dag heward-mills

PASTORAL MINISTRY



- Practical and extremely useful
- Authoritative and up-to-date
- An indispensable guide for the earnest minister

Pastoral Ministry

By

Smashwords Edition

Dag Heward Mills

Copyright Dag Heward Mills 2007

E mail Dag Heward-Mills:

info@daghewardmillsbooks.org

evangelist@daghewardmills.org

Find out more about Dag Heward-Mills at:

http://www.daghewardmills.org/

http://daghewardmills.org/healingjesuscrusade/

Smashwords Edition, License Notes

This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This eBook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to Smashwords.com and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

Scripture quotations are taken from the KING JAMES VERSION of the Bible, unless

otherwise stated.

Excerpts in Chapter 24 from: 1 A Passion for the Gospel by Colin Whittaker Used by permission of Kingsway Publications, Lottbridge Drove, Eastbourne, BN23 6NT 2 Understanding the Anointing by Kenneth Hagin Used by permission of Faith Library Publications &Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Inc. 3 All Things are Possible by David Edwin Harrell Junior Used by permission of Indiana University Press 4 The Release of Power by Bishop David A. Oyedepo Used by permission of Dominion Publishing House 5 Tragedy Trauma Triumph- WHY? by T.L. Osborne Used by permission of OSFO International

Contents

SeCtion i: BaSiC PaStoral MiniStry

1. Discovering the Lay Ministry
2. The Burden of Ministry
3. Poimen and Kubernesis
4. The Call of Shepherds
5. How to Become a Lay Pastor
6. The Work of the Ministry
7. The Branches of Pastoral Ministry
8. How to Develop Basic Preaching and Teaching Skills
9. How to Be a Good Shepherd
10. Moving from Lay Ministry into Full-Time Ministry

SeCtion ii: advanCed PaStoral MiniStry

11. Real Ministry.
12. The Purposes of Prayer

13. Spiritual Warfare.

14. Effective Prayer

15. Fervent Prayer

16. Intercessory and Travailing Prayer

17. Visitation

18. How to Develop Successful Teaching Skills

19. Interaction

SeCtion iii: ChurCh Growth

20. Building Large Churches.

21. Measuring Church Growth

22. The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

23. The Power of Words

24. Aman and Tsalach

25. Catching the Spirit of the Ministry

26. Fighting for Commitment

27. Retention Evangelism

28. Developing Permanent Members

29. Principles for Church Growth

SeCtion iv: the PaStor and the voiCe of God

30. Hearing from God

31. The Voice of the Mind and the Voice of the Flesh

32. The Voice of the Holy Spirit

33. Doors of Ministry

34. Using Dreams for Direction

35. Using the Word of God for Direction

36. Avoiding Mistakes When Being Led

SeCtion v: SPiritual fatherS

37. The Importance of Spiritual Fathers

38. Signs of Sonship .

39. Fathers and the Highest Blessing

40. Turning the Hearts

41. Following a Spiritual Father

SeCtion vi: advanCed doCtrine of the anointinG

42. Reasons Why You Must Be Anointed

43. Seven Steps to the Anointing

44. The Anointed Ones

45. The Battle to Stay Anointed

SeCtion vii: BiBliCal doCtrine on woMen

46. Scriptural Beauty
47. The Ungodly Woman
48. Women and Daughters
49. Temptations and Sins of Women
50. Successful Keys for Women
51. Frustrations and Hindrances of Women
52. Receiving the Blessing for Women
53. Understanding the Curse of Women
54. Promises for Women
55. Wisdom for Women
56. Warnings for Women

SeCtion VIII: PaStoral ethiCS

57. Ethics for the Head
58. Ethics for Relationships
59. Financial Ethics and Privacy
60. Public Appearance and Politics

SeCtion IX: BaSiC CereMonieS

61. Dedication Ceremonies
62. The Wedding Ceremony
63. Funeral Services .

Multiple Choice Questions

SECTION I: BASIC PASTORAL MINISTRY

DISCOVERING THE LAY MINISTRY 1

THE RIGHT APPROACH TO LAY MINISTRY

I have experienced two worlds of ministry fulltime ministry and lay ministry or working with non-stipendiary people. Most pastors are only aware of the existence of the full-time dimension of ministry. In this section of the textbook, my intention is to help you to discover the reality of using lay people to do the work of ministry.

A lay person/minister is someone who maintains his secular job and yet is active in the ministry of the Lord Jesus.[1] A full-time minister is someone who has abandoned his secular job to concentrate fully on the ministry.[2] Many ministers who are in full-time ministry are not comfortable with the idea of lay people participating in the ministry.

Two Reasons Why Full-Time Ministers Despise Lay Workers

1. They want to maintain the ministry as the exclusive preserve of a few "called" men of God.

Some full-time ministers do not want to accept the reality that lay people are capable of making a substantial (non-financial) contribution to ministry. Many full-time ministers are happy to maintain their lay people as mere financial supporters. They think to themselves, "What makes me special if everybody else can do the job I'm doing? Why should a lay person be able to do what I do?" Pastors want to feel special as they perform their exclusive ministerial duties.

2. Full-time ministers are not convinced that lay people can do the work of the ministry.

I have had pastors ask me, "Will they have time to attend to the needs of the flock? Can they handle emergencies? Can they minister powerfully the way we do?" The answers to these are very simple - a resounding YES! I have been in the lay ministry for many years and have found it to be practically possible.

PRINCIPLES FOR INVOLVING LAY PASTORS IN MINISTRY WORK

I'm writing this to introduce you to an alternative to the traditional concept of full-time priests who only wait on God in the temple. The lay ministry is the key to church growth.3 Churches in this world which have experienced phenomenal growth have all employed the principle of using lay people for the ministry.4 I believe that it is the key to fulfilling the Great Commission. There is no way we are going to win this world with a few priests and pastors. Everyone must get involved.

1. MANY MORE PEOPLE MUST GET INVOLVED IN THE MINISTRY WORK AT A HIGHER MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

There must be a revival of the lay ministry in the church.[5] It is possible to have lay pastors, that is pastors who combine both secular jobs and the ministry. At least ninety-five percent of the pastors in my church are lay pastors.

2. FULL-TIME PASTORS MUST BE SECURE IN THEIR POSITIONS IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE LAY PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED.

There is nothing mystical about the ministry! There are pastors who want the ministry to be shrouded in mystery so that their members feel dependent on them. In this section, I intend to demystify the art of shepherding and pasturing people. It is something that many can get involved with. What a blessing it is for lay people to discover that they can be useful in the ministry. What a blessing for the pastor when he discovers that the contributions of lay people make his church grow.

I am not saying that there is no need for fulltime ministers. I am a full-time minister myself today. There is a great need for certain people to be one hundred percent involved in ministry work. There are things that only full-time ministers can do. There is a stage at which lay people can no longer adequately perform the ministry.

The Student Lay Pastor

At the age of about fifteen, in secondary school, I met the Lord. From the day I gave my life to Christ, I became very active in ministry. I was involved in soul winning and following up converts. I was also involved in singing and playing musical instruments for the Lord. In the first phase of my Christian life, I was not a traditional Sunday morning church attendee. In fact, I hardly went to church on Sundays. My Christian life was so active from Monday to Saturday that I ended up resting on Sundays! On Mondays and Wednesdays I had prayer meetings and Bible study. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I had music rehearsals. On Fridays we had fasting and prayer meetings. And then on Saturdays we would have a retreat from ten in the morning until six in the evening.

While I was involved in these activities I never gave up my schooling. I completed my 'O' levels and passed with a distinction - I had seven ones (one is the highest mark of distinction). That was a great accomplishment by any standards. In my 'A' levels I topped my class and was one of the only people from my school admitted into the medical school. Throughout this period, I was fully involved in ministry. I preached! I won souls! I visited people in their homes! I counseled many people! I fasted and prayed! At one point, I fasted so much that I became as thin as a rake. Someone even asked me, "Do you think that you will get to Heaven by being a skeleton?"

Never did it occur to me that I had to be paid for the ministry work that I was involved in. By the time I was nineteen years old, I was fully involved in the ministry. I had many sheep who looked up to me for direction and prayer. By 1980 I was a strong preacher and leader of the Scripture Union fellowship. The point I am making is that ministry is possible alongside other pursuits. I entered the university in October 1982. I was privileged to be a medical student - one of the most difficult and time-consuming courses. Whilst in the university I began a Christian fellowship, still in existence today. During my fourth year, I began to establish the foundations for a church. I then became a pastor and was acknowledged as such whilst I was still a medical student.

During this time I was not being paid by anyone to do the work of the ministry. Neither did I slacken in my academic work. On the contrary, I did extremely well and won prizes in the medical school. I applied wisdom and sacrificed my leisure time so that I could be involved in ministry.

3. THESE ARE THE TWO KEYS TO BEING IN THE LAY MINISTRY SACRIFICE AND WISDOM.[6]

4. THE MAIN DUTY OF A MINISTER IS TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION, THIS IS SOMETHING LAY PASTORS CAN DO.

What is the main task of a pastor? Is it to perform funerals and officiate weddings? Certainly not! These are certainly duties of a minister but they are not the main duties. If your ministry has

deteriorated to the point where your main functions are to conduct marriages and bury people, then you need to read your Bible again!

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"

(Matthew 28:19,20)

The reason why it is called the Great Commission is because it is the great commandment to all ministers. It is sad to see ministers of the Gospel who have become mere social functionaries. Sometimes pastors are under pressure to be accepted by society. As a result, they want to do nice things that relate to health, education, etc., so that they may gain the approval of society.

5. THE SECOND PRINCIPAL DUTY OF A PASTOR IS TO PRAY. THIS IS SOMETHING EVERY LAY PASTOR CAN DO.

Apostle Peter came under the same pressure to leave his principal duties and to perform mainly social tasks.[7]

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. BUT WE WILL GIVE OURSELVES CONTINUALLY TO PRAYER, AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD"

(Acts 6:1-4)

You can see from this Scripture that Peter's main duty was to pray and to minister the Word. This is something that can be done by unpaid church workers.[8]

ARGUMENT FOR INVOLVING LAY WORKERS IN MINISTRY

1. Non-paid staff can pray.

2. Lay workers can be taught how to preach.

3. Lay workers can be taught to visit young Christians.

4 They can be taught to counsel younger Christians

5. They can be taught to witness.

6. Lay people can be taught to minister the Word with power.

7. They can be taught to make spiritual gains through prayer.

8. Any lay worker can become a pastor.

What I have just described is the work of a pastor. Any honest reader will agree that a lay person can become a lay pastor. What is needed is a systematic approach of training lay people to become ministers. Do not limit a lay person because he is a professional in another field. Do not say that your doctors, lawyers, architects, carpenters, engineers, tailors, masons, nurses and secretaries, cannot be pastors. They can!! I recently visited one of our churches pastored by a female nurse. I realized that there were hundreds of people in the church and I gave glory to God.

The Need for Workers

In a large house there are many vessels. God is using all kinds of people. Do not limit God to what YOU think with your little experience and limited knowledge.

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work”

(2 Timothy 2:20,21).

When I was in my first year at the university, I was told by the Christian fellowship that I could not be a leader because I was a medical student. Medical students were considered too busy to be involved in ministry work. How unfortunate! They had effectively eliminated a whole group of potential leaders from the fellowship. This is what many pastors do. They look at the doctors in the church and think to themselves, *"Sit down quietly, receive your Sunday sermons and pay your tithes. Be a nice principled Christian doctor who does not perform abortions and you will please God!!"*

I want you to know that a doctor can also please God by winning souls. It is true that God wants principled doctors. But God also wants doctors who will win souls and do the work of ministry. Today, I have doctors who own clinics and at the same time pastor churches with hundreds of members. Today, I have many architects who do full-time architectural work and are very fruitful in ministry. I have pastors who work in banks and pastor large churches.

There are pastors in Lighthouse Chapel who are teachers, pharmacists, university lecturers, accountants, students, doctors, nurses, army officers, civil servants, air conditioner repairers, computer scientists, computer technicians, businessmen, lawyers, and the list goes on! Recently our church came under investigation by the Internal Revenue Service. The investigators could not believe that our long list of pastors were lay people who were not paid by the church. If pastors gain the understanding that their lay people can do much more than just give money to the church, they would have helped themselves and their churches a great deal. That is what this part of the textbook is about - showing how lay people can be involved in the ministry. Please do not misunderstand me; not every lay person who is active in ministry must become a pastor.

Some of the lay people will function as ordinary shepherds (cell leaders). But there are others who have the call of God upon their lives and will rise to the rank of a lay pastor.

The Principle of Investing in Leaders

One day as I was walking on a hillside I saw something which I want to share with you. I was praying in tongues and walking along a footpath on one of the hills in Ghana. The entire hillside was covered with wild bushes and tall untamed grass. As I walked along, I saw a section within the wild grass measuring about 20 meters by 20 meters. In that particular section there were neatly planted pineapple plants. I could see the baby pineapples sprouting. That section of the hillside was very different from the rest of the surroundings.

The Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and said, "That section of the hillside is different because certain seeds have been planted there. That area of the hillside is different because some special investment has been made on that patch of ground."

The Lord told me that the rest of the hillside can be likened to the general congregation which receives the general rainfall. The special patch of ground which was yielding pineapples can be likened to the leadership of the church. If you invest in a particular area, it will yield what you want it to yield.

Many people do not invest in their leaders. If you invest in potential leaders, you will harvest a crop of well-seasoned leaders. I spend more time with my leaders than I do with the general congregation. The teaching in this section is examples of some of the things I have taught ordinary people over the years. This investment has turned many people into shepherds and lay pastors! Invest specially in leaders and potential pastors and they will grow up to become great ministers!

I have heard people criticizing me for starting churches with people whom they consider not to be pastors. I pray for these critics to come a bit closer and learn what happens in our church. For years, and at great expense, I have been holding Shepherds' Camps and training people to become shepherds of God's sheep. We constantly have pastoral training sessions for lay people who want to be in the ministry. I am constantly encouraging my lay people to be more than principled citizens of the country. I want them to be soul winners for Jesus.[8] I want them to be shepherds of God's flock. I want them to fulfill the Great Commission.

Dear pastor friend, I wrote this textbook for you! God told me to write it! The following pages contain instructions that can be taught to any eager lay person. Dear lay person, this textbook is for you as well! God has a ministry for you. Please do not go to heaven and discover that you did not even start your ministry before you died! Take what you are reading seriously and learn the art of shepherding and pastoring. Discover for yourself the joy of serving God as a layman even if you do not sacrifice your profession.

The Burden Of Ministry 2

THE BURDEN OF THE FLOCK

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall BEAR THE BURDEN of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone” (Numbers 11:16,17). One of the most difficult tasks in life is to lead people. The Bible teaches us that Moses delivered the Israelites from bondage, yet he had a difficult time handling them. The job that Moses did is the job that all pastors have to do.

God graciously gave Moses spectacular and sensational miracles. These signs and wonders helped to establish his authority over God's flock. In spite of this, the burden of leading the people was very heavy on Moses. The Bible calls it a burden - and that is what it is![1]

RELATING WITH THE FLOCK

1. IF YOU HAVE A PASTOR'S HEART AND LOVE PEOPLE, YOU CANNOT DISASSOCIATE YOURSELF FROM THEIR PROBLEMS.

Their problems will become your problems and their burdens will affect you! When God wants to use you to minister to a large number of people, He will expect you to share the burden of His divine call upon your life.[2] Failure to share this burden will simply mean that you may collapse or come to a standstill in ministry. There are many standstill churches around. They grow to a point but can grow no further. The reason being they fail to share the burden of ministry.

2. EVERY PASTOR MUST AIM TO INCORPORATE ALL SECTIONS OF THE CHURCH TO HELP IN THE GROWTH OF THE MINISTRY.

A balanced church is one that has people of all sorts within it. There are the young, the old, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, and male and female. Every pastor will fall into one of these categories. It must be your goal to incorporate all sections of the church to help in the development and growth of the ministry. In other words, all sorts must be drafted in, to share the burden. You will find that the category of people who you have written off, as far as ministry is concerned, would be able to contribute greatly to the ministry.[6]

I notice that most churches exclude the educated and rich from involvement in ministry. Usually, the rich are only expected to contribute money to the church. Similarly, the educated are just expected to improve the cosmetic image of the church. However, I have found both of these groups of people to be very productive and useful spiritually. I have many medical doctors, specialists, lecturers, architects, and engineers, who are all serving as lay pastors. These lay pastors are sharing the burden of ministry alongside me.

The burden of the ministry cannot be borne by one person. It is simply impossible. From today, if you want to have a greater ministry than what you currently have, learn to share the burden. Sometimes people do not share the burden because they want to take all of the glory for themselves. They want people to feel that they are the only ones with a supernatural gift. They want people to show appreciation to them alone. Others are afraid of rebellion in the camp. How common is the story of associate pastors rebelling.

Many senior pastors fear their assistants will outshine them one day. Fear not, only believe! You cannot expand without trusting people. The work is so great that you will never ever be able to do it all alone. There is too much space in the sky for two birds to collide. I want to show you seven reasons why it is such a burden to pastor people.

SEVEN REASONS WHY PASTORAL WORK IS BURDENSOME

1. PEOPLE ARE BY NATURE UNGRATEFUL AND FORGETFUL.

“In the last days… men shall be… unthankful”

(2 Timothy 3:1,2).

You can notice ingratitude in people by the way they complain. Moses led the Israelites out of bondage and slavery and yet they murmured and complained bitterly against him. Aaron even had to make a golden calf to calm them down.

When something minute goes wrong, you may be surprised at the actions of people you have ministered to. Many easily forget what you have done for them. This is because the things a pastor does are often not physically tangible, but spiritual. Most tend to think that the pastor has done nothing for them. Others go a step further and commit evil towards you after you have been a blessing to them. Don't be shocked! The prophet Jeremiah experienced the same thing from his people.

He said, “Shall evil be recompensed for good?” (Jeremiah 18:20a) Once a pastor told a very disturbing story. He said that he was surprised when one of his church members came to his house one night to assault him. He

couldn't believe that this young man whom he had led to Christ, trained up in the Lord, blessed his marriage and helped him through various crises would attack him in that manner.

Dear friend, do not be surprised! Do not expect gratitude from man, expect your rewards from God. Hezekiah was blessed. But he did not "render again". That means he did not show gratitude for all the blessings he had received,

“But Hezekiah RENDERED NOT AGAIN according to the benefit done unto him”

(2 Chronicles 32:25).

This is the nature of man. This is the nature of the people God wants you to lead.

2. PEOPLE WILL BETRAY YOU.

Though Judas walked and ministered with Jesus for three years, he eventually betrayed him for a small amount of money. Betrayal is part of ministry. It is also a part of life. If you have yet to experience betrayal, I can assure you that you will. The disturbing thing about betrayal is that it is done by people who are supposedly close to you.

You are not greater than your master Jesus! The fact that someone may one day betray you, may make it very difficult for you to happily interact and flow with the people. Look closely at the ministry of

any great man of God. You will discover that they have all had their fair share of traitors. All of this contributes to the burden and difficulty of ministry.

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me”

(Psalm 41:9).

3. PEOPLE ARE WICKED.

Alexander, the coppersmith did Paul a lot of harm in his ministry.

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works.”

(2 Timothy 4:14).

I have experienced wickedness from people who have lifted themselves up to fight and oppose me. There are times when my ministry and very existence have become a source of work for such wicked individuals; their work being fighting, slandering and that of opposition. Without my existence, I think some people may not even have a job to do! If you are not resolute in ministry, you could easily decide to leave these harassments behind and move on to a more peaceful existence in some secular job.

4. PEOPLE CAN ABANDON YOU SUDDENLY.

Paul experienced sudden desertions by some of his colleagues, like Demas. I remember one young man whom I trained. He was about to take up an important position in the ministry that we had been preparing for, for over a year. On the day he was to fill the position, he suddenly informed me that he was leaving the country. I couldn't believe my ears! All of our months of preparation meant nothing to him. He just abandoned ship without notice. These experiences are all part of the ministry. Abandonment also occurred under the ministry of Apostle Paul

“For Demas hath forsaken me”

(2 Timothy 4:10).

Because people can abandon you at any time, it is burdensome to lead them. But God wants us to help share the burden of His people. God wants us to be involved in His work. God wants us to be shepherds!

5. PEOPLE ARE EQUALIZERS, DISRESPECTFUL AND IMPUDENT.

“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses… Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? HATH HE NOT SPOKEN ALSO BY US?”

(Numbers 12:1,2).

Miriam and Aaron (the closest assistants and closest relatives) were now speaking against Moses. They most probably said things like, "God also speaks by us," and "Are you the only one called to be a leader?" With time, familiarity creeps in and people now consider you as an equal. They tend to think, "We can all do it. What's the big deal? You are no different from us!" This is unfortunate, but real. People easily take you for granted. They murmur and complain against you, forgetting all that you have done for them. When they lose their temper, you will find church members speaking to you like a little child.

One church member approached her pastor after Sunday service. The pastor thought she was about to compliment him for the powerful sermon he had just preached. She started, "Pastor, you know something? I felt I should tell you that you remind me of my father." "Oh really?" the pastor responded. She continued, "He was so full of himself and so are you!" The pastor was taken aback but he had to smile and continue as though he had received a compliment. The church member was telling the pastor exactly what she thought of him.

“Now Korah...and Dathan…and Abiram…and On…rose up before Moses...and said...WHEREFORE THEN LIFT YE UP YOURSELVES [Moses and Aaron] above the congregation of the Lord?”

(Numbers 16:1-3).

These rebels apparently thought that Moses felt he was too "big for his own shoes".

6. PEOPLE ARE DISOBEDIENT AND REBELLIOUS.

Samuel confronted Saul and asked him why he had not obeyed the Lord fully. One of the difficult things every pastor will have to come to terms with is that in spite of all the good things you preach, many people are still disobedient and continue to live in sin. I used to be amazed at the extent of spiritual rebellion found in the Body of Christ. But that is human nature.

“Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?”

(1 Samuel 15:19).

7. PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND AND DO NOT RESPOND.

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and UNDERSTANDETH IT NOT”

(Matthew 13:19).

Sometimes people do not understand the Word. Often they do not understand why you have to do fundraising. Consequently, many do not respond in giving. Many times, I have to explain that they are giving to build a nice church where they can have their weddings, baby dedications and other ceremonies. Leading people who have all the above characteristics: ingratitude, disloyalty, etc., is a major task. One person cannot do it alone. The burden must be shared with others. Sharing the burden is hard work. The people will be angry with you for trying to help them. People need help but when you try to give it to them, they attack you.[3]

HOW TO DISTRIBUTE THE BURDEN OF MINISTRY

1. THE PRINCIPAL STRATEGY FOR DISTRIBUTING THE BURDEN IS TO INVOLVE LAY MEN AND WOMEN IN MINISTRY.

No church is capable of employing an endless number of people. Every church has a limit to its resources. It is not possible to pay salaries and rent an unlimited number of houses for the staff of the ministry. Full-time staff are limited in the amount of work that they can do. In my ministry, though I oversee a hundred churches and several thousand people at the Lighthouse Cathedral, we currently have only eight fulltime pastors on staff in our office. We have over two hundred pastors and trainee pastors within the ministry. Over ninety-five percent of them are unpaid lay people.

2. THE USE OF LAY PEOPLE IS THE SECRET TO UNLIMITED EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH.

Sometimes people think that lay people cannot do much of the ministry work. Do not be deceived the opposite is true! Lay workers often do more ministry work than full-time staff. The reason is simple. The sheep who you have to minister to are at work from nine to five in the day and are only free in the evenings and at weekends.

Both full-time and part-time pastors have to wait until this period to have access to the sheep. What do full-time pastors do during the day? Many of them pretend to be working in the office behind a desk, but in reality, they are doing nothing at all! Pastors instruct their members to have their "quiet times" at home, however they come to the office to read their Bibles and pray behind their desks! (The pastor should have his devotion time at home just like his members.) Sitting behind a desk does not mean that you are working. A pastor is neither a banker nor an accountant. He is a shepherd. Shepherds must be in the fields moving amongst the sheep and ministering to them. Let the pastors do pastoral work, and let the secular people do their work. Lay people can join the pastors to share the burden of the people.

3. LET YOUR LAY PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY ARE CALLED TO SHARE THE BURDEN OF MINISTRY WITH YOU.

They will share the burden on earth and they will share the burden of accounting for the sheep in heaven. What is the burden on earth? It is the burden of praying, visiting, counseling and interacting with the sheep.[4] What is the burden in heaven? It is the burden of answering for each and every soul that God gave to you.

4. THE BURDEN OF LEADING SHEEP CANNOT BE BORNE BY ONE PERSON OR JUST A FEW PEOPLE WHO SUPPOSEDLY HAVE A “CALL”.

The burden of accounting for hundreds of different people cannot be borne by one person. When I stand before the judgment seat and God asks me about some souls in Canada, I intend to mention the name of the pastor there and ask the Lord to inquire from him. When the Lord asks me about some souls in Navrongo, in the north of Ghana, I will immediately tell the Lord, "Please ask my dear pastor who is in charge of that branch." It is impossible for one person to answer for such a large burden of souls.

“For they watch for your souls, AS THEY THAT MUST GIVE ACCOUNT, that they may do it with joy”

(Hebrews 13:17).

Every pastor will have a lot to answer for when he stands before the Lord in heaven. Your burden is to lead all your sheep to heaven. Make sure you lose none of them. Every true pastor's motto should be,

"Of all that you have given me, I have lost none!"

(John 6:39, John 17:12; and John 18:9).

Moses was breaking down under the burden of leading the entire flock. God saw this and decided to take of the "spirit" that was on Moses and put it on the seventy leaders "to bear the burden" with him.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me SEVENTY MEN of the elders of Israel… THAT THEY MAY STAND [work] THERE WITH THEE”

(Numbers 11:16).

5. THE LORD WANTS US TO BE FRUITFUL NO MATTER WHAT WE DO IN THIS LIFE.

Involving students, workers, and professionals helps to distribute the burden to all saints in the church. In the universities, I have established Lighthouse churches and have entrusted the preaching and pastoring responsibilities to a few students. I am very proud of these student ministers because of the great job that they have done on their respective campuses. I don't have to rush to the university every Sunday morning to minister the Word. Ordinary saints should please join in and work together.[5] The saints must be perfected (prepared, trained) to do the work of the ministry. Ordinary saints can do the work.[6]

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”

(Ephesians 4:12).

TAKING UP THE SPIRITUAL BURDEN

Spiritual burden is a different type of burden but it is an important one. God will only use you if you have a burden. If there is no burden, God will not use you. For example, if you want to heal the sick and cast out devils you need to have a genuine burden to have miracles of healing. I had a burden to preach and to teach. Preaching and teaching brings deliverance. Preaching and teaching is powerful. I emphasize the Word of God whilst others emphasize other things. You cannot emphasize the Word of God unless you believe it is a powerful tool of deliverance. Compassion is a key starting point for all ministries.

The Burden of Jesus

Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw the sheep without a shepherd.

“But when he saw the multitudes, HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION ON THEM, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd”

(Matthew 9:36).

Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw the multitudes.

“And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, AND WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION TOWARD THEM”

(Mark 6:34).

No one can minister effectively without a genuine burden. Jesus' burden was to keep all that the Father had given him. The reason I know this was a burden on him was that he kept on repeating this particular statement.

“Of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing”

(John 6:39)

“Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition”

(John 17:12).

“That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none”

(John 18:9).

People who don't have a burden for souls, are often motivated by money, fame, power or some other ulterior motive.

The Burden of Paul

Paul's desire (burden) for Israel was that they might be saved.

“Brethren, my heart's DESIRE and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved”

(Romans 10:1).

Paul had great heaviness and sorrow in his heart for his people,

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have GREAT HEAVINESS and CONTINUAL SORROW in my heart”

(Romans 9:1-2).

HOW TO DEVELOP A GENUINE SHEPHERDORIAL BURDEN

If you are the senior pastor, you can sensitize people towards the burden of ministry. The shepherdorial or pastoral burden is the burden of not losing any of the sheep that God has given you. This burden drives a shepherd/pastor to look for the lost, pray for the sheep, and to visit them. It is that burden that leads us to fast and pray so that the sheep will not fall away. The pastor's heart and attitude is that he doesn't want to lose any of the people he has in his ministry or church. It is that attitude that makes the pastor leave the ninety-nine people to follow the one lost sheep.[7] It should be that the only people who leave your church are "sons of perdition". Sometimes people who leave are not "sons of perdition" but genuine people who we didn't care for. People who didn't receive the shepherd's attention! You can develop a genuine shepherdorial burden by the following principles:

1. NOT BEING AFFECTED BY PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND BURDENS

When you get to the point where your own problems and burdens do not weigh you down, then you have taken the first step towards having a genuine shepherdorial burden. As long as the burden for your own problems weigh you down, you will not be able to think about God's work. Genuine ministry begins when you can separate yourself from your own burdens and take on the burdens of others. I always remember the example of Kathryn Kuhlman, an American healing evangelist. She had a strong burden for the sick to be healed. However, she herself was said to be very ill with a serious heart condition whilst she ministered to the sick. She did not think of her own problems as she ministered to the needs of others.[8]

2. PRAYING FOR A BURDEN

You can pray to God for a burden for His work. I remember a retreat I attended in 1982, just before I went to university. It was held at the Legon Botanical Gardens. It was a seven-hour prayer meeting from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It was such a memorable event! Guess what we prayed for? We prayed for burdens. We didn't ask God to bless our ministries, we asked Him to give us genuine burdens for His work. I believe that is why God has given me a burden for His work, because I asked for it. I spent seven hours praying for a burden! Dive into the work and the burden will come. You cannot do the ministry work for long without realizing the great need of mankind for the Word and power of God. As you do God's will, a burden for the harvest will come upon you.

POIMEN AND KUBERNESIS 3

THE MINISTRY OF THE PASTOR

“I am the bread of life” (John 6:35).

“I am from above” (John 8:23).

“Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

“I am the light of the world” (John 9:5).

“I am the door” (John 10:9).

“I am the good shepherd” (John 10:1).

“I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36).

“I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25).

“Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (John 13:13).

“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

“I am the vine” (John 15:5).

“Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born” (John 18:37).

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” (Revelation 1:8).

“I am the first and the last, “ (Revelation 1:17).

Jesus Christ was many things to us. He called himself different things at different times. At one time he said he was the way, the truth and the life. He announced that he was the door. He declared that he was the bread of life and the light of the world. But one of the most important things that Jesus proclaimed was that he was the good shepherd.

“I am the good shepherd”

(John 10:11).

EXPOUNDING ON *POIMEN*

What did Jesus mean when he said he was a good shepherd? The word “shepherd” in John 10:11 is translated from the Greek word poimen (pronounced “poy-mane”). It is this same word, poimen, which is translated “pastor” in Ephesians 4:11.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors [poimen] and teachers”

(Ephesians 4:11)

We can see from this that the word shepherd is interchangeable with the word pastor.1 So What the Lord was really saying was, "I am the good pastor.” Throughout the Bible, Jesus referred to himself as a shepherd or a pastor. Jesus Christ is the perfect example of a good pastor.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

1. THE PASTORAL OFFICE IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE WITHOUT IT MANY THINGS CANNOT WORK.

Remember that the sheep were scattered and lost not because they didn't have an apostle or prophet, but because they didn't have a pastor.

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd [pastor]”

(Matthew 9:36).

I am not saying that prophets and apostles are not important. They are also important but the sheep scattered without a *pastor!*

2. WITHOUT A GOOD PASTOR THERE WILL BE NO GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

The Bible says that sheep without shepherds fainted. This means they were distressed and harassed.[2] In the medical arena there are ophthalmologists (eye doctors), cardiothoracic surgeons (heart doctors), and dentists (teeth doctors). If you ever had a heart problem, you would certainly not want a dentist to operate on your heart! Neither would I! Dentists are specialists for the teeth and not for the heart.

In the secular world, people have grown to respect these different specialties and have allowed them to function well within their own field. Specialists increase the individual's safety and allow for the special needs of everyone to be met. We must learn to accord similar specialties to Christian ministers. Today, everyone in the ministry is called "pastor". However, many of those who claim to be pastors are no more a pastor than I am the Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the world!

In the Old Testament, anyone who intruded into a holy place or office, in which they had not been called, were struck dead by a Holy God who does not accept such intrusions.

3. THERE IS A GRADUAL DISINTEGRATION OF MINISTRIES WHEN SOMEONE WITHOUT A SHEPHERDING GIFT STANDS IN THE OFFICE OF A PASTOR.

In my few years of ministry, I have noticed many people without the shepherding gift standing in the office of pastor. Consequently, some of these people either have failed in ministry or are experiencing a gradual disintegration of their ministries. This is not because they are evil, but simply because a dentist cannot operate on a heart. God gives different gifts to everyone. It is time for us to discover our gifts and stay with our special callings.

4. ONE OF THE KEY ROLES OF A SHEPHERD IS TO LEAD SHEEP.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: HE LEADETH ME”

(Psalm 23:1,2).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GIFT OF GOVERNMENT (*KUBERNESIS)* IN THE CHURCH

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, the Bible talks about the gifts of governments. The word "government" is translated from the Greek word, kubernesis, which means “a steering, pilotage, or guiding”. I believe that this gift of governments is the same thing as the office of a shepherd or pastor.[3]

1. ESSENTIALLY, THE GIFT OF GOVERNMENT IS USED TO LEAD AND GUIDE PEOPLE.

The shepherd is to use this gifting to guide the sheep to "good places" (green pastures). This gift of governments is a special gift from God and is therefore not to be enterprised nor taken in hand want only, or unadvisedly by anybody. We need to soberly reflect on the implications of leading people. When someone does not have the ability to govern in the natural world, the whole nation can be thrown into chaos. There are bad governments everywhere. This is obvious by the state of poverty, war, and instability that exist in such countries. That is the reason why there is so much fuss about who is elected into the seat of government. The government means so much to everyone. It may mean the difference between death and life, poverty and prosperity. That is why there is so much commotion over which government will come into power.

2. THERE MUST BE GREAT CONCERN IN THE CHURCH ABOUT WHO IS ALLOWED TO BECOME A PASTOR.

With poor government, and incapable people at the helm of affairs in the church, we are headed for anarchy and chaos. God's Word must be our guiding post. Things not based on the Word of God have a limited life span. In the beginning, they may look flashy and appealing, but with time, they will crumble!

It is time for evangelists to leave the church and go out where the sinners are. It is time for prophets to leave the governing of local bodies to pastors. It is time for pastors to make budgetary allocations for the support of other ministers like evangelists, prophets and teachers.

3. A LOCALCHURCH SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY SOMEONE WITH THE PASTORAL CALLING.

You will notice certain peculiar things when an evangelist or prophet is in charge of a church. On your first visit, the charisma and the inspiration of the leader may impress you. Apostles, prophets and evangelists are very inspirational and impressive speakers. But remember, a church is not governed on impressive speeches and powerful prophecies.

A church is not sustained by miracles. A local church is to be run by a pastor—a good shepherd (poimen). Someone with the ability to govern a local body of people. Somebody with the ability to

lead people successfully to a good place (green pastures). Someone with the gift of governments (1 Corinthians 12:28).

4. DISORGANIZATION AND MISMANAGEMENT IS NOTICEABLE IN A CHURCH PASTORED BY SOMEONE WHO IS NOT CALLED TO BE A PASTOR.

As you continue attending a church that is pastored by an evangelist, you will probably notice some amount of disorganization and mismanagement. I have noticed that church heads, who are obviously not pastors, struggle with the day-to-day administration of their churches. Often these out-of-place ministers are accused of evil deeds. Knowing some of them personally, I realize that they have no evil intentions. It is just that they simply do not have the gift of governments (administration, management). The sad thing is that sometimes they don't even know that they don't have the ability.

I remember once visiting a church headed by someone, obviously called to be an evangelist. After I finished ministering, I heard the minister chide the whole church about an amplifier and other equipment that had not been repaired. The question I asked myself was this, "What does the repairing of equipment have to do with the whole congregation?" The maintenance of the equipment should have nothing to do with the congregation, but rather with the administration of the church. A church must be able to run its affairs properly. This man of God spoke to the congregation about money matters and other intricate details that had nothing to do with the general crowd. They were matters of internal management. At a point, tears came to my eyes as I watched this evangelist, helplessly and hopelessly struggle to govern the local body.

Dear reader, his rightful place was out on the harvest fields, bringing multitudes to Christ, performing miracles, signs and wonders (not governing a local assembly). As soon as such a person sits in the seat of government, he becomes an oddity. In fact, you can become a byword and a laughing stock after a while!

5. CHURCHES NOT RUN BY CALLED PASTORS ARE SUSTAINED BY WAVES OF INSPIRATIONAL MEETINGS.

The sheep are not systematically taught Bible principles and doctrines. Rather, they are fed on a diet of inspirational, highly motivating and emotional meals every week. No Christian can survive on eating "junk food" everyday; they need a well-balanced diet!

These churches are full of babies who are not interested in the Bible. Therefore, there is no stability in the membership. They have what I call a floating crowd. Every week you will see an entirely different group of people attending their services. In order to grow, people need a regular diet of the Word of God.

“And Jesus [the Word] said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst”

(John 6:35).

Motivation is different from feeding. There are churches that are full of highly motivated but empty shells. What am I trying to say? It is time for us to allow the church to be governed by individuals with the gift of governments. It is time for shepherds to take their rightful place at the helm of the local church. It is time for people to be able to say like the Lord Jesus—I am a good shepherd or pastor.

THE CALL OF SHEPHERDS 4

AN EXPOSITION ON THE CALL TO MINISTRY

In this section, I would like to show you that there are many scriptural reasons why I believe you can be a shepherd/pastor. I believe that at a point in your Christian development, you can be a shepherd, at least at some level. The Bible teaches from many angles about being fruitful in ministry. The Word also teaches us that "many" and not "few" are called to the ministry.[1]

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors [poimen] and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”

(Ephesians 4:11,12).

The usual interpretation of this Scripture is that God gave special ministerial offices to the Church for three principal reasons:

1. To perfect the saints.

2. To do the work of the ministry.

3. To edify the Body of Christ.

This is true. However, we must be aware that the translators of the Bible added punctuation, which sometimes gives an unfortunate interpretation of the text. When you remove the commas from Ephesians 4:12, it gives a completely different meaning, which I believe is more accurate. Remove the punctuation marks in Ephesians 4:12 and look at what the verse is saying now.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors [poimen] and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ”

(Ephesians 4:11,12).

It is saying that God gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry".[2] In other words, these special ministerial offices are given to perfect ordinary saints to enable them (the saints) to do the work of ministry. What does this mean?

1. This simply means that ordinary saints can do ministry work.

2. It also means that ministry work is not the sole preserve of certain apostles and teachers. Laymen can satisfactorily accomplish a large part of the ministry. When you interpret Ephesians 4:11,12 this way it puts the responsibility of ministry on all of us and not just on a few special people. This must be the case, because the Bible says many are called!

God never called a few people to do His work. God has always called many more people than have responded. If you were God and you had a huge task to accomplish—the task of saving the whole world, would you call a few people and send them out? Of course not! You would call as many people as possible and send them out. Unfortunately, few people respond to the call, therefore, few are eventually chosen to serve in the vineyard.[3]

UNDERSTANDING THE CALL TO MINISTRY

1. THE CALL OF GOD IS NOT A MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE.

We have made the call of God into some mystical experience involving the hearing of voices, seeing of visions, and having of spectacular spiritual experiences. That is an erroneous generalization. Many are "called", but many have not seen visions of Jesus. The Bible teaches us that we are "called" to be saints.

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, CALLED TO BE SAINTS"

(Romans 1:7).

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, CALLED TO BE SAINTS"

(1 Corinthians 1:2)

It is the saints who are expected to do the work according to Ephesians 4:12. Now let us be honest. In our calling to be saints, how many of us heard supernatural voices? How many of us have had thunder and lightning frighten us to salvation?

How many of us fell down on the way to Damascus? Very few Christians have had such dramatic calls to God. That however, does not mean that we are not called to be Christians.4

2. ALL BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS HAVE A SUPERNATURAL CALLING ON THEIR LIVES TO BE SAINTS.

It may not be spectacular but it is certainly supernatural. If you call yourself a Christian, then you have received a call to which you have responded. I am informing you that without knowing, you have actually heard a call and responded to a divine call. What was that call? That call was simply a conviction that came upon you about the reality of Jesus Christ. That same conviction led you to give your life to Christ, and made you a born-again Christian.[5] Sometimes people looking out for the sensational miss the real supernatural move of God.

3. IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE ARE CALLED TO BE CHRISTIANS, GOD WILL CALL MANY OF US TO HIS SERVICE AT ONE LEVEL OR THE OTHER.

You may not be called to a breath-taking level of ministry like Elijah, but it is still a calling! Look at the ministry of Samuel the prophet. Samuel was in the temple when he received the call of God.

And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli

(1 Samuel 3:1).

But notice that Samuel did not know what the call of God was. In fact, he thought it was something very natural, a man's voice. Many people are called, but think that because it feels natural, like a thought, an idea or even a conviction, they are not called. Since the call of God is not so different from natural things around us, many just assume they have not been called. The prophet Samuel went to his father-in-ministry, Eli, thinking that he was calling him. He could not distinguish between a natural human voice and the supernatural voice

of God. What does this mean to us? It means that many times the supernatural is not as dramatic as we expect. If it was that dramatic, Samuel would have immediately known that he was not hearing a human voice.

THE LORD CALLED Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; FOR THOU [Eli] CALLEDST ME

(1 Samuel 3:4,5).

It was Eli (his pastor or father-in-ministry) who helped him to recognize the call of God on his life.[6]

I have watched many of my church members grow up in the Lord. I have watched God calling them and have seen how many of them did not recognize the call of God on their lives. In fact, some of my best pastors were once allergic to the subject of being called to the ministry. One particular pastor did not want to accept the possibility that the call of God was there. So he developed an allergy to the topic and did not want to discuss it with me at all! Today, he is a successful pastor in full-time ministry, obeying the call of God on his life. You see, you can be called without even knowing it, just like Samuel. He was called but did not even know it!

4. THE CALL TO A SMALL MINISTRY IS STILL A CALL.[7] IT IS STILL SUPERNATURAL.[8]

It may not be outwardly impressive, but it is still a call. I have not had the experience of thunder, lightning and heavenly voices calling me to the ministry. But I am just as called as any other minister.

But the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire A STILL SMALL VOICE.

(1 Kings 19:11,12).

God often speaks by this still small voice. It was the still small voice of conviction that brought me into the ministry. I have just had a quiet conviction. It is that conviction that I have followed up until this time.

5. PASTORS OUGHT TO ENCOURAGE THEIR MEMBERS TO BE OPEN TO THE CALL.

This will release many more Christians into useful ministry.[9] It is this secret of releasing the masses of lay people into the ministry that brings about church growth[10]. One man can do very little, but many people can do a great deal. One pastor can probably remember the names of only one hundred and fifty people in his church.

How can one man, who does not even know the names and problems of most of the people in his church effectively pastor thousands of people? That is why we need the help of lay shepherds and lay pastors.[11] In the church I pastor, I encourage everyone to be open to the call to the ministry. In fact, if you ask my congregation whether they are called or not, most of them will respond, "I believe I am called!" The Bible said that many are called and not a few. Samuel stayed in the temple and was able to hear the call of God.

6. SERIOUS CHRISTIANS, WHO SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN CHURCH DOING THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, ARE LIKELY TO HEAR THE CALL OF GOD.[12]

I also think that Christians who spend time at discos, parties and the like do not hear the voice of God. Even if they are called, they will not be able to hear it because of the other distractions in their lives.[13]

We all quote this famous verse of Scripture on prayer.

“Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”

(John 15:16b).

We believe that whatever we ask the Father, He will give it to us. In fact, we have great confidence that this scripture applies to all Christians and not just to the apostles. However, what does the first part of that verse say? It says,

“I HAVE CHOSEN YOU, AND ORDAINED YOU, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain”

(John 15:16).

Is this ordination and choosing not the same thing as a calling? It certainly is! If you believe that God, the Father will hear all of our prayers then we must believe that God has chosen and ordained all of us to go and bear fruit. This leaves no one out, including you. This means that Christian doctors, lawyers and businessmen are also ordained ministers who are expected to bear much fruit. What is

the fruit that he is talking about? The fruit of souls brought to the Lord. The fruit of people being established in the Lord. Who does that? A shepherd.

If you expect God to answer all of your prayers, you must first bear much fruit. Many people are fainting and are being scattered because there are not enough shepherds. There are a lot of big-time men of God but there are not enough shepherds. Let me now show you ten reasons why I think every Christian can do the work of a shepherd.

TEN REASONS WHY EVERY CHRISTIAN CAN DO THE WORK OF MINISTRY

There is a time in every Christian's life when he must be able to teach. This is a natural stage of development. It does not require any special or spectacular experience with God to be able to teach. Teaching is the principal duty of a good shepherd. Teaching is the same as feeding the sheep. I have found out that when Christians do not develop normally into shepherds they often turn into something bad. A time comes when some of the church members know exactly what the pastor is going to preach. They know how he will begin the message and how it will end. They heard the same message two years ago. They end up becoming critical. There are many reasons why every Christian can do the work of ministry. I would like to outline here ten of these reasons.

1. ALL YOU NEED IS A DESIRE.

The Bible says if anyone has the desire to become a bishop, he has desired a good thing. Let us not deviate from the Word of God.

"This is a true saying, if a man desire the OFFICE OF A BISHOP, he desireth a good work"

(Timothy 3:1)

The Word is telling us here that in order to become a bishop all we need is a desire. Let it be clear that a bishop is simply a shepherd or pastor. The Greek word translated bishop is episkopos, which means an overseer of God's people.

Apostle Paul's vision was to enjoin more people to do God's work. He therefore asked Timothy to look out for people with a desire to be involved in ministry. After locating people who had a desire to do the work, Paul instructed Timothy to ensure that they were of honorable reputation. All the qualities that Paul asked Timothy to look for were matters of character and not talent, ability or anointing. Paul was making it very easy for anyone to become a shepherd. All you needed to do was to have a desire and an unquestionable character. Pastors, look out for people who have a desire for God's work and who have an honest and faithful character. If that is what the Bible teaches us to look out for, then we cannot be more spiritual than God. Some of my most fruitful pastors do not look outwardly anointed or talented. But, because God was looking for their faithfulness and integrity they have grown to be very successful in ministry.[14]

2. BECOMING A SHEPHERD IS A NATURAL STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

"FOR WHEN FOR THE TIME YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat"

(Hebrews 5:12).

When Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians, he made it clear that he was disappointed in the fact that when they should have been teachers themselves, they still needed instruction. He talks about a time when you need to be a teacher yourself.

A Christian who has received a lot of teaching but has not gone on to become a shepherd, becomes spiritually unhealthy. In the medical field, when a person has more food than he uses the food is converted into fat and the person becomes obese. Obesity is a dangerous disease that can kill you. It is simply caused by being overfed and under-exercised.

That is the problem of many Christians; they have nothing to do with the knowledge that is being imparted to them Sunday after Sunday. They never use the knowledge they have. They never feed anyone. They never minister to anyone. They then become a danger to themselves!

A dangerous sign that you should look out for in your own life is when you become full of criticism. People who criticize a lot are often not involved in the work of God. I remember one critical friend. He had many comments to make about different men of God. However, he himself did not do much in the ministry and was more like a commentator. Beware of commentating Christians! They fill your mind with poison!

Let's all grow up naturally, and begin to teach when we need to teach and shepherd when we need to shepherd. Pastors, encourage your members to become shepherds and feeders of sheep under you. Allow them to become solvers of problems and helpers of the weak. Everyone can do it! I remember a doctor colleague whose wife went into the labor ward to deliver a baby. Unfortunately, the woman was permitted to labor too long and the baby became distressed (short of oxygen). Eventually the doctors took a decision to operate on the lady and she gave birth to a child who had brain damage. I never saw this child! About five or six years later, I met someone who had visited this lady and I asked about the child: "How is the child doing?"

She said, "Oh pastor. It's a pathetic story. This child is six years old and cannot talk or move. He sits in a chair and defecates and urinates all over himself. He is growing into a boy but has no control whatsoever of any of these functions!" She said to me, "It's a sorry sight. Because when a baby messes up, it's quite different from when a grown boy does the same thing!" She went on, "What an embarrassment it is to the parents. And how difficult it is for them to cope with the situation."

As I reflected on this story, the Spirit of the Lord showed me how similar the condition of this child was to many Christians. When they should be performing certain functions naturally, they still need to be carried about, fed and cleaned by someone else. Spiritually, that is also a pathetic situation! A situation of no growth and no development.

Recently I had a call from a young man. I got to know this young man about seven years ago, when he was just nineteen years old. At that time he was a student, but hadn't taken his education seriously. I said to him, "You have to take your education seriously!" I even tried to help him to continue his schooling. I even promised, "I will pay for every single one of your books, if only you will go to school."

After I made that promise, I did not see this young man for a long while. He just wasn't interested in his studies. The next time I saw him was at a family funeral. When I saw him, I wondered what he was up to. I didn't speak to him but then out of the blue, seven years later this young man gave me a phone call. "Hullo!"

"Yes," I answered. He mentioned his name. "Oh, I see. It's been a long time. What can I do for you?" It was his birthday. He told me his story and said, "Things are difficult for me now. I am twenty-six years old and I have no man to help me now." I said, " I see. What can I do for you?" "Since I have no one to help me now I wanted to ask you if you could start helping me. And if I could be coming to you for pocket money." "Pocket money!" I exclaimed. This was a twenty-six year old man who doesn't work but wants to collect pocket money from me on a regular basis. What he had failed to realize was that there is a time you can receive pocket money and there is a time you must work. In every sphere of life, you are expected to develop and grow into the next stage. If you fail to do so you will become an anomaly in society.

I said to this young man, "Come and see me in my office." When he came I told him, "The days of collecting pocket money like a child are over. You must work now! Nobody is going to give you pocket money at this stage of your life. We can help you go to school or help you get a job, but you cannot expect regular handouts from me." You must develop into a teacher or shepherd that feeds God's people. You are expected to develop and become a feeder according to Hebrews 5:12. If you fail to do this you will become an awkward, critical, malformed, and retarded Christian.[15]

3. THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR SHEPHERDS.

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd”

(Matthew 9:36).

In this Scripture, Jesus makes it clear that people are fainting and being harassed because there is no shepherd.[16] When I was growing up as a Christian, I learnt a lot by talking to senior Christians (who were like shepherds to me). Every difficult question I had, I directed it to them. They were easily

accessible people I could talk to. When I had difficult questions like, "Who created God?" "Why did Jesus have to die?" and "Who was Cain's wife?" I always had somebody to ask.

Today, in some of the big churches, pastors are almost unavailable because the reality is that one man cannot attend to the personal needs of so many thousands of people. Yes, he can preach to thousands, but he cannot personally talk to thousands. He cannot answer questions and spend time with the needy thousands. He is likely to have a break down if he tries to.

I believe in preaching to thousands from the pulpit, but I believe in having shepherds on the ground who minister one-on-one to the multitudes. Although I preach to thousands, I still enjoy attending to the personal needs of as many of the flock as I can. When you decide to become a shepherd, the lives of certain people will be changed forever. If you do not become a shepherd, perhaps many lives will never become stable in Christ. When you, an ordinary Christian, decide to become a shepherd (someone with the Word of God and solutions), people will begin to gather around you. It is then that you will minister to them Living Water.[17]

4. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.

“And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered”

(Ezekiel 34:5).

I remember when I was in Achimota School in Accra there was no Scripture Union (SU) fellowship on the western compound. You see, Achimota School, being one of the greatest schools in Ghana, has two compounds, the east and the west.

There was a vibrant SU fellowship on the eastern compound but none on the west. I took it upon myself to begin a fellowship on the western compound. After a while, there was a gathering of the western compound SU members into the western assembly hall. This western SU fellowship became so dynamic that some easterners even began to walk to the west to attend these meetings. What am I saying? The SU members (God's sheep) were scattered on the west when there was no shepherd. But with the rising up of a shepherd God's people began to gather and were blessed. The devil wants us to be scattered because he knows that he can get the sheep when they are alone.

When the sheep are together in a group they are safer and the devil knows it! That is why Satan does not want you to be a shepherd. Satan wants the sheep to be scattered. The devil wants to prevent you from becoming a shepherd because it is the shepherd who will gather the sheep. That is why the devil has blinded the eyes of many pastors preventing them from seeing the potential shepherds and lay pastors amongst the congregation who could help greatly in the work.

5. IN ORDER TO FULFIL THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus' last words to His disciples on top of a lonely hill were, "Go ye… and make disciples...teaching them" Traditionally, we think of the Great Commission as an evangelistic command. Yet when you study the instructions of our Lord very carefully, you will realize that the Great Commission is also a shepherdorial commission. It is a pastoral commission. It is a mandate for shepherds to move out and to begin to teach the Word of God. Christian friend, it is up to you and I to go out there and fulfill the Great Commission.

The evangelist has an anointing to preach and to lead people to Christ. That was the first instruction Jesus gave to Peter; come and I will make you fishers of men. His last words added something to the first words the teaching element. I once read about a famous evangelist who was holding mammoth crusades in every city of the world. One day this evangelist returned to one of the cities where he had held a crusade and did a survey of all the people who had taken decisions for Christ during his last crusade. The result of his survey was frightening. It showed that only 5% of the converts of his last massive crusade were still Christians. I don't think the evangelist was very happy about these results. The poor results led him to establish a strong follow-up ministry.[18] You see, the evangelists' preaching alone does not fulfill the Great Commission. There is a need for shepherds to rise up to finish his work.

A cell leader is a shepherd. A pastor is a shepherd. A bishop is a shepherd. It is the same ministry operating at different levels. You must decide to develop into a shepherd so that you can help to fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus said; go and teach them because they (the sheep) need shepherds. After you have received for so many years, it is time for you to give. Teaching builds people. Teaching builds churches. Teaching fulfils the Great Commission.19

6. SO THAT YOU CAN OBTAIN A GOOD DEGREE

I went to the university in 1982 and finished in 1989 with a degree in medicine and surgery. That degree is intended to help me for the rest of my life on this earth. Many Christians do not know about the existence of a heavenly degree. I can assure you that just as a university degree will guarantee you forty or so years of comfortable living on this earth, a good heavenly degree will guarantee an eternity of comfort and blessings.

Make no mistake my friend. God is not blind! God is not a fool! God is not mocked! Whatever you sow on earth you will reap. Paul said that if anyone used the office of a deacon (which is a church helper or a shepherd), he would have a good degree in heaven.

For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves A GOOD DEGREE, and great boldness in the faith.

(1 Timothy 3:13).

God wants all of us to have this degree. Some of you might not have earthly degrees but you can obtain a heavenly one when you function as a shepherd. If you have been a good shepherd you can be bold when you think about going to heaven. Your degree will help you up there!

7. SO THAT YOU CAN COMBINE MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

(1 Timothy 6:6).

You may never enter into fulltime ministry. You may pursue a career and acquire all the houses and cars you want. There is nothing wrong with that. Understand that God is not against your material prosperity. All that the Bible is saying here is that, if you are able to add onto your material blessings, godliness or spiritual blessings then you are truly blessed. While in the medical school, I trained to become a doctor. But I didn't just become a medical doctor. I started a church when I was in my fourth year and by the time I qualified with my medical degree, I was also an experienced minister of the gospel. I had a material and a spiritual degree. I had them both! I did not have one without the other. I wasn't a spiritually bankrupt doctor.

I was a doctor who was a shepherd as well. Many have one but not the other. Strive to have both and not just one. It is a greater blessing (great gain) to have both. This is what the Bible means by godliness and contentment. In my case, the "godliness" was in becoming a pastor and the "contentment" was in becoming a doctor. You can have that too! You can be a businessman and at the same time a minister of God's sheep! You can get all of the money you desire and at the same time fulfill your God given ministry of being a shepherd. Most of the pastors in my denomination are lay pastors. They work very hard in the secular world, and there is nothing wrong with that. Some of them are millionaires and yet they pastor God's sheep as well. Isn't that a blessing? What more could you ask for?

8. PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY FOR THE TRUTH.

People have a hunger in their spirits that can only be satisfied by the Word of God. “Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” (Ezekiel 34:2).

I remember when I was a young Christian; I would always have biblical discussions with Christian leaders. That helped me a lot in my spiritual development. Let's ask ourselves; when the pastor preaches on one topic how does he meet the needs of a thousand different people at the same time? That is why we need shepherds of all degrees who will feed the sheep at every level. Some sheep

need attention that a particular pastor may not be able to give. There is a need for all kinds of shepherds. God needs lady shepherds to do His work as well.

Sometimes when a male shepherd tries to help a female sheep in the "mud", he may get his feet dirty. Perhaps a female shepherd may be more suitable than a male one.

I remember a lady who came to see us in the church office. She had a problem with fornication and adultery. I asked, "What have you been doing about this problem?" She said, "So-and-so evangelist came to our church to preach and minister deliverance. Afterwards he called and asked me to come for further deliverance at his home church." "Did you go?" I asked. She said, "Yes." "What did he tell you at his home church?" I inquired. "He said that he had discerned by the Spirit that I needed extra counseling and deliverance. So, he decided to fast with me for seven days," she replied. "Did you get delivered after the seven days?" I queried. "I hope so!" She said. "At the end of the seven day fast, when we were praying together in his house, we fornicated."

She continued, "It happened several times." Please notice that the pastor was so kind as to actually fast for seven days with this sheep who needed counseling and deliverance. Not all pastors would lay aside their stomachs to help a sheep in need. Unfortunately, his help ended up in disaster. Perhaps a lady pastor or shepherd would have been a better person to fast and counsel with this sheep. Make no mistake about this, it is not only a physical hunger that people have, they also have a spiritual hunger. Even in Europe and America, this same spiritual hunger leads them to go after the occult and witchcraft.

9. SPIRITUAL HUNGER IS REAL.

Once while in Geneva I decided to attend a church service in a very large and old building. I wanted to see how the churches in the land were faring. In the church were eight old men and women. You could see that they didn't have much more than a few years to live. There was no young person in the church. The church building was virtually empty! Most Swiss people have virtually stopped going to church. Many of them no longer believe in God. Yet, they still have a spiritual hunger - a great spiritual need. When I saw a large occult/witchcraft shop, a few blocks down the road, I was not surprised. I have heard that Switzerland has a very high number of such cults and witchcraft activities. The reason for the multiplication of false cults and witchcraft is obvious. The spiritual vacuum has to be filled by something! Since there are no shepherds, the devil is having a field day in such places. The Bible says in Matthew 9:36, "He was moved with compassion… because they fainted… as sheep having no shepherd."

10. PEOPLE NEED TO BE VISITED AND STRENGTHENED.

One thing that cannot be replaced by any other is a visit from your pastor. It is a blessing for a shepherd/pastor o come to your house. Remember, Jesus visited the earth for only three years and the earth has never been the same. A visit is a very POWERFUL ministration. People need to be visited. A visit is different from a phone call. A visit is different from a powerful ministration of the Word in church. The sheep need to know that they have not been forgotten. They need to know that someone knows where they are. God needs more shepherds to go forth and strengthen the sheep. The Bible says that love never fails. When the sheep are visited, they feel that the pastor genuinely loves them. You may be a mature and successful Christian who has a lot within you that can strengthen other people. Make the time to be a shepherd who visits somebody.

"Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them"

(Jeremiah 23:2).

Instead of watching useless films on television and sleeping for twelve hours, get out of your house and minister to someone. Be the shepherd you are called to be!

Identifying the Call

a. As you do the work of the ministry, you will begin to realize the talents and anointing within you.

Do you know whether you are called? That is a good question. I cannot tell whether you are called by looking at your nice face. No one can tell whether you are called by listening to you speak. I believe in the lay pastor and the lay shepherd. Remember, God has given every one of us talents, however some people feel that what they have is so small that it is not important. God will judge you for doing nothing. God will not judge you only because you are immoral or wicked but also because you are doing nothing to help the Kingdom! Many times Jesus illustrated that doing nothing in certain circumstances is tantamount to being wicked.

b. If you are not in a church that allows people to rise up and become lay pastors and shepherds, perhaps you should move out to where you can be more fruitful.

HOW TO BECOME A LAY PASTOR 5

CONDITIONS FOR BECOMING A LAYPASTOR

Who is a lay pastor? A lay pastor is a pastor who maintains a secular job on the side. You could actually call him/her a part-time pastor. There are many people who are called to ministry. But perhaps they are not called to give up everything for the ministry. Some people would like to give up some things but not everything. God has a place for all these people. God wants to use us as far as we would allow. It was only Abraham who was asked to sacrifice his son. God did not ask Jacob, Joseph or Moses to sacrifice their sons.

God does not require the ultimate sacrifice from everyone. Lay pastors are people from whom the ultimate sacrifice has not been exacted. There are five important conditions for anyone in the church to become a Lay Pastor.

1. YOU MUST HAVE A DESIRE.

The first condition is simple you must have a desire. Timothy was pastoring a large church and probably had the task of bringing up future pastors and leaders. He must have sent an urgent message to Apostle Paul for guidance in this matter. It was very significant that Paul wrote back and laid out very clearly the conditions for anyone to become a pastor in Timothy's church.

“This is a true saying, If a man DESIRE the office of a bishop, he DESIRETH a good work”

(1 Timothy 3:1).

The first thing he said was that if anyone has a desire for God's work, he desires a good thing. In other words, it is a good thing for members in the church to desire and aspire to become pastors. Let's be honest. Why shouldn't members of the church aspire to the highest possible office in the church structure? In the local church, the highest possible office is that of the pastor. I remember years ago, as I walked up and down the corridors of different hospitals, I never once remember having the desire to be a hospital cleaner, laboratory man, or even a technician. I only had a desire for the highest possible position in the hospital that is the position of a doctor. When someone walks into a bank, he would naturally aspire to become a bank manager.

Why is it that people in the church are not taught to aspire for the highest position in the church? It is biblical to desire the highest office in the church. Do not desire just to be an usher. Do not desire just to sing in the choir. Desire to be a pastor! I used to play the drums and the organ in church. But I wanted to go as high as I could. The highest position in the church is not the organist. I am not talking about replacing the senior pastor. I am not talking about displacing the people above you. I am talking about rising into responsible and fruitful positions within the church.

Dear ministers of God, if you teach your people that they can also be pastors, they will believe it and rise up to the occasion. Here again, I am not talking about anybody leaving their job, I'm talking about becoming LAY pastors. The church does not have an infinite amount of money, and therefore cannot employ an infinite number of people. (Actually, that is why many churches are broke, because they employ far too many people).

Recently, when the tax office investigated our church, they were surprised to find such a small number of people employed by the church. They asked for the list of pastors in the church. We gave them a long list. However, they did not believe that most of our pastors were gainfully employed elsewhere.

Our chief accountant told them, "This one works in the bank. And this one is an army officer. This one is a nurse…" But they still didn't believe us. They promised to investigate all of these pastors' work places to verify

whether we were telling the truth. Some pastors unfortunately criticize and spread bad stories about sister churches. This keeps them in darkness. Instead of learning the secrets that have made others great, they want to bring their brothers down.

I do not criticize other churches. I think all churches have a role to play. I learn from all successful churches around me, including those in my own city. I read all of the books written by pastors from my own city and I learn from them instead of fighting them. If somebody has a secret that I do not have, why shouldn't I learn from him? Pastors, look for men and women who have a genuine desire to do God's work. You see, people having a desire or interest in the ministry is supernatural. It may not be a sensational experience but in a sense it is a burden put there by God. I believe that the desire for ministry is a symptom of a divine call within.

2. YOU MUST HAVE A DIVINE CALL.

You must have a divine call. The ministry is not a human institution. The Bible makes it clear that you need to have a divine call to serve in a certain capacity. “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is CALLED OF GOD, as was Aaron” (Hebrews 5:4).

Whenever I interview people who want to be in the ministry, I ask them if they believe they have a call of God on their lives. Without the conviction of a call you cannot be a pastor. Many people do not even know what it means to have a divine call. They don't know whether they are called or not! I believe that one of the principal manifestations of a divine call is a supernatural desire and interest in the work of the ministry.

Paul had a supernatural interest for the salvation of all men, including the Jews.

“Brethren, MY HEART'S DESIRE and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

Paul had this desire in him and it was this desire that was translated into practical ministry time and time again. Christian friend, don't take the call of God lightly. You could pay with your life for disobeying the divine call.

I have always had the desire to help God's people and to prevent God's sheep from falling away from the fold. One of my favorite songs begins like this, "Father, help your children." That desire in me is a manifestation of a divine call to the pastoral office.2 I've been a shepherd or pastor since I was sixteen years old in secondary school. I didn't call myself "pastor" then, but it was easy to see that I was called to be a pastor. I would draw up lists of the Scripture Union members who were in the fellowship and pray for them. I would mention each and every name and pray for them daily. I had long lists of names of over a hundred people. Mind you, no one was paying me to do this!

When it was time to go on holidays, I would draw maps to everyone's house and would visit them during the vacation. Was that not a sixteen-year old pastor visiting his sheep? It certainly was! You see, the supernatural desire to do God's work is often a manifestation of a divine call. I believe that is why Paul asked Timothy to look for the desire and didn't even mention the call. The desire is a manifestation of a divine call.

Dear pastors, look out for people with the desire for the work. Most people don't know what a call is. They certainly do understand when they have a desire. I want to emphasize here that it is important to respond to the call of God on your life. If you were standing downstairs and your boss called for you from upstairs, wouldn't you run to him? What do you think would happen if you ignored his calls when he knew that you could hear him? You might lose your job. It is a different thing if you do not know that you have been called. If you do know that God is calling you and refuse, you might be endangering your very life.

3. A WILLING COMMITMENT

“Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! FOR IF I DO THIS THING WILLINGLY, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (1 Corinthians 9:16,17).

There must be a willing commitment to obey the call of God on your life. Some people know that they are called! They even have a desire to do the work, yet you do not see any commitment in them. “Then said I, Here am I; SEND ME” (Isaiah 6:8) Notice that Isaiah didn't say, "Here am I, SEND HIM!" He said, "Here am I, send me!" That is the true sign of commitment for any Christian.3

For instance, I have always had the desire to be a pilot and to fly a plane. Because of that, when I travel I have often gone into the cockpit of the plane. I have even stayed in the cockpit during takeoff and landing. But beyond this, I have made no effort to become a pilot. I am more of an admirer of pilots. I am not serious about becoming a pilot, otherwise, I would have taken some other steps by now. It is the same thing for some people who claim to be called into the ministry. They make no efforts to be available or involved in day-today church life. There is no extra commitment or willing sacrifice. I take no notice of such people when they tell me that Jesus has appeared to them, calling them to the ministry. They are no nearer the ministry, than I am to the moon! Samuel was available in the temple when he heard the call of God and responded. "Then Samuel answered, Speak; for THY SERVANT HEARETH" (1 Samuel 3:10).

4. YOU MUST HAVE A GODLY CHARACTER.

There is no substitute for godliness and a good character. Your faithfulness is the cornerstone of your character. When I started out in ministry, I was initially impressed by flamboyant and well-spoken people. I thought that was the call of God. As the years have passed, I have absolutely no confidence in an outward and impressive show. I have found people who are quiet, not impressive, but faithful in character. These people are to be preferred one hundred times more than outwardly impressive pastors.4

a. A Bible certificate, nice dressing and ability to sing should not earn someone a position in the church.

You simply have to be around long enough for us to know you and what you are made out of. Even with stringent character filters, we still have some sticks turning out to be snakes. Whenever there is a test of some sort, you will notice some of your firewood sticks turn into snakes. Remember the incident when Paul was gathering some sticks to light a fire. When he lit the fire, a snake jumped out from among the sticks.

b. As the senior pastor, beware of people whom you feel under pressure to promote.

Beware of people whom you feel under pressure to show appreciation. Beware of people whom you feel under pressure to increase their salaries. Such people will not be satisfied anyway with your show of appreciation. There is only one qualification for people who want to join the pastoral team they have to stay around long enough. They have to "company" around long enough for time and the elements to test them.

c. Pastors must not just accept impressive ministers from other churches to work with them.

It could be the mistake of your life. Am I speaking a biblical truth or am I speaking my mind? When the apostles had to choose a replacement for Judas, what did they say? Whom did they choose? “Wherefore of these men which have COMPANIED WITH US all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21,22). What did they do? They didn't choose the best worship leader or the most charismatic speaker. They chose a tested and tried person. I take no notice of sweet words showered on me by some job-seekers. All I say in my mind is, "I commend you to God and to time." If with the passage of time, your character remains proper, then and only then will I believe those sweet words.

d. The breakup of many churches and the painful conflicts in many ministries are because people are not abiding by biblical rules for pastoral selection.

Someone cannot be a pastor unless you know his character. You can never know someone's character unless you have known him for some years. There are many gifted people who have a lot of skeletons in their wardrobe. Samson operated in the gift of working of miracles. At the same time he had a major problem with fornication and adultery.

I remember a pastor who came along to work in our church for a while. I have never seen someone so talented and anointed in ministry. One day I found out that he was having the young ladies in the church to cut his fingernails and toenails in his apartment. So I asked him, "Do you think that it is helpful as a young and unmarried man to have ladies doting over you and cutting your nails?" To my surprise he answered, "Yes I do! It saves me time." I went on and warned him to be careful. Not long after that, one of the young ladies in church approached me, and told me how this pastor had tried to have sex with her on several different occasions. I had known this preacher just by watching him minister, but had not known him for a long length of time. If I had known of all his problems, I would have never welcomed him into my church.

One night after holding a crusade I called this pastor to sit in my car with me because I wanted to talk with him. As we talked, I questioned him about his relationship with the ladies but he was defiant. Suddenly I smelt the unmistakable scent of alcohol. I said, "You have been drinking!" He smiled, "No pastor!" This gifted pastor had multiple problems: he was a fornicator, drunkard, smoker and a liar. Irrespective of all this, he was beautifully anointed to preach and lead worship. Dear Christian friend, the concept of duality is a reality.

Pastors, save yourselves from the pain of bringing in untested leaders. Do not spoil the work you have built by bringing in rebels from outside to fill key positions. The whole of 1 Timothy 3 is a catalogue of character qualifications for every serious minded minister. Read it for yourselves. You will never

read anything about a bishop or pastor having to be anointed or gifted. There is no instruction that a pastor must be talented or charming (in fact, be careful of "charming" pastors). The nearest thing to a gift in the catalog of character

qualifications is where it says a bishop must be apt to teach (1 Timothy 3:2). That only means he that must be able to share the Word of God effectively.

5. YOUR WIFE MUST BE QUALIFIED FOR MINISTRY.

The Bible continues to talk about the characters of the wives of the pastors. Not only is a pastor's character important, but also the character of his wife. Even the character of the pastor's wife has a bearing on his ministry.5 A Bible school certificate is not the only qualification for the ministry. Certainly not! That is why our Bible school involves a long enough period where we can get to know the disposition of students. It may not be such a fast and easy way of raising up pastors but it sure is a safer, stronger and more stable way of doing things. After all, that is God's way and none of us can be wiser than God. Watch out for these qualifications in shepherds. It is very well outlined in the Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, which I quote on the next page.

Thirty Pauline Qualifications for Shepherds

1. Blameless in conduct (Greek - anepileptos)

(1 Timothy 3:2; 5:7; 6:14.)

2. Husband of one wife, i.e., no polygamist. One could be a bishop without a wife, as Paul (1Corinthians 9:5).

3. Vigilant (Greek - nephalios), drinking no wine; sober. Translated vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2); and sober,(1Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:2).

4. Sober (Greek - sophron), of sound mind; discreet; prudent; moderate; self-controlled; temperate. Translated sober,(1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8); temperate (Titus 2:2); and discreet (Titus 2:5).

5. Of good behaviour (Greek - kosmios), (1Timothy 2:9.)

6. Given to hospitality (Greek - philozenon) lover of strangers. (Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 4:9; Romans 12:13).

7. Apt to teach (Greek - didaktikos) capable of teaching, (2 Timothy 2:24).6

8. Not given to wine (Greek - paroinos) a winebibber (Titus 1:7).

9. No striker (Greek - plektes) not quarrelsome; one not ready to strike back at those who displease him; no persecutor of those who differ with him. (Titus 1:7).

10. Not greedy for filthy lucre (Greek—aischrokerde) not desirous of base gain; not using wrong methods to raise money to increase his own income. (1Timothy 3:3,8;Titus 1:7).

11. Patient (Greek-epieikes) meek and gentle, (1Timothy 3:3, Philippians 4:5).

12. Not a brawler (Greek - amachos) not contentious, but quiet and peaceable. (Titus 3:2).

13. Not covetous (Greek - aphilarguros) not a lover of money; not desiring the office for the sake of personal gain. (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 12:15).

14. Ruler of his own house, not by hardness and tyranny but with honesty. (1 Timothy 3:4).

15. Not a novice (Greek - neophuton) new convert to the faith. (1 Timothy 3:6).

16. Of a good report from outsiders. (1 Timothy 3:7).

17. Grave (1 Timothy 3:8) (Greek - semnos). Translated grave (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 2:2) and honest (Philippians 4:8).

18. Not double-tongued (1 Timothy 3:8) (Greek—dilogos) liars; saying different things to different persons on the same subject. Only used once in the Bible.

19. Not given to much wine (1 Timothy 3:8) even unfermented (in the cluster; Is 65:8).

20. Not greedy of filthy lucre (1 Timothy 3:8).

21. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9). They must maintain a good conscience and be able to demonstrate the mysterious power of faith (Mark 9:23; 11:22-24; 16:17,18).

22. Let them be proved (1 Timothy 3:1). The same as not a new convert in 1 Timothy 3:6. Let them be tested and proved worthy of the office, and able to keep themselves from being lifted up in pride and falling in the same manner Satan did.

23. Blameless (Greek - anegkletos) (1 Timothy 3:10). Translated, Blameless (1 Timothy 3:10; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Titus 1:6-7) and unreprovable (Colossians 1:22). They must be free from evil and reproach.

24.Their wives must meet certain qualifications, (1Timothy 3:11).

25. Each, the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:12) No polygamist.

26. Each, the ruler of his own house (1 Timothy 3:12), as required of bishops (1 Timothy 3:4,5).

27.Grave (1 Timothy 3:11).

28. Not slanderers (1 Timothy 3:11) (Greek - diabolos), devils.

29. Sober (1 Timothy 3:11). (Greek - nephalios) not drinkers of wine.

30. Faithful in all things (1 Timothy 3:11). These qualifications apply to wives of bishops, deacons, deaconesses, and Christian women in general.7

FIFTEEN FEATURES OF POTENTIAL LAY PASTORS

You must constantly assess your shepherds or lay pastors in certain areas. These areas are indicative of definite important character traits.

1. A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

A disciplined person who has consistent prayer and personal Bible study shows a deep relationship with God. Without a personal relationship with God, you are going nowhere. Your reading and study of ministry related books compliments Bible study and is a good sign.[8]

2. THE INTEREST IN LISTENING TO PREACHING TAPES AND WATCHING WORD VIDEOS

This is indicative of a person's personal interests and desires. The Bible says a pastor should not be greedy for money. Are they greedy for money or greedy for the Word?

3. THE PERSONAL FASTING LIFE OF THE SHEPHERD

This also shows commitment and preparedness to sacrifice. Someone who never fasts must be marked. If you cannot lay down your stomach, what else can you lay down?

4. AVAILABILITY FOR THE WORK

This is the most important feature to look out for in a potential lay pastor. The major sacrifice of a lay pastor is to make himself available in spite of his business and work schedule. Some people do not make the sacrifice to spend their evenings or Sundays doing extra work for the Lord. My lay pastors work the whole day Sunday and many evenings throughout the week. This is a big sacrifice. Someone who is not prepared to be available cannot do this job!

5. THE INDIVIDUAL'S FINANCIAL INPUT TO THE CHURCH

Someone who is not committed financially is not committed at all. The Bible teaches us that if a person is not faithful with unrighteous mammon then he cannot be faithful with God's riches. Pastors who do not pay tithes and offerings should be dismissed they are traitors. Acquire and maintain a system of monitoring the tithes and offerings of all leaders in the church.[9] You have a right to demand that those who claim to be shepherds be committed financially!

6. PEOPLE-HANDLING SKILLS

When the Bible says "apt to teach", it includes the ability to lead and influence by your personal lifestyle. Teaching includes being able to handle people of all sorts. A person who is quarrelsome is disqualified from being a pastor. "No striker" in 1 Timothy 3:3 means you are not to be quarrelsome or cantankerous.

7. PREACHING AND TEACHING SKILLS

People who want to be shepherds or lay pastors must develop the ability to teach and to preach. The principal duty of a shepherd is to feed the flocks. Someone who wants to be a pastor must demonstrate experience in preaching and teaching. The best way to learn how to preach is listen to preaching tapes and preach the same thing. Timothy was told to preach the same thing that he had heard Paul preaching. “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, THE SAME commit thou to faithful men” (2 Timothy 2:2).

8. AN INTEREST IN EVANGELISM

Assess the interest of the potential lay pastor in winning souls. Soul winning is the ultimate job for the whole church. Jesus was a good pastor. He said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14). But he also said, "I came to seek and save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10). Therefore, a good shepherd seeks to save sinners, which are lost. If you are not interested in souls I question whether you have a genuine call to be a shepherd.10

9. VISITING, COUNSELLING AND ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITIES

These are the three most used skills by shepherds. These fall under the qualification—apt to teach. A person who does not love people enough to visit them is not a pastor at heart. Shepherds must be able to organize people together in order to be able to teach them the Word. Counseling is the art of giving the counsel of the Word of God to people.

10. HAVING A STABLE AND HAPPY MARRIAGE

A person with a stormy and unhappy marriage is not likely to be a good lay pastor. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:5, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" I have learnt from experience that many of the problems pastors have to solve are related to marriage. If the pastor himself is unable to gain control of his own marriage, what will he say to others? He will be forced to be a hypocrite and a liar, giving advice about things he himself does not practice. Ezra 7:10 gives a very important principle, it says, "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach…" It is very important to do things before you teach them!

11. CATCHING THE SPIRIT OF THE LEADER

Choose someone who has caught the spirit of the leader. Lay shepherds and pastors must operate in the same spirit or anointing of the senior pastor or founder of the church. This is the principle which God first set into motion in the days of Moses and his seventy elders. In Numbers 11 God took the same anointing that was on Moses and put it on seventy elders. From that time they all operated in the

same spirit. This is important if you want to have a very large network of churches. It helps prevent disunity and disintegration of the Body into different factions with various opinions.

12. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX

Watch the relationship that potential lay pastors have with the opposite sex. I encourage people to marry and to marry early - this brings stability. It also helps to prevent unwholesome relationships with the opposite sex.

13. LOYALTY

They are the perfect shepherds. A deacon must not be double-tongued according to 1 Timothy 3:8. The word double-tongued comes from the Greek word dilogos. It means liars, people who say different things to different people about the same subject. This person has two tongues. One is full of praise and good reports to the senior pastor. The other is full of traitorous, sarcastic, and disloyal comments when the pastor is not around. Another interesting revelation is when the Bible says wives of deacons should not be slanderous. The Greek word for slanderer is diabolos, which means devils. If you have pastor's wives or pastors who are slanderous, it means your church is full of devils. If your church is full of devils how will it grow? How will it improve when you literally have human devils occupying positions of influence and leadership? Pastoral positions must be occupied by people who are 100 percent loyal to the cause.

14. HAVING PERSONAL FINANCIAL AND JOB STABILITY

People who are unstable in one area of their life are likely to be unstable in other areas. A person who keeps changing jobs may end up changing churches, wives and friends. The Bible says that a double-minded man is unstable in ALL (not some) his ways.

15. A PERSON WITH A VISION

Lay pastors often struggle with the problem of dual vision. They have a vision to fulfill their secular aspirations on the one hand and to fulfill their call to ministry on the other. Sometimes pressure from secular work stamps out the fire of ministry in lay pastors. Shepherds and lay pastors must desire to go forward in the ministry in real and measurable terms. People generally think that you make your vision. But I've come to learn that it is your vision that makes you what you are!

The Work of the Ministry 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK OF MINISTRY

I remember when I first started out in full-time ministry. People would often ask my wife at work, "Where is your husband? Is he at home?" One lady, a lawyer friend of hers once said, "Oh, so your husband doesn't work anymore!" My wife would answer, "You have no idea how hard he works." They thought that because I was no longer practicing medicine, I was no longer working. Many people think that all that the pastor does is to prepare one sermon a week and then deliver it on Sunday morning. Afterwards, he is free to sleep until the next Sunday. Many times people have called either late in the morning or in the afternoon and have said, "Hullo, how are you pastor? Sorry to disturb your sleep." I would think, "This man thinks I sleep all day and all night as well." Then I would politely answer, "I was not sleeping." I have never bothered to explain what I was doing. "It is a waste of time." I thought to myself. These and other remarks have made me realize that some people think that the ministry is one long restful occupation—an easier alternative to real and difficult jobs. From both the Bible and my experience, I have seen that there is no work like ministry work.

THE BIBLICAL REFERENCE TO MINISTRY AS "WORK"

"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"

(Ephesians 4:11-12).

This interpretation is a bit clearer in the New International Version:. "To prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12 NIV). The saints are to be perfected for the work.

1. THIS SCRIPTURE MEANS THAT PASTORS ARE TO PERFECT THE SAINTS SO THAT THEY CAN JOIN IN THE "HARD WORK" OF MINISTRY.[1]

2. EPAPHRAS IS SAID TO HAVE "LABOURED IN PRAYERS" IN THE MINISTRY.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers" (Colossians 4:12). This man was laboring, he wasn't resting. Throughout the Bible, ministry has been described as work.

3. JESUS SAID THAT THE "LABOURERS" ARE FEW

When Jesus saw the multitudes who were fainting because of lack of a shepherd, He said, "The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few."

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few"

(Matthew 9:37).

The Greek word translated "labourer" is the word "ergates", which means a toiler, teacher, laborer and a worker. The ministry is toil and sweat. I have found that out practically. Anybody who wants to be a lay pastor or shepherd must realize that he is not embarking on a game but real work. He will soon realize that being a pastor is not in title alone, but is real toil and labor. If ministry is work, what does it involve? What type of work is ministry work?

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTRY WORK

No lay person can claim to have joined the ranks of ministry workers until their activities have gotten certain characteristics. There are what I call the Characteristics of Ministry Work. An activity moves out of the realm of playing, joking and pleasure and into the realm of work when it has the following characteristics. If you are involved in ministry and your activity does not have these characteristics, you may be doing something related to the ministry but it has not yet become "work".

1. MINISTRY WORK HAS "WORKING HOURS".

Every true job has its own working hours. The work of the ministry has its own peculiar working hours. This often confuses people. They think pastors must be in the office from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. like everybody else. Those are the hours of most secular offices. But we are not bankers nor accountants, we are pastors. No more banking hours for pastors! Nobody asks pilots to work from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Everybody knows that their working hours are peculiar and everyone accepts that reality. I rarely ever go to the office at 8 o'clock in the morning. Most of my work is in the evenings, that is when the sheep have come from their workplaces and are available. That is when I can interact with, pray for and minister to them.

Anyone who wants to be a lay pastor must fix some working hours. These working hours should be your weekends (especially Sundays) and some evenings. Someone may say, "Then it means I won't have anytime to rest at weekends." Well, that is the reality of being a lay pastor or shepherd. It means a little extra sacrifice for the kingdom. You may not be prepared to do the greater sacrifice of leaving your job, so you have to give up some of your leisure and resting times.

At the Lighthouse Cathedral, we go to work at 6:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings and we sometimes leave at midnight. Sunday is our busiest and most important day. It should be the case for every church. Many people do not realize that the time when sheep will be available is the time when the shepherds must be at work. Pastors in our church counsel, visit, and teach Bible school classes throughout Sundays. After our fourth service that ends at one o'clock, activities continue until evening.

Someone may ask, "When do you rest?" The answer is Mondays.

2. MINISTRY WORK CONSUMES A LARGE AMOUNT OF TIME.

When an activity consumes just a few minutes of your time in a week, it cannot be called your "work". For instance, I drive my car for a few minutes every day but my work is not "driving" per se. It is something that I do on my way to work. However, if driving a car, for example a taxi, were to become my work, I would not spend less than eight hours a day driving. Then, to me, driving would have

become work! You cannot claim to be doing the "work" of the ministry until it actually consumes a reasonable amount of time in your week.

Give your weekends and evenings to God. The lay pastors in my church spend almost twenty hours of their leisure time doing the work of the ministry every week. Remember, the normal working schedule is forty hours a week. That means their pastoral work is equivalent to a twenty hour part-time job in addition to their full-time job. That is why I can comfortably say that lay pastors in my church are doing the "work" of the ministry alongside with the full-time pastors. Their involvement in church is no longer a relaxing social activity, it is actually "work".

3. MINISTRY WORK EXPENDS ENERGY AND MONEY.

Everyone must realize that doing the work of the ministry involves spending a lot of energy. Do not be surprised if you get tired doing the work of a lay pastor. It is only a sign that the activity has entered the realm of work. You have now begun to do the work of the ministry in Ephesians 4:11. Don't most jobs leave their employees tired after several hours? This is because it is work.[2]

Another thing that you will expend is money. Does it not cost you money to go to work everyday? Do you not spend money at work for lunch everyday? It is the same thing with the work of ministry. You will spend some of your money in order to do the work. Someone may say, "In the case of secular work, we expend money but we get some back at the end of the month." Dear friend, your rewards and treasures will come one day in Heaven! “But lay up for yourselves TREASURES IN HEAVEN” (Matthew 6:20).

I do not believe in giving money to lay pastors and shepherds to help them to pay for their transportation when visiting sheep. In our church, we do not give money to lay musicians, lay shepherds or lay pastors to help them come to church. When they were ordinary church members weren't they spending money to come to church? I do this because if we start paying them, it will soon become as though we are hiring people to do a part-time job. As far as I'm concerned you are either full-time or a lay person.

Very often when you pay people their attitude changes and it becomes more of, "Is this all I get for my hard work?" I have decided to let the Lord pay those who work for Him. Make no mistake about this. Praying, visiting, counseling and interacting with people is hard work. As you do this work you will expend your energy and money. When you begin to feel tired, just remember it is a sign that you are really working for God.

4. MINISTRY WORK IS REPETITIVE AND REGULAR

By nature, all real work is repetitive and regular. If the ministry is "work", then it will have features which make it repetitive and regular. Sometimes you may be bored but you just have to keep on doing the "work" - praying, visiting, counseling and interacting (PVCI). Many pastors don't pray much because they feel it's repetitive and boring. But when prayer becomes your work you will have to repeat your prayers and you will have to pray regularly. When visiting becomes your work, you will have to visit repeatedly and regularly. There is a difference between a social visit to a friend's house and a pastoral visit. Pastoral visits must be conducted repeatedly by both lay pastors and shepherds. Pastors must intentionally go to the homes of their members on a regular basis. No one ever told me what to do in ministry.

I have naturally wanted to pray, to visit and to counsel my people. Now that our church is much larger I feel deprived when I am not able to know all of my sheep personally. I struggle to know their names and to remember who they are. But it is almost an impossible task! I wish I knew all of their homes. I wish I could attend all of their important family events. It is a natural desire. Anyone who is a true pastor has what I call natural care and does not need to be supervised!

From today, decide that no one will ever have to supervise you to pray, read the Bible, study, visit or any such thing. Just do your work without supervision. Be a pastor who does not need supervision. Don't we all go to work when we don't feel like it? Don't we all go to the same work place repeatedly and regularly although we don't feel like it? In the same way, anyone who claims to be doing the work of the ministry must rise up and repeatedly do the important tasks of a shepherd. We don't pray just because we feel like it. We pray because we have to. We must rise up early and intercede for the people God has given us.

5. MINISTRY WORK IS SUPERVISED OR UNSUPERVISED WORK.

“Go to the ant… and BE WISE: Which HAVING NO GUIDE, OVERSEER, OR RULER, Provideth her meat”

(Proverbs 6:6-8).

All work falls into two categories: supervised work or unsupervised work. There are therefore two classes of working pastors and shepherds. Those who need supervision and people who do not need supervision.

In every field, the supervised person is paid less than the unsupervised person! Decide to be a shepherd or lay pastor who does not need to be told what to do, when to pray, and whom to counsel. Your rewards in heaven will be even greater. Nobody tells me that I have to pray. I know I have to pray, so I just pray. Become a shepherd who naturally (without supervision) cares about the work of

God. Be like Timothy. Paul said that there was no one like him. He had a natural "care" for the sheep. He didn't need to be told what to do. It just came naturally. I believe that is the heart of a true pastor.

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus… For I have no man likeminded, who will NATURALLY CARE for your state”

(Philippians 2:19,20).

No one ever told me what to do in ministry. I have naturally wanted to pray, do visit and to counsel my people. Now that our church is much larger, I feel deprived when I am not able to know all my sheep personally. I struggle to know their names and to remember who they are. But it is almost an impossible task! I wish I knew all their homes. I wish I could attend all their important family events. It is a natural desire. Anyone who is a true pastor has what I call natural care and does not need to be supervised.

From today, decide that no one will ever have to supervise you to pray, read the Bible, study, visit or any such thing. Just do your work without supervision. Be a pastor who does not need supervision

The Branches of Pastoral Ministry 7

THE MINISTRY OFFICE OF THE PASTOR

In this section, I want to show you a very important revelation concerning all of the ministry offices.

1. EVERY MINISTRY OFFICE HAS DIFFERENT MINISTRIES OPERATING UNDER IT.

Each office of the Body of Christ; apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, has several different ministries under it. A pastor will have several ministries operating under his office. A prophet will also have different ministries operating under his office. For example, a minister standing in the office of a prophet will primarily function in the ministry of preaching and teaching.

2. ANY MINISTRY WHICH DOES NOT PUT THE WORD OF GOD IN ITS PROPER PLACE IS DOOMED TO FAILURE.

Beware of so-called prophets who do not preach the Word of God but only give personal prophecies. I believe in personal prophecies. However, let it be very clear that anything that does not put the Word of God in its proper place is doomed to failure with the passage of time.

"In the beginning was the Word… Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly… Thy Word is a light unto my path… Thy entrance of thy Word giveth light…,"

Anything without the Word is in darkness and is not of God. All offices of the ministry have a primary function of teaching and preaching.

The Word comes first and is of paramount importance in every ministerial office. After this, a prophet may operate in the ministry of healing, and other revelation gifts like "word of knowledge "and "word of wisdom". The prophet may also flow in the ministry of predictive prophesying or exhortative prophesying. From scripture, you will see that Jesus was a great prophet,

"And they glorified God, saying, THAT A GREAT PROPHET is risen up among us"

(Luke 7:16).

His principal ministry was to go about preaching and teaching the Word of God. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, TEACHING in their synagogues, and PREACHING the gospel"

(Matthew 9:35).

He also had a healing ministry. "How God anointed Jesus…who went about doing good, and HEALING all that were oppressed of the devil"

(Acts 10:38)

He also operated in the gifts of revelation. Standing in the office of a prophet, he ministered to the woman of Samaria;

“For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband”

(John 4:18).

The woman of Samaria immediately realized she had met someone standing in the office of a prophet. Look at her response to Jesus' ministration,

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, I PERCEIVE THAT THOU ART A PROPHET”

(John 4:19).

Jesus also operated in the ministry of predictive prophesying. In Matthew 24 he predicted the destruction of Solomon's temple (70 AD) when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Speaking of the temple he said, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another” (Matthew 24:2).

Jesus gave extensive predictions concerning the end of the world. We would do well to take note of these prophecies because Jesus was a great prophet. I have used the office of a prophet to illustrate how different ministries flow from one office in the church. Just as there is one Holy Spirit with different operations, manifestations and administrations, there can be one office with different ministries emanating from it.

Let us now study the different ministries that flow from the office of the pastor (poimen). It is important that lay pastors and shepherds flow in all aspects of the ministry. God does not want an imbalance in ministry.

“A false balance is abomination to the Lord”

(Proverbs 11:1).

We may naturally flow in certain areas but be weaker in others. It is important to develop your weak areas so that you have a balanced ministry. Every profession has a symbol. The symbol of the medical profession is a staff with a snake around it. The symbol of a king is a scepter. The symbol of a shepherd is a staff. For example, a soldier's symbol is a rifle. It symbolizes his ability to kill and to destroy. By studying the symbol of the shepherd, we can see more clearly the different ministries of the pastor.

“The Lord is my shepherd… thy ROD and thy STAFF they comfort me.”

(Psalm 23:1,4).

THE SEVEN MINISTRIES OF POIMEN

1. THE RULING MINISTRY

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword…and he shall rule them with a ROD OF IRON"

(Revelation 19:15).

The first ministry of a pastor is the ruling ministry. The traditional perception of a pastor is of someone who is soft, kind-hearted, compassionate, poorly paid, available at all times, and a never-complaining doormat. This picture is not one of a ruler but rather a picture of one who is ruled. I believe that a pastor must be kind-hearted and patient, but one of his cardinal roles is to lead and to rule. A pastor is the head of the local church. A head must take decisions.

"The Lord is my shepherd… HE LEADETH ME beside the still waters"

(Psalm 23:1,2).

You cannot be a good leader if you are weak. Every church needs a strong voice that is confident and bold in the Lord. The sheep are looking for someone with direction, who knows where he is going. A pastor must lead the people spiritually and in other areas such as in the family and social dimensions.[1]

When the church does not have a strong capable leader, something is wrong. You may be surprised to discover what the prophet Isaiah described as a curse. "When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, BE THOU OUR RULER, and let this ruin be under thine hand: In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in mine house is neither bread nor clothing: MAKE ME NOT A RULER of the people"

(Isaiah 3:6,7).

Learn to speak to your sheep with authority. When I say authority I do not mean you should dominate their lives. Lead them with a high level of confidence and control. Sheep are meant to be led. You have authority over the sheep God has placed in your care. You will answer for their souls one day. A leader who refuses to take important decisions is doomed to failure. A good leader takes decisions when all necessary information has come to him! These decisions may be hard and painful.

If you, as the shepherd do not take them your church is doomed to wither. Just look around and see how many churches are dead and lifeless. They are a far cry from what their founders had envisaged. This is often because as wrong things began to creep in, the leaders were afraid to rock the boat and take important decisions. Things will get out of hand. Sometimes when I look at some hopelessly incompetent government corporations and agencies, I just marvel. They make huge losses, and

generate a lot of waste in the system. I have been to government offices where I see everyone reading newspapers.

Sometimes you see twenty secretaries in one office with one typewriter. They have nothing to do, yet they are paid with the taxpayers money every month. What a pity! They sleep, eat and chat all day. Their managers are afraid to take the decision that nineteen out of the twenty typists must be laid off.

The country becomes poorer and poorer and people wonder why. The reason is simple. The leaders have refused to assess the situation and take a strong but hard decision. They are refusing to rule.

The fear of losing political power makes democratic leaders become liars and hypocrites. I am not afraid of taking such decisions because I realize that the church will deteriorate if I do not. I teach lay pastors to remove stagnating leaders and replace them with willing and capable workers. I make the necessary changes in my staff and with my lay pastors when I realize a change must be made.

Sometimes, it is only a big change that will lead to a big breakthrough. A minor transformation will take place when you take minor decisions. But a major transformation will occur when you are bold enough to take a major decision. Be a strong ruler and lead your sheep to green pastures.[2]

Even lady pastors can learn to be strong firm leaders without being ill-natured and quarrelsome. Lady shepherds should be gentle and effective, without being cantankerous.

2. THE WAY-MAKING MINISTRY

"And the Lord said unto Moses…But LIFT THOU UP THY ROD, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea"

(Exodus 14:15,16).

As a leader, God will tell you to speak to his people, giving them many instructions. There is something I call the Way-Making Ministry. After you have given instructions to the sheep, help them to obey the Word. A true shepherd loves his sheep and tries to help them to obey God. Moses was the shepherd of the people of Israel. His instructions were to cross the red Sea. After receiving that command he stretched forth his rod and made a way where there was no way. That is what I call the way-making ministry of the pastor.

Every full-time minister or lay pastor must learn to make a way where there seems to be no way for the people of God. When some of your sheep think that their house is too far away from the church, go and visit them at whichever corner they live. This will prove to them that their homes are not too far.

I knew a family that lived about a two-hour train ride from one of our churches. When I called them, they said it was too far to attend church. So one Saturday, I took a car and together with another

pastor, we drove all the way to their house. They were so surprised to see us visiting them.

This is one thing that visits do. It establishes the fact that people are not too far for me to visit them. From that day, the entire family decided to come to church, taking the train and travelling two hours to church.

They did this for a number of years, and today one of them is a pastor of one of the branches of our church. Make a way for your sheep. Help them to see that it is possible to obey the Word of God. Sometimes when they don't have money, tell them to come to church and give them some money to help them attend. You may not be able to give them money all of the time, but the fact that you did it once or twice encourages them and shows that you really care. This is the pastor's heart.

As a pastor, you often see that your sheep are looking for husbands or wives. Don't just look on unconcerned and preach about how good it is to be married. Discuss the practical concerns of choosing a partner with them. Help them to notice one another. I call that Shepherdorial Linking.

Teach your members that they can find a good partner within the church. Some people may not like that idea, but it works and stabilizes the sheep.

Of course, do not force people to marry each other; you should not guarantee them happiness if they choose someone you have recommended. Marriage is very complicated and they may curse you for the rest of their lives for influencing them to marry someone. They will think to themselves, "I would never have married this person. It was pastor who made me marry her."

I preach to my members about prosperity and about how they should work. After I've done that, the way-making anointing comes upon me and I help them to get jobs. If one of my church members is strategically positioned as an employer, I would speak to them about a sheep who needs employment. Sometimes a person you have recommended will disgrace you. But do not let that deter you from making a way for other good sheep. It is not good enough to say "Cross the red Sea" you must make a way for them to cross!

I have often changed meeting times or rehearsal times just so that one person could attend. I am a pastor and I want all of my sheep to attend the meetings. Schedule reasonable meeting times. Make things convenient for people. That is the way-making ministry in action. Schedule fewer meeting times without compromising the number of meetings. Sunday is a good time to meet and counsel your sheep. For example, when a person already has a service he attends, you can always combine it with another meeting; don't let him travel to church twice when he could do it once.

Be an expert at overcoming the excuses of church members. When they say that church services are too long, point out to them how many hours they spend watching video. When they say that the church

is too far from their homes, ask them how far their jobs are from their homes. When the church member doesn't have shoes, get him a pair. Be a way-maker.

3. THE TERRITORY-TAKING MINISTRY

The territory-taking ministry of a pastor is embodied in his vision. If the pastor is a visionary, he will always want to take more territory for Christ. The way you can take more territory for God is through prayer and fasting. A pastor must lead his sheep into spiritual warfare.[3]

I always have a new vision for my church. When I had twenty members, I had a vision to have fifty. When I had fifty people at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, I dreamed of the day when I would see a hundred people sitting in church on Sunday morning. When I had five hundred, I dreamt of a thousand. It is the duty of the pastor to dream about greater territories for the kingdom of God. We are not a social club. We are not fighting a psychological warfare. We are into spiritual warfare.

"And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the ROD OF GOD in mine hand. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed"

(Exodus 17:9,11).

People who take new territories are people who fast and pray. I believe in praying for long periods. I believe in fasting as the Spirit leads.[4] Moses, the shepherd of God's people, stretched out his rod in warfare against Amalek. Moses' rod symbolized the power of intercessory prayer. It is the art of travailing in prayer for the ministry. What you see happening in the physical is only a manifestation of what has taken place in the spiritual realm. Anyone who calls himself a pastor must learn to fight with prayer in the realm of the spirit.

If you want to have a big church, you must learn to fight for it in the spiritual realm. Every physical territory is occupied by evil spirits who dominate the area. Africa is dominated by territorial spirits of poverty, superstition and war. That is why the continent, although blessed with human and natural resources, is plagued with backwardness and underdevelopment. Europe is dominated by territorial spirits of atheism, homosexuality, and immorality. That is why there are ministers who are homosexual and millions who do not believe in God. There are even gay clubs within churches now.

This is the return of Sodom and Gomorrah! It certainly signals imminent destruction. Any shepherd who wants to do the work of the ministry will come face to face with the territorial spirits of that area. When I travel from place to place, I can virtually feel the difference in the spiritual atmosphere. When I am in Ghana, I sense a lighter and easier spiritual climate than when I am in a place like Switzerland.

Develop the art of intercession for taking more territories for God. That means you must develop several important prayer skills.

i. The art of praying alone for several hours

Jesus did that! If we want to have the results that he had we must use the methods he used.[5]

"And it came to pass, as he was ALONE PRAYING, his disciples were with him" (Luke 9:18).

ii. The art of leading people into long hours of advancement prayer.

Whenever we have fasting and long hours of prayer, I often lead the church myself. I do not delegate it to anybody. Sometimes we have prayer meetings from 8 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock in the evening. Teach people to

pray in tongues for hours, it is a very important practice. Many times, I take my pastoral staff to the

mountains to wait on God. We pray from morning until evening every day until we return. Jesus often took his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane.

"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, [as his custom was] to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. AND WHEN HE WAS AT THE PLACE, HE SAID UNTO THEM, PRAY"

(Luke 22:39,40).

Lead your church to pray for church growth. Lead your sheep to ask God for increase. There are many ways that the increase will benefit all of the church members. So tell them that it is for their own good to take new territories for Christ.[6]

iii. The art of praying with the spirit and with your understanding

In 1 Corinthians 14:15, Paul asked a question, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also." He also said, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." (1 Corinthians 14:18). The apostle was very happy about exercising the gift of tongues but he also prayed with his understanding.

In taking new territories, you must learn both aspects of the prayer weapon. Praying in tongues is a powerful tool to defeat the enemy. Use it and spend hours speaking in the spirit concerning your future and your ministry.[7] Pray with the understanding also. As you pray with your understanding, you will find yourself praying out the prophetic for your life. You will find yourself speaking words of faith concerning church growth and ministry. I can pray continuously with my understanding for several hours, if necessary. Today, there are many Christians who cannot pray for more than one minute with

their understanding. They can only pray in tongues. It is a sign that they are shallow and don't really know God.

Every pastor must be able to stand up and pray for at least one hour in their understanding. I remember when I was in Geneva praying for church growth. I remember praying with my understanding for long periods. It was a powerful time of fighting the devil and taking territory for God.[8]

iv. The art of travailing in prayer

Travailing prayer is the art of prayer that results in the giving birth of a new spiritual baby. It may be a baby church, it may be a new Christian, it may be a new ministry, it may be a new fellowship. It may even involve the giving birth to a mature Christian from a baby Christian. The Apostle Paul travailed twice for the Christians in Galatia. The first time was to give birth to the Galatian church. The second time was to give birth to a Christ-like maturity in the church.[9]

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

(Galatians 4:19).

We will discuss the characteristics of travailing prayer later in this textbook.

4. THE COMFORTING MINISTRY

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"

(Psalm 23:4).

One of the principal ministries of a shepherd is to comfort the sheep. Every sheep should be able to say to his shepherd, "Your rod and your staff comfort me." Some people do not know why their churches do not grow. The shepherd must genuinely love the sheep and care for them when they are in trouble. Never lose the opportunity to be by your sheep's side in their time of difficulty. The duty of the lay pastor is to stand by his sheep in the time of their greatest need and greatest joy. It is not an option! Remember that, sorrow shared is half sorrow, and joy shared is double joy. The sheep want to share their sorrows and their joy with their pastor.

It is the duty of the shepherd to comfort the sheep. The comforting ministry starts by showing interest in things that are important to the sheep. Be interested in all of their major events; especially the birth of a child, marriages, sickness and funerals. God expects you to be there! What is important to your sheep must be important to you. If you claim to be a pastor, what are you doing to show real love to your sheep?[12]

Shepherds, if you genuinely do not love your people, they will not respond to your preaching. The Bible says that God is angry with the shepherds because they have not ministered to the sheep under the comforting ministry. “The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them”

(Ezekiel 34:4).

The sheep often know the Word before you preach. What they want is some love. Everybody responds to love. It is only demons that cannot be loved! Remember that love never fails. The Bible does not say, "Preaching never fails" or, "Teaching never fails". The Bible says "Love never fails". The comforting ministry is love in action.[13]

5. THE MEASUREMENT MINISTRY

One of the principal duties of a shepherd is to do what I call measuring the temple. Measuring the temple helps you to know where you stand.

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, rise, and MEASURE the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein”

(Revelation 11:1).

This involves a critical analysis of the way things are going. The first thing you must constantly measure is yourself. Ask yourself, "Am I doing what God called me to do?" The reason why I am writing books now is because I believe it is in obedience to the ministry God gave me to teach His Word. No matter what additional ministry I have, I am constantly trying to fulfill the call of God on my life according to his specifications.

Even when I had over fifty churches to oversee, my self-analysis (measurement ministry) made me see that I had to keep on pastoring the church and teaching the Word of God. If pastors and ministers were to analyze their ministry, it would help them to take important decisions. I was chatting with a pastor who had been in the ministry for twelve years. After being in the ministry for twelve years, he only had twenty-five members in his church. His church was in a city where there are many large churches.

By analyzing the reality of the situation, this pastor would have been helped to take an important decision for his life and ministry. Surely, after some years there must be some growth.

Anything that is alive and healthy grows naturally. If this pastor were to analyze his ministry, he may conclude that perhaps he was supposed to be an assistant and not the head. Perhaps he had to learn something new. Perhaps he needed to even close down the church. Analysis is very important in ministry. Some years ago, I spoke to a pastor friend of mine. I had known this pastor for several years. He had been actively pastoring a church in a large city of the world. Due to circumstances beyond his control, he found himself in another city. There he just attended a dead church. He was no longer actively involved in the ministry. He was just a church attendee. I spoke to him and said, "If you are called of God to the ministry, then wherever you are and whatever your circumstance you must fulfill your ministry." I impressed upon him to analyze his condition (measuring ministry) as a pastor and take the important decisions that would bring him to a place where he was fulfilling his divine call.

I'm happy to say that he did. Today, he is pastoring and overseeing many churches.

“EXAMINE YOURSELVES, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves”

(2 Corinthians 13:5).

In other words, examine yourselves to see whether you are within your call and whether there is anything that you have to change. One thing that people marvel at when they haven't visited the Lighthouse Cathedral for some time is the number of dynamic changes that have taken place. There are always improvements taking place. Many things remain the same, but many things continually undergo enhancement.

Can you imagine if the Mercedes-Benz car that is being sold today was exactly the same as it was fifteen years ago? It would be a very different car. The Mercedes-Benz of today is still a Benz but it is a much improved version of the 1950 model. That is how our churches and ministries must be continually upgraded and improved.

If you see something in the Bible that is not in your church, strive to attain that biblical standard. I always marvel at people who fight against miracles and prophecies. Prophecies and prophets are in the Bible. The entire Bible is full of testimonies of supernatural and spectacular miracles. If you have no miracles in your church please do not say that the day of miracles has passed. Just work on yourself until you have the miraculous operating through your ministry. If people helped the poor in the Bible days, strive to have a church which ministers to the poor. Do not say that people who minister to the poor do so because they do not have anointing to win souls. Accept the fact that it is a biblical standard that you must attain!

It is because we don't measure what we are doing, that we continue in the wrong thing for a long time. Ask yourselves, "Am I a good person?" Ask your wife or husband what he thinks about your character. Ask yourself, "How many should we be at this stage?" Measure your performance and analyze your duties! Don't be like a husband or wife who appears so glorious on the outside. They call each other "sweetheart" and "honey" in public, but are brewing a stormy divorce at home. If you assess and judge yourself, God will not have to deal with you.

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man”

(1 Corinthians 2:15).

6. THE MINISTRY OF CORRECTION

“SHALL I COME UNTO YOU WITH A ROD, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?”

(1 Corinthians 4:21).

Some people think that the pastor must be so soft that he cannot point out evil and correct it. The worst type of pastor is the one who cannot correct things that are going out of line. It is important to purge out certain tendencies from the flock. When your sheep realize that you are a weak leader, they will take you for a ride. Many years ago, I went for a ride on a horse called Black Beauty. This was at Burma Camp, a military riding school in the city of Accra. I was a new rider; and the horse soon realized that I was a novice. Our instructor would take us on a ride through various fields in the countryside. When we got to the boundary of the riding school, the horse didn't feel like going out for the ride so it stopped at the gate. I had a whip in my hand so I hit the horse several times and the horse began to kick and jump. It knew that I was afraid of it.

Some of the more experienced riders in the group came along and encouraged me to put the horse in line and bring it out of the school and into the field. Would you believe that the horse calmly turned around and took me back to the stable? It utterly refused to go out on a ride that afternoon. I would say that the horse rode me, I didn't ride it! Some months later after I became experienced, this horse was no match for me. I could make it do anything I wanted it to do.

That is how the pastor is with his sheep. If the people you are leading feel that you are weak, they will go out of line and do wrong things. When they realize that you are strong, they will stay in check. Identify disloyal people and remove them from the fold. Rebuke people publicly when you have to.

I remember during a Tuesday night service, my associate pastor called to the stage a church member who was notorious for stealing. The boy probably thought he was going to be introduced to the church. However, the pastor announced to the church that this young man was a dangerous thief who

was going about taking things from church members. He went on to say that everybody in the church should be careful of him and not believe his lies anymore. The church was dead calm for a second and then suddenly burst out in thunderous applause. This young man thought that he could take us for granted. He thought that because we are a church we would allow him to do anything he wanted. That was his biggest mistake!

The sheep will appreciate your strong leadership.

“Know ye not that a little leaven leaventh the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven”

(1 Corinthians 5:6,7).

To some of the sheep, you must be gentle and say things like:

"I am disappointed in you."
"I wasn't expecting this from you."
"I was expecting something better from you."
"Let this never happen again."
"Shame."
"I give you 20% for your Christianity."
“And of some have compassion, making a difference”

(Jude 22).

Correcting the sheep does not mean you should disgrace them. You can correct them without disgracing them. If you do not correct them, that thing will begin to spread among the congregation. To some of the sheep, you must be rough and hard. With others, you must actually dismiss them from the church. I remember one pastor who stood in the pulpit and looked at two giggling girls and shouted from the pulpit, "Ruby, Walk Out!" She had no choice but to walk out, never to return.

“Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease”

(Proverbs 22:10).

Some people need to be dismissed from the church. Their presence in the church is not desirable or helpful, so get rid of them. It's as simple as that!

7. THE FEEDING MINISTRY

The importance of the feeding ministry of a shepherd cannot be overemphasized.

a. **It is a principal duty of a shepherd to feed his sheep**.

Everything else comes after he has done this principal duty. The authority to lead, is given to those with the ability to feed.

“FEED THY PEOPLE WITH THY ROD, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old”

(Micah 7:14)

I have people in my church who are older and wiser than I am in many respects. Yet in the church, I am their leader and I minister to them. Where would I get the authority to advise someone who could be my father or my mother?

This authority is found in the ability to feed. Where does your earthly father get his authority to tell you to come home or what to do with your life? It comes from the fact that he has fed you for years and continues to feed you. When your parents no longer feed you, the authority they have over your life drastically reduces. Jesus said to Peter three times, "Feed my sheep". It is very important to the Lord that His sheep are well fed on the Word of God.

“Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep”

(John 21:17).

The principal duty of all ministry offices is to preach and to teach the Word of God.[14]

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, TEACHING in their synagogues, and PREACHING the gospel of the kingdom”

(Matthew 9:35).

Paul was an apostle and a prophet. He called himself an apostle to the Gentiles.

“Paul, AN APOSTLE of Jesus Christ by the will of God”

(2 Timothy 1:1).

Paul went on to say in verse eleven,

“Whereunto I am appointed a PREACHER, and an apostle, and a TEACHER of the Gentiles”

(2 Timothy 1:11).

It should be clear to every minister that our main resolve is to preach and teach the Word. What did Paul tell Timothy?

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ…PREACH THE WORD”

(2 Timothy 4:1,2).

b. A shepherd must preach and teach the sheep because the time will come when people will not like to listen to the preaching of the Word of God.

Paul predicted that a time would come when people would not want the Bible to be preached.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”

(2 Timothy 4:3,4).

I believe that time has come now! Many prefer to be prophesied to. They want a quick, "bless me" prayer and some anointing with oil.

Pastors, develop your ability to feed and to preach. It is your one greatest asset. Look around you and observe the great men of God you know. You will soon discover that every one of them has a strong ability to deliver the Word. Because this is so important, In later sections, we will discuss how to develop the art of preaching and teaching.[15]

How to Develop Basic Preaching and Teaching Skills 8

KEYS FOR DEVELOPING THE ABILITY TO PREACH AND TEACH

A pastor's greatest asset is his ability to preach and teach. Pastors of large churches are usually good preachers. The sheep know where the grass is green so they go there to be fed. Sometimes pastors who have had a small congregation for a long time have not developed the art of preaching and teaching. The following are strategic thoughts on how to improve your feeding ministry.[1]

1. PREACH OUT OF YOUR HEART.

Every good pastor and shepherd must be able to preach from his heart. Thank God for notes. I believe in notes, but they are just a guide. I preach from my heart all the time.

“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord”

(Psalm 130:1).

If the thing is not in your heart, don't bother to say it. People notice when what you are saying does not come from your heart. The best preachers are "heart preachers" and not "note preachers".

2. PREACH EXTEMPORANEOUSLY.

Extemporaneous means informal, unrehearsed, impromptu and "off the cuff". If you want your preaching to be powerful, and if you want people to listen to you, then learn to preach "off-the- cuff". The powerful sermons recorded in the books of Acts were unrehearsed and from the heart of Peter and Paul. When Peter stood to preach for three thousand to be saved, do you think he was preaching from his notes? He stood up and addressed the crowd from his heart without any preparation per se.

I believe that preparation takes place over a long time. It takes a long time for a message to go deep down into your heart. Do you want to preach for three thousand to be saved? Do you want to preach to five thousand? Then learn how to preach extemporaneously. Even when you have prepared notes, let the preparation be so deep that you hardly have to refer to these notes.

When you were proposing to your fiancée, did you read from notes? Of course not! You spoke from your heart! You were able to capture one woman! Capture many souls for Christ using the same strategy. Many women have used their charm to win the hearts of their husbands. Use the same charm to turn people to Christ.[2]

3. PREACH IN A CHARISMATIC STYLE.

To be charismatic means to be Holy Spirit inspired. Let your preaching be anointed! Learn to trust the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I will teach you what to say in that very hour." What Jesus said is true. I have experienced it many times. Shepherds, never turn down a preaching appointment because of a short notice.[3]

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season”

(2 Timothy 4:2).

When you start preaching the anointing will flow. Many times when I start preaching I don't feel anointed, but as I begin to flow I can feel the anointing rising. Learn to trust the Holy Spirit even if it is contrary to your wonderfully prepared sermon notes.

4. PREACH IN AN ORDERLY FASHION.

Orderly preaching means there is a pattern that your listeners can follow. When they can follow the train of thought, the congregation usually remembers the message. To do this you often have to write down a few points.

“Let all things be done decently and in order”

(1 Corinthians 14:40).

Even when you are preaching under inspiration, there are usually two or three points that you are trying to stress. Learn to preach in a charismatic style even whilst using prepared notes! Let there be some order to what you are saying. I believe in writing notes and preaching with points. It helps to establish otherwise vague ideas.

5. PREACH WITH EMOTION.

I believe that every shepherd must preach using his or her emotions as well. If your teaching is bland and emotionless, it will not appeal to anyone. Let your sheep feel your happiness, laughter, righteous anger and your excitement. Your excitement is contagious and will pass on to the congregation. [4] Your expressionless and lifeless sermon is also contagious and will minister death.[5]

6. VARY THE TONE OF YOUR VOICE.

Vary the tone of your voice. Anyone who is serious about what he is saying would naturally bring some variation in the tone of voice. Anything that is monotonous (one tone) is boring. Learn to imitate other people's voices as you preach! Your congregation will love it! People want to have something that is real. They want to hear something that is funny. They also want something that they can relate to. Do not say, "I am not that type of person." Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some"

(1 Corinthians 9:22).[6]

7. LEARN TO PREACH BY CLOSELY FOLLOWING A GOOD PREACHER.

In the natural, many women learnt how to cook by doing exactly what their mothers did in the kitchen. Their food tastes exactly like their mother's food. Initially, they just copied their mother's recipes word for word. However, with time they may have developed their own variations to the recipe. Nevertheless, they essentially learnt how to cook by copying someone who already knew how to cook. It is that simple in the natural.

When it comes to preaching, many ministers have all sorts of psychological difficulties with accepting this reality. I have never attended a Bible school. I have never studied homiletics. In fact, I didn't even know what that word meant until recently. I learnt how to preach by watching and listening to good preachers; and I am not ashamed to say so. I think it is a proven method of acquiring a skill. Even in medicine, you learn surgery by watching, assisting and then doing it under supervision. That is how I train my pastors in Lighthouse Chapel. I teach them to listen to tapes and soak them in! This method has worked and is still working very well for me.

"...Wisdom is justified of her children"

(Matthew 11:19)!!

First, you must choose someone who preaches well and who can be your mentor. Then consciously soak in the tapes until you unconsciously flow in his style and message. Choose a style that works and a message that has worked. I learnt to preach by sitting at the feet of Kenneth E. Hagin and Fred Price for hours. I had watched and listened to Fred Price so much that without knowing it I began to

preach like him. I did not do this consciously. I just loved listening to his messages. I now know that I was learning by observing. The disciples, Peter, James and John didn't even know that they had learned to preach, and heal the sick until after Jesus had left. Suddenly, Peter was thrown into a situation where he had to preach a biting and heartrending sermon. He spoke to the Pharisees in the same biting way as Jesus did. Without realizing it, Peter had learnt how to preach by being with Jesus.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS”

(Acts 4:13).

8. PREACH ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE ARE THINKING.

Many times Jesus knew what the people were thinking. He often preached against what they were thinking. A good preacher can sense what the people are thinking about as he is preaching.

“The Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus KNEW THEIR THOUGHTS, and said [preached] unto them”

(Matthew 12:24,25).

Do not close your eyes when you are preaching. Look at them eyeball to eyeball! Preach against any negative thoughts that they may have! Do not preach about anything that is irrelevant. People must comment that your preaching is biting.

9. DRESS NICELY AND APPROPRIATELY.

Always dress decently and properly. Every pastor should endeavor to look decent and business-like when ministering. If you are a young preacher, it is important that you dress appropriately. Otherwise, you may be mistaken for a worthless young man. Your dressing can upgrade your youthful appearance and make you acceptable before an elderly crowd.[7]

Female pastors must be extra careful! Women have been designed to be attractive to men. Men are also attracted to women. Therefore, lady pastors or female shepherds must ensure that they do not put on any clothing that is risqué or revealing.

10. SHAVE AND TRIM YOUR BEARD NEATLY.

Decide whether to be clean-shaven or to keep a beard. If you shave you must do it regularly. If you decide to keep a beard, you must keep it trim and neat. Some people's beards have spittle all over them. Others have unidentified objects hanging in there! At times, you may have to instruct a shepherd to shave off his beard because it looks too scruffy. Some Bible schools do not even allow students to keep a beard. The facts are that your beard changes your appearance completely.

11. HAIR SHOULD BE WELL KEPT.

The maintenance of your hair sends messages to everyone. The lady pastors in particular must maintain their hair in good condition. Otherwise, people will feel, "If she can't even take care of her hair, can she take care of me?" Get a wig if you need one. A wig will always come in handy when you don't have time to do your hair.

12. DEVELOP APPROPRIATE GESTURES AND POSTURE.

Your gestures refer to your body movements during preaching. Observe any good preacher and you will notice that his preaching style includes many interesting gestures and postures. Your body movements add a lot to the message you are preaching. It keeps the congregation attentive. If you do not already use gestures, decide to consciously learn and add some to your preaching.[8]

13. VARY THE VOLUME.

When preaching there are times when you must speak loudly. At other times, the preacher must shout! There are also moments when whispering is very effective.[9] Female ministers must be conscious of not shouting and screaming. This can be quite offensive. The shrill voice of a lady who is shrieking is not inspiring. It may turn the attention of the congregation away from their ministration.

14. MOVE AROUND FREELY.

At times you must stay behind the pulpit and preach. However, you must learn to move about

when you are preaching. Sometimes it is good to walk into the crowd to get a feel of the atmosphere.

15. CONGREGATIONAL INTERACTION

I always involve the congregation when I preach.[10] You must learn to involve your congregation by asking them questions. Occasionally call out some familiar names. It helps to keep everybody alert.

16. EYE CONTACT

When ministering look into the eyes of the people. Jesus said that we should feed his sheep, not his giraffes! Do not look above their heads, look into their eyes. See whether they are dead or alive! As a preacher, you must discern what they are thinking. Watch their facial expressions to know whether they understand what you are saying. Surprisingly, there are messages written all over their faces.

You may even notice that people are asleep. This should prompt you to make your sermon less boring.

I once heard a true story about a church member who died sitting in his seat during a service. They called an ambulance to come and collect the body. Upon the arrival of the ambulance, they found several congregation members asleep whilst the pastor was preaching. It was impossible for them to know who was asleep and who was dead. So they carried out several people only to find them waking up in the ambulance. The attendants weren't sure who was dead or not! Neither did the pastor know.

How does a pastor continue to preach to a congregation that is asleep or dead? If he was looking at their faces during his ministration he would have known when they died![11]

17. YOUR PREACHING MUST BE RELEVANT.

Your preaching must be relevant.[12] It must be related to what is going on in the world around you. People must be able to say that your preaching is down-to-earth and easy to understand. Once the message loses its relevance, it loses its power. Jesus was very relevant.

“Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?”

(Luke 13:4).

When people were killed in an accident at the tower in Siloam He immediately spoke about it. He used it as an illustration for them to repent or likewise perish. That is what I call relevance. Some people feel they must preach about complex things in order to impress people. Don't you know that the greatest people are simple people? Why are you preaching about Aaron's beard? How is the color of Aaron's garments going to help the sheep? Please be relevant and practical!

18. YOU MUST HAVE A COMMAND OF CURRENT EVENTS.

Relate your preaching to current events that may be affecting the members in anyway. It helps them to relate to your preaching. Unemployment figures in Western Europe are of no interest to the average Ghanaian. However, who the next military ruler may be is of utmost importance to the average Ghanaian.

19. USE "WINDOWS" IN YOUR PREACHING.

Windows are illustrations,[13] amusing stories and personal life testimonies that allow people to "see" into your sermon. A pastor who just reads out Scripture after scripture without any real life explanation is just ministering death and not life. A pastor who is not prepared to "open up" and tell people about himself and about his life will never be a good preacher.[14]

Ensure that you preach with windows. As soon as you begin to give them a story that explains the message, they will begin to understand.[15] People especially love to hear things about your personal life. It is a window into your private life and everyone loves to peep. Church members cannot understand your sermon without the use of windows. Jesus preached with windows all the time. He continually used real life stories, parables and illustrations. I insist that all my pastors preach with windows! I insist on it because I believe it is one of the most important aspects of good preaching![16]

20. LAUGHTER

Develop the art of making people laugh. People want to be happy. There is so much sadness in the world that everyone looks forward to hope and happiness. People want to laugh, so make them laugh whilst you are preaching.[17]

21. SOAK IN PREACHING TAPES.

You must invest in preaching tapes. Soak them in. Play them over and over again until you preach it exactly as it is, using your own illustrations and personal life stories. Soaking in the words of a man of God through cassettes and videotapes imparts the anointing or spirit of that person into you. “And the spirit entered into me when HE SPAKE unto me” (Ezekiel 2:2). In John 6:63 Jesus said, "The

words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." This means that the more of Jesus' words you hear, the more "spirit" (anointing) comes into you. The Bible says in Acts 10:44 that "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost (the anointing) fell on all them which heard the word." There is something within the word of the king called anointing. As you speak, the Holy Spirit will enter the spirit of the people.

22. CATCH THE ANOINTING TO TEACH.

As you soak in the tapes of a man of God, you will receive an anointing to minister. Your teaching and preaching ministry will improve. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). The anointing makes the difference in ministry, not strategies and cunning ideas. Don't be too big to learn from others. We all do. Ninety percent of what we know is learnt from somebody.

23. TITLE YOUR SERMON.

Titling your message gives you clarity of thought. The congregation will know that they are taking "something" home. Your message titles should usually stay within an average of a one-to-five worded catchy sentence. For e.g., “Abrahamic Success, Divine Provision, Frugality, Can-Do Man, How to Develop your Potential”. Occasionally you may have a long sentence topic, for instance: “Twenty-five reasons Why You Must Be a Permanent Member, Forty Reasons Why Some Christians Don't Pay Tithes”. Titling your message helps to establish order.[18]

24. PREACH WITH AUTHORITY AND CONFIDENCE.

People must feel that you know what you are preaching about. When people feel that you are not sure of what you are saying they will no longer receive your preaching. The thing that struck the Pharisees about Jesus' teaching was his authority.[19] “By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23). “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:29).

25. PREPARE EXTENSIVELY TO PREACH.

Preparation to minister does not take place a few minutes before a sermon is delivered. It takes place all the time. My preparation to minister is constant and ongoing. Without long-term preparation, you can never really preach from your heart. [20] Prayer is a vital part of your preparation.[21] A pastor must spend Saturday evening to Sunday morning in prayer.[22] Specifically pray for the following:

i) That everyone who came the week before will attend again.
ii) That new people will attend church and be born again.
iii) That there will be church growth.

iv) That the flock will understand the Word and their lives will be affected.

v) That every need be met: healing, peace of mind, salvation, deliverance.

vi) That God would give you a spirit ofrevelation in the Word.[23]

26. INTRODUCE THE MESSAGE WELL.

You must let your congregation know and feel that the message is important. If you tell them that you have a very important message to give to them, they will sit up and listen. Even before you begin ministering, you should inform them that this message is vital for their Christian life.[24]

27. LEARN TO PREACH IN SERIES.

One of the challenges of pastoral preaching and teaching is the challenge of having to preach to the same crowd of people each week. Church members expect the pastor to have a fresh and new revelation every week. Thank God for the Holy Spirit. Even if we are not capable, He is able. I have discovered that pastoral preaching is best done in series. If part one is good, many people will come back to hear part two and part three. However, if every week you preach a different sermon, then there will be no motivation to continue receiving the lesson.[25]

28. END THE MESSAGE WELL.

Learn to conclude your messages well. End on a happy note. End when people are laughing. They will look forward to hearing more next time.[26]

29. DO ALTAR CALLS FOR SALVATION AND HEALING.

I believe every minister must consistently make altar calls for salvation.[27] This gives ordinary members the opportunity to give their lives to Christ. Pastors and shepherds should not be afraid that no one will come to the altar. After all you are not trying to impress anyone; you are trying to please God. He wants all of His people to be saved. I make altar calls at weddings, receptions, parties and anywhere else I find myself ministering. I will use every opportunity I get.[28] Every pastor must learn to use strong persuasive and evangelistic language to draw out any sinner that might be present in the congregation.[29]

HOW TO BE A GOOD SHEPHERD 9

TWELVE SIGNS OF A GOOD SHEPHERD

In every profession, you have good and bad elements. The Bible says that whatsoever a man findeth to do, he should do it with all his might. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"

(Ecclesiastes 9:10).

If you are going to be a pastor, be a good one! Let us use the Word of God to show us exactly who a good pastor is. Some people think a good pastor is someone who is gentle and nice to people.

Others think it is someone who is a very good preacher. What does the Word of God say? Jesus said He was a good shepherd. He spoke extensively about what a good shepherd does in the tenth chapter of John.[1]

1. A GOOD SHEPHERD LEADS HIS SHEEP.

"To him the porter openeth…and LEADETH THEM OUT"

(John 10:3).

What does it mean to lead sheep? It means to be practically available for them to see and learn from you in every area of life and ministry. Anything you want your sheep to do, you must first do it yourself. They will follow you if they see you doing it first! A pastor who wants his church members to pray must practically lead them into prayer. When the sheep see the shepherd taking the lead, they are convinced that the ground is safe and can follow confidently.

Contrarily, a bad shepherd would sit at home and send the members to go for a prayer meeting alone. In our church, I have always tried to do first, what I wanted my people to do. When we were building a basement in our church, we could not afford to hire the necessary machinery. We had to dig ourselves. I needed the help of the entire church to drill and dig very deep into the ground. After that, we needed to carry tons of red sand out of the pit.

I could have easily delegated it to some others, but I decided to dig and carry the sand myself. I believe my decision-motivated members of all social standings to get involved. There were students, lawyers, doctors and businessmen carrying sand like laborers. They worked with all their might. Why was that? They had seen their shepherd taking the lead. I want you to notice something that made David popular.

"But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them"

(1 Samuel 18:16).

Why did the subjects of Israel love David? The answer is simple. They could see him practically going in and out with them and doing things with them. We have a large attendance at our mid-week service. Many people are surprised that so many people attend church on a Tuesday evening. The fact is that I'm always there myself. I consider it an important meeting. The sheep see that, and follow my example.

Sometimes we have long periods of fasting with all-night prayer meetings everyday. You would be surprised to see how many people attend every night. I tell my members that I am struggling and suffering in the fast just like them, and they love to hear it. The sheep are always happy to identify with the shepherd when the shepherd identifies with them. Leadership is very spiritual. Even when people do not see you physically, they follow you spiritually. I have found that sheep have a mysterious way of becoming like their shepherd. The reason being, they are following him in the realm of the spirit.

Many years ago, there was a scandal in a large church. The senior pastor of the church had an affair with one of his members. The secret relationship had been ongoing until the lady became pregnant and exposed it. The Christian community was surprised! However, more surprises were to follow. After the senior pastor finally admitted to his sin, it prompted a series of confessions from other pastors and leaders of the same church. Unknown to each other, the pastors, leaders and sheep were all involved in similar sins.

One evening, the associate pastor announced to the congregation, "I have a confession to make. I am a womanizer. If anyone saw me coming from sister so-and so's house in the morning… Whatever you thought happened, that is what happened. I am sorry to say that I have had affairs with four different girls in the church." After this confession, many other immoral sins were exposed as being very common in the church.

A pastor is a spiritual leader over a flock. What you do is what the people will do. They cannot rise above you unless you the leader show the way through righteous living. That is why it is important for all shepherds to maintain very high standards. Go ahead of your sheep. Do not operate as an executive, just walking in and out like a "big shot". There is no place for "big shots" in the church. There is no place for "unreal leaders" in the real world of the sheep.

2. A GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP BY NAME.

“And he calleth his own sheep by NAME”

(John 10:3).

If you are a shepherd over a few people, you must know all their names. You must want to know their names and call them by name. Nobody is a number! Nobody wants to be called "Hey!" or "You there!"

You must get to know new people everyday. Keep asking their names until the name sticks. I am not ashamed of asking somebody his name seven times until it sticks. When you know the sheep by name they cannot simply walk out on you.[2]

3. A GOOD PASTOR IS KNOWN BY THE SHEEP.

“For they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow”

(John 10:4,5).

How do people know the voice of the shepherd? How do you know the voice of someone? It is because you have heard them speak to you time and time again. A good shepherd must speak to his sheep over and over until they know his voice. I preach to my church all the time. I do not often have guest speakers. I believe in guest speakers, but I believe the best person to preach to my sheep is me because I am their shepherd. I preach about ninety percent of the time.

When a woman gives birth to a baby, her breasts are full of milk for the new child. So it is with the shepherd. His spirit is full of the Word to give to his children. No other woman's body and breasts are better qualified to feed her own child. Nature made it that way. Because you gave birth, you are naturally primed up to feed what you have brought forth. When your sheep are used to your voice, they will not follow strangers.

If you call yourself a pastor, rise-up and feed your sheep regularly. Preaching and teaching only becomes feeding when it is regular. Preach to them all of the time, and teach them from your heart. They will grow and give birth to others. They will know your voice on the issues of marriage, business, success and life in general.

They will want to hear your voice concerning different aspects of their life. The voice of a true shepherd always rings in the spirit of his sheep. I question whether you are a real shepherd if you do not regularly and consistently feed your sheep.[3]

4. A GOOD PASTOR STAYS WITH THE SHEEP.

“The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep”

(John 10:13).

Anyone who calls himself a pastor will want to stay around and mingle with the members, talk with them and be interested in them. David said,

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; THAT I MAY DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple”

(Psalm 27:4).

David wanted to stay in the house of the Lord. He actually wanted to live there. And you want to rush home! Are you really called? I question the genuineness of a pastor who has no interest in staying around for a while after service to mingle and chat with the sheep.

The Bible says that the hireling flees.[4] This means that he dashes off quickly! He wants to get away from the people! Such people cannot stand visitors in their homes. They always say things like, "I need my privacy" or "I can't stand having all these people around" and "I can't cook for so many people". Remember that a bishop is supposed to be "given to hospitality"

(1 Timothy 3:2).

I once knew a white minister and his wife who were pastoring a large church in a European city. It happened that many of the members of his church were black people; some Ghanaians, some Nigerians, etc. One day, while having coffee with this pastor and his wife, I got a feeling from certain things they said, that they did not really like Black people. It was no wonder that even though they had a large church, they one day abandoned the flock and went elsewhere. “The hireling fleeth!”(John 10:13).

5. A GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP.

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine”

(John 10:14).

Knowing your sheep means that you must know their names, where they live and where they work.

Know about their health, friends, and school. Know when they are writing exams. Know their family, spouse and who they reside with. Know their financial situation and their occupation. Simply know all aspects of their lives. Know means know! It is only when you know more details about your sheep that you can help or advise them properly.

I once asked a pastor about one of his sheep. I asked, "Is he married?" He answered, "I don't know." "Where does he work?" "I'm not sure." He answered. "Did he come to church last week." "I didn't see

him," he replied. In a very large church, you may excuse such a question but in a small community church, the pastor has no excuse when he does not know the details about his sheep.

I recall one brother who belonged to a prominent church in my city. He joined another church, and after being a member of that ministry for a number of years, became a pastor himself. One day at a wedding he happened to meet his former senior pastor. His senior pastor said to him, "Brother 'X', it is a long time since I saw you." "Did you come to church last Sunday?" the senior pastor asked. Brother 'X' (who had now become a pastor in another church) smiled and said, "No pastor I didn't."

This senior pastor did not know that this brother had long since stopped coming to his church. He did not know that this gentleman had even become a pastor in another ministry. How sad! Jesus said a good pastor knows his sheep.

If God gives you twenty people to look after, make sure you know all about them. Do not let any of them slip out of your hands. Jesus kept saying,

"Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost"

(John 17:12).

It is important to have many junior pastors and shepherds to work with the senior pastor so that none of the sheep get lost. God will hold us accountable for every single sheep that is lost. Keep the sheep that God has given to you.

6. A GOOD SHEPHERD IS KNOWN.

A good shepherd "opens up" his life to the sheep so that they can know about him. The sheep are interested in the shepherd's life. Do not be a mystery figure to your sheep. Let them know how real you are and how you experience the same problems and temptations they do.

7. A GOOD SHEPHERD KEEPS THE CHURCH FAMILY TOGETHER.

The sheep of a good pastor are kept together under his "wings". One of the cardinal features of the pastoral calling is the ability to keep people together throughout the years. The longer a group of people stay together the more the people step on each other's toes. The conflicts of a family begin to rise. Brothers turn against brothers and sisters against sisters. But it is a good pastor who keeps everybody together.

The pastoral gift keeps employers in the same church with employees. The anointing on the shepherd is able to keep the old in the same room with the young. It keeps the married flowing with the unmarried. As the church grows, you will even have enemies worshipping together under the same

roof. It is the art of shepherding that will keep debtors and creditors within the same fold and prevent them from tearing each other apart.[5]

“But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and SCATTERETH THE SHEEP”

(John 10:12).

8. A GOOD PASTOR NOTICES THE PROBLEMS OF HIS SHEEP.

“But he that is an hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, SEETH THE WOLF COMING”

(John 10:12).

The Scripture tells us that the good shepherd can see the wolf coming. He sees the problems of his people and is concerned. He knows when they are doing exams. He knows when they are having marital problems. He knows when their businesses' are going through "tough times". When a sheep fails his exams or loses a loved one, a wolf of discouragement and frustration is soon to come. A good shepherd must be able to see the wolf and move into action. The bad shepherd sees the wolves but says, "That's your problem!" The good pastor will always stay with his sheep in their time of trouble.

9. A GOOD PASTOR DELIVERS HIS SHEEP FROM CAPTIVITY.

“And the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep”

(John 10:12).

Most of the members of a bad pastor are backslidden and in captivity. Pastors, rise up and pray for your sheep! Minister to their needs. Apart from preaching, pray for their deliverance from witchcraft, demons and diseases. People love to be prayed for by their pastor. Pray for them, anointing them with oil. They need this encouragement and ministration.[6]

10. A GOOD SHEPHERD WANTS TO HAVE MORE SHEEP.

A hireling is just around for a while, but a true shepherd is like the owner of the sheep. He is interested in them and he wants more. Every sheep owner wants to have more sheep because

that makes him richer, naturally speaking. Yet, the servant or slave in the farm does not care whether there are more or fewer sheep because he is not the shepherd, he is the hireling.

“And other sheep I have… THEM ALSO I MUST BRING”

(John 10:16).

The true pastor is always concerned about bringing in more sheep. That is why Jesus said, "Them also I must bring."

11. A GOOD PASTOR LOVES THE SHEEP AND NOT THE MONEY.

“But he that is an hireling, and NOT THE SHEPHERD”

(John 10:12).

A true pastor does not work for money. He is interested in the salvation of souls and the growth of the church. A bad pastor looks forward to some form of physical gain. His input is tied to that which he can get. He is not concerned about the problems of his sheep. Anyone who cannot do pastoral work voluntarily, without being paid, is not genuine.

12. A GOOD SHEPHERD GIVES HIS LIFE.

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep”

(John 10:11).

A good shepherd sacrifices his time for the sheep. The bad shepherd is only prepared to give two hours of his time on Sundays. He always wants to get away from the crowd. If a woman desires

to be a good wife, she must give herself fully to her husband. If you want to be a good doctor, you must give yourself fully to medicine.

Similarly, if you want to be a good shepherd, you must give your life and your time to the high calling of the pastoral office. It is worth it at the end of the day. Decide to be a good shepherd from today. You do not have to be paid to be a good pastor. In fact, the best pastors are often lay!

MOVING FROM LAY MINISTRY INTO FULL-TIME MINISTRY 10

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL PRECONDITIONSFOR FULLTIME MINISTRY

I started ministry as a lay person, so the option of full-time ministry came up much later. I started my church as a medical student and thus found myself pastoring while at the same time practicing medicine. Later on, I went into business and combined business activities with pastoral work. At the end of 1990, the Lord told me to leave everything I was doing and enter into full-time ministry. It was not an easy decision for me.

Since January 1st, 1991 I have been full-time in the ministry for the Lord Jesus. There are many people who are in full-time ministry who should not really be there. There are many people, whom I believe should find secular jobs! How can a church with sixty members sustain four pastors and their

families? Yet, this is the case in many ministries. Success in the ministry requires both power and wisdom.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God”

(1Corinthians 1:24).

There are many people whose ministries are frustrated because they entered full-time ministry too quickly. In this section, I want to share with you a few steps that I believe will give guidance when it comes to entering full-time ministry. I am including this section because there are many people who will move from the lay ministry into full-time ministry. It is important to know when and how to make this great transition. I believe in full-time ministry!

I consider it to be a privilege to be a full-time minister. I have always loved the ministry and thank God that I can now serve him with one hundred percent of my time. If I had entered full-time ministry, even one year earlier than I did, the results might have been very different. What I am presenting in this section are not hard and fast rules about the ministry, they are just guiding principles of wisdom to help you into full-time ministry. There are five fundamental pre-conditions I believe you must fulfill before you enter into full-time ministry.

1. YOU MUST HAVE A SPECIAL CALL TO SACRIFICE YOUR ISAAC.

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me"

(Genesis 22:1-12).

In this story, God asked Abraham to give up his most treasured possession—his son. Some people have the mistaken view that God asks everyone to sacrifice their "Isaac". God did not ask Joseph to sacrifice his sons. Neither did He ask Jacob or Isaac to sacrifice their sons. King David was a man after God's own heart, but God did not ask David to sacrifice his son. God deals with everyone differently! What God requires of me may be different from what God will require of you.

God has asked me for my profession. Perhaps God will not ask for yours. I believe that before you enter full-time ministry, you must have a definite call to give up your treasured secular job. This is different from the call to follow God. God spoke to Abraham and directed him on many occasions. That was a call to follow and Abraham was faithful to follow the Lord each time.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee"

(Genesis 12:1).

"Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and build there an altar unto the Lord"

(Genesis 13:17,18).

Then came the special call to give up Isaac! God may call you to follow Him. But that call to give up Isaac may never come! It is an entirely different thing. Everyone must obey God on an individual basis. I am not you and you are not me! What has worked for me may not work for you. What works for you may not work for me! If God is in it, it will work and there will be a blessing. So make sure that you have a definite call to give up your Isaac before you do so.

2. YOU MUST DEMONSTRATE FAITHFULNESS IN HANDLING A FEW THINGS.

The Bible teaches clearly that he that is faithful with little will be faithful with much.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will

commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

(Luke 16:10-12).

If somebody is not faithful with a little responsibility, how will he be faithful when he is in full-time ministry? Many people are not doing well in full-time ministry because they did not do well as lay people. I worked for the Lord for years without supervision! I did not need anybody to tell me to get up to pray or to study my Bible! I was faithful with Scripture Union fellowships whilst I was in secondary school. I was faithful as an organist in Calvary road Incorporated (a Christian singing group). I was faithful as a drummer and pianist for Victory Church in London. I was faithful with the fellowships in the university. It never once crossed my mind that I should be paid. No one ever told me what to do. I just did what I thought was right. And God blessed it![1]

3. A MINISTRY THAT NEEDS A FULL-TIME PASTOR

Not every ministry needs a full-time pastor. The pastor of our main church in London, for instance, developed the church into a congregation of several hundreds, with six branches before he became a full-time minister. Most of our churches are pastored by unpaid lay pastors. Jesus pays them directly!

If there are only twenty-five people in the church, it is obvious that it cannot sustain a fulltime minister.

Many of the church members secretly ask, "What does the full-time pastor do all day?" Many people think that the pastor sleeps from morning to evening. The fact is that there isn't much to do with a congregation of thirty. The ministry has to develop to the point where it needs a full-time worker. The other reality that you have to face is that, most of the members are at work during the day and only become available during the evenings.

Pastors are not bankers, accountants or pharmacists. They are shepherds who are supposed to look after sheep. The working hours are different for different professions! I do not work from nine to five everyday because I am not an accountant, I am a pastor! When the sheep become available in the evenings I become very active. That is why I work late into the night almost every evening! There are some pastors who have become idle and lazy as they wait for Sunday when they can deliver their next sermon.

"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, WORKING NOT AT ALL"

(2 Thessalonians 3:11).

Let us be honest! Let us be realistic! Does your church need so many full-time pastors? Does it need even one full-time pastor? Can the income of the church sustain the pastor and his family? Can the pastor not find a secular job to do? Pastors are frustrated and fearful because they are not sure whether they will be able to survive until the next month. Let that frustration die today! Get a job and pastor the church on the side until it grows and demands your full attention!

The Swiss missionaries who were sent to Ghana many years ago were sent as self sustaining ministers. They came equipped with skills that would enable them to work in Africa as they did their ministry work. That is a good example to follow. We need self-sustaining ministers today more than ever before. Most churches cannot bear the burden of maintaining so many full-time pastors.

I purposely keep my ministry staff as small as possible. I want to pay people properly. I do not want idle and discontented people around me. Idleness leads to laziness and laziness leads to discontentment and discontentment leads to disloyalty.

"And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not"

(1 Timothy 5:13).

4. A DEATH TO THE LOVE OF SILVER

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity"

(Ecclesiastes 5:10).

The ministry is not an alternative source of employment for anyone. It was never intended to be! It is a special job that God gives to those whom He has called. As the church becomes larger, it often deteriorates into a source of employment for the unemployed. This attracts many people who have no better options. What happens to the church? It becomes full of seekers of wealth and lovers of silver. These pastors who are seeking for gold, end up with one long fight for better salaries and conditions of service.

Many pastors see the ministry as a way to travel around the world and to drive nice cars. I did not enter the ministry in order to drive a nice car. I do drive a nice car now and I have no apologies for that! I can tell you with all certainty that I did not come into the ministry because I wanted to have the nice things of this world. In fact, coming into full-time ministry was, for me, the end of all hopes of ever having the nice things of this world.

“I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST: NEVERTHE-LESS I LIVE; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain”

(Galatians 2:20,21).

A minister who is going to serve God properly must have died to the love for silver and gold. Why is this? The Bible teaches that those that love silver are never satisfied with silver. The more you give them, the more they want. Why is it that the richest people in this world are often the biggest thieves? Is it because they are poor? Is it because they are in need? Certainly not! It is because of the greed for more and more and more! I have found that you cannot satisfy people with more and more money.

From experience, whenever I have felt under pressure to raise salaries, I have often discovered that, that alone does not solve the root of the problem! Senior pastors, if you feel under pressure to raise salaries and give more and more benefits, you will discover that the problem never goes away. I believe that full-time ministers must be people who just want to serve the Lord at heart.

This does not mean that people will be poor but it means that the heart is not craving endlessly after more and more. Soon the church becomes unionized with the workers against the management, and the management against the workers! The "management" are often the senior pastors who make decisions and the "workers" are the other pastors and workers who are not involved in the decision-making.

You should see the bitterness, petty jealousies and bickering amongst the full-time staff of many churches and ministries. This often extends to their families where pastor's wives pick up quarrels with other pastor's wives. I would rather have one or two workers with peace than to have a hundred unhappy and discontented full-time staff. This is one of the reasons why I believe in a few full-time workers with the majority as lay people.[2]

5. A TOTAL SURRENDER FOR ALL POSSIBILITIES

As you enter into full-time ministry you must be open for whatever the future will bring. You may be rich or you may be poor. You may have abundance or you may live in the "want of all things". Are you ready for anything?

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me”

(John 21:18,19).

Jesus told Peter to be ready for anything. Be ready to be carried anywhere. It will no longer be your will, but God's will. You are not the commander, you are just one of God's workers. One of the reasons why I am in the ministry is because I have no choices! "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

(1 Corinthians 9:16).

God has told me to do it, so I just have to do it. I must obey Him at all costs. I refuse to listen to the detractors, faultfinders, analysts and commentators who talk about me all the time. I have no time for empty chatter. I prefer to hear my dogs barking in the morning than to listen to hateful animadversion! I must continue doing what God has called me to do. Some people love me for what I do and others hate me. I thank God for them all. But I press on for the mark of the prize of the high calling. I am totally surrendered to fulfilling the call of God upon my life, so help me God!

SECTION II: Advanced Pastoral Ministry

Real Ministry 11

WHY YOU MUST AVOID A PSEUDO MINISTRY

In the Old Testament, true ministry was typified by the gold in the temple. Every important object in the temple was covered with pure gold. The Lord gave the design of the temple to Moses.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering…And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them… And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold…And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat"

(Exodus 25:1,2,8,17,21,22).

This is what God wanted His temple to look like.

1. NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO INTRODUCE HIS OWN VARIATIONS INTO GOD'S MASTER PLAN.

When King Solomon built the temple, he followed God's plan to the letter.

"And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure GOLD; and so covered the altar which was

of cedar. So Solomon overlaid the house within with PURE GOLD: and he made a partition by the chains of GOLD before the oracle; and he overlaid it with GOLD.

And the whole house he overlaid with GOLD, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with GOLD… And within the oracle he made two cherubim of olive tree, each ten cubits high… And he overlaid the cherubim with GOLD… And the floor of the house he overlaid with GOLD, within and without"

(1Kings 6:20-23, 28,30).

"And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord: the altar of GOLD, and the table of GOLD, whereupon the shewbread was, And the candlesticks of pure GOLD, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of GOLD, And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure GOLD; and the hinges of GOLD both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple"

(1 Kings 7:48-50).

Many years later, another king substituted the gold with brass. Brass looks very much like gold. It is "close and parallel", but it is not gold.

2. YOU MUST NOT SUBSTITUTE ANYTHING FOR REAL BIBLICAL MINISTRY.

King Rehoboam brought brass into the Lord's house. It may have looked like the real thing but God was not pleased with it. Brass is an alloy consisting of copper and zinc. In reality, brass is very different from pure gold! Many people are deceived when the real is substituted for the pseudo.[1] That is why I am writing this textbook.

"So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the TREASURES of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of BRASS, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house"

(2 Chronicles 12:9,10).

I want to help you to keep the gold in the temple.

3. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE WHO IS GETTING INTO THE MINISTRY TO KNOW WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT!

As is the case with many professions, lay people do not really know what the professional does.

Lay people do not really know, for example, what a pilot or doctor knows. I realize that many people like to create a mystical air about what they do. They do this to enhance their image within the profession. However, the Lord has urged me to teach you what a pastor's real duties are.[2] In this textbook, I will not attempt to cover every detail of a pastor's work. I am only going to share the main things with you.

It is my prayer that you will believe in the simplicity of the ministry. I realize that people often prefer complicated doctrines to simple truths. They feel that the more complicated the message is, the more likely it is from God. But the greatest truths are often simple enough for the common man to grasp.

The Crossroad of Ministry

In the Book of Acts, Peter and the other apostles arrived at a crossroad of ministry. At that crossroad, they had to decide which direction to take. They had to decide whether they were going to be real ministers or secular administrators. But they chose real ministry!

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should LEAVE THE WORD OF GOD, AND SERVE TABLES. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But WE WILL GIVE OURSELVES CONTINUALLY TO PRAYER, AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD"

(Acts 6:2-4).

You must be able to differentiate between true ministry and pseudo-ministry. A pseudo-ministry is not the real thing! Like brass, which is a poor substitute for gold, it is close and parallel to the real thing. There are many things that look like true ministry, but are not. For instance, being a church administrator makes you busy around the ministry. Many pastors are actually administrators. They are seen to be busy in and around the church office.

Psychologically, they feel that they are working for God. After all, the rest of the world is in offices and behind computers. People seem to have something important to do from nine to five everyday. They go out there as secretaries, security men, computer programmers and so on. If the pastor is not seen to be doing something similar, he feels unemployed. I have had people ring me at home at eleven o'clock in the morning. They would ask if I were still asleep. They assume that a pastor sleeps all week.

Dear ministers of the Gospel, do not be moved by people's opinions. Do not yield to worldly pressures. It is the prince of the power of the air who governs and directs the world. Everything in the world is controlled from the Spirit realm. Satan is a clever being and has deceived the whole world. But this deception must not come into the church.

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"

(Ephesians 2:2).

The Deception of the World

"Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die! When you die you are dead like a dog! Heaven is on earth and hell is on earth! Life is what you make it!" These subtle slogans have influenced the masses to live their lives chasing after money and pleasure. When this kind of thinking enters the church, people feel that only secular (non-spiritual) things are of importance. Even pastors are under pressure to buy computers and sit in offices like everyone else.

But we are not "everyone else"! We are shepherds of God's flock! Shepherds are "dirty" people who live among the sheep, and who give their lives for them. A shepherd is not an armchair executive! When you declare that your work is prayer, you immediately look queer! Government officials have the audacity to suggest that the church spend its time doing more "fruitful" things. Indeed!

What is more fruitful than prayer? Why should we listen to unbelievers tell us how to do our job? Why should godless men teach the church her duties? The Great Commission is our principal instruction from the head of the church.[3]

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world”

(Matthew 28:19,20).

Read it for yourself! It is in black and white! There is no mention of social, health or educational work.

Health and education may be by-products of the Great Commission but a by-product must not become the main product! Today, large sections of the church are mere hospitals, schools, relief organizations and social clubs. This is unfortunate! You will notice that secular health organizations and educational institutions do not set aside their jobs to preach the Word of God! Satan smiles approvingly as the ministers of the Gospel metamorphose into politicians, social workers and health workers. The gold of ministry has been substituted with brass![4]

This attitude filters down to the ordinary Christian. One day, a young student brought me a report from the university. He said, "Pastor, God is moving on the campus!" I said, "really, what is happening?" He said, "God is working!" So I asked, "How is God moving? What is He doing?" He said to me, "People are passing their exams!" I was taken aback. "Exams?" Although I didn't voice it out, I thought to myself, "When God moves, people get saved and filled with the Spirit." Passing exams is a blessing from God but it is not the move of God. Let us not get confused about God's work. Let us

understand what the Bible teaches about ministry. Let's not mistake brass for gold. Let us avoid the judgment of Rehoboam by bringing only gold into the temple.

It is my prayer that as you read this textbook you will understand what pastors, shepherds and church leaders are supposed to do. It's time to move away from "pseudo-ministry". We cannot hasten the return of the Lord Jesus Christ with something that looks like the real thing but is not.

THREE REASONS FOR AVOIDING A PSEUDO-MINISTRY

In summary, these are the three reasons why we should avoid a pseudo ministry:

1. The church is the only institution that is mandated to preach the Gospel and make disciples of every nation. No one else will do our job for us!

2. We must not try to impress the world by doing things that they want us to do. God is the one who called us and He is the one we must seek to please.

3. We can only defeat Satan and his cohorts with real ministry! A pseudo ministry has no place in this great end-time battle. I have a little code that will help you and I to remember the humble duties of a God ordained pastor. And it goes like this: P for prayer, V for visitation, T for teaching (counseling and preaching) and I for interaction. (P.V.T.I.)

HOW TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY

You can achieve excellence in ministry! Your ministry does not have to be mediocre. However, you must realize that excellence must be achieved by God's standards, and not human standards. I want to show you four keys that brought excellence to Jesus' ministry. Jesus Christ is the greatest example for all of us.[5] He is given to us so we can see what God looks like. In every situation we have the best example to follow.

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE of his person”

(Hebrews 1:3).

Remember this! When you don't know what to do, do what Jesus did. Jesus is the good shepherd, (John 10:11). He is the best example of a pastor you could ever have. Are you a good pastor? Who endorses your ministry—God or man? Would Jesus say "Well done, good and faithful servant" to you?

Jesus - The Model of Excellence

Since Jesus is the example of excellence, let us look at Jesus for direction in ministry.[6] I want us to look at four main areas of the good Shepherd's ministry: prayer, visitation, teaching and interaction (PVTI). A good understanding of these four aspects of Jesus' ministry will transform your pastoral ministry.

1. PRAYER

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there PRAYED"

(Mark 1:35).

2 VISITATION

"And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they ENTERED INTO THE HOUSE of Simon and Andrew, with James and John"

(Mark 1:29-31).

3. TEACHING

"And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may PREACH there also: for therefore came I forth. And he PREACHED in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils"

(Mark 1:38,39).

4. INTERACTION

"Now as HE WALKED BY THE SEA OF GALILEE, HE SAW SIMON AND ANDREW his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men"

(Mark 1:16,17).

These scriptures show us that Jesus was a man of prayer, a man of preaching, a man of visitation and a man who interacted with the people.

[The Purposes of Prayer 12]

REASONS WHY MINISTERS MUST PRAY

Prayer is the foundation for every real ministry.[1] Prayer is actually the ministry.[2] Anyone who discovers this reality will have a great and fruitful ministry. Let me give you ten reasons why every minister should pray.

1. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER IS A GREAT ACT OF FAITH.

Prayer is one of the greatest acts of faith. I never used to think so! I always used to think that praying was different from exercising faith. But now I realize that prayer demonstrates and releases faith. The reason for this is simple; whenever you pray, you are declaring that you do not have faith in the arm of flesh. Have you not noticed that every time you begin to pray, one hundred different "things to do" come to your mind?

Something tells you to make a call. Something says to you 'get up and go'. Something tells you to organize that meeting so that you have good success. When you decide to pray, you are saying that prayer will have a greater effect than all those physical things you have to do. In other words, you are saying that God's direct intervention is the most important thing for your ministry. That is faith in the arm of God.

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, SHALL HE FIND FAITH on the earth?”

(Luke 18:1-8).

After this great lesson on prayer, Jesus asked an important question. Will I find faith on earth? He was asking: 'will I find people on earth who pray?' In other words, Jesus wondered whether he would find this expression of faith (prayer) when he returned to the earth.

PRAYER IS AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH

Do you want to be a great man of faith? A man of faith is a man of great exploits. Become a great man of faith by becoming a man of prayer. Prayer is one of the greatest expressions of faith in God. “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).

As you can see, you cannot please God without faith. That means you cannot please God in the ministry without prayer. You do not please God by being an administrator, accountant or computer wizard. You please God by praying and demonstrating faith in Him.

2. PRAYER MAKES YOU INTO A MAN OF AUTHORITY.

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY, and not as the scribes”

(Matthew 7:28,29).

You will notice that Jesus was a man of authority. Authority can be explained as "Not easily- defined, invisible, magnetic aura that surrounds a man of God." Authority emanates from your closeness to God. The closer you are to a person, the more confidently you speak about him. You will have more authority when you speak of him. For instance, when a great man dies, his death may not be announced immediately.

There are different reasons for this. For instance, one of the heads of state of Nigeria, General Aguiyi-Ironsi, was assassinated on the 28th July 1966, but it was not announced until 14th January 1967. However, if you were close to the family you would have been able to speak authoritatively about whether he was dead or alive. If you said that the person was dead, people would believe you because of your closeness. The closer you are, the more authority you have.

The more you pray the closer you are to God.[3] If you are close to God it means you have more authority with God and with man. As you pray people will not be able to explain that invisible magnetic aura that surrounds you. You will have a following without even understanding why people follow you! You will have a crowd without being able to explain why! Your teaching will have more power! Your instructions will be obeyed! All these are the results of ministerial prayer that make you into a man of authority.

HOW JESUS BECAME A MAN OF AUTHORITY

Jesus was not introduced to this world by anyone. He was not appointed as a teacher by anyone. In fact, his background was questioned and many had reservations about his parentage. But Jesus knew the secret of having authority with man. He went into the wilderness and waited on God.

“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).

The word "power" is translated from the Greek word dunamis. Dunamis means "miraculous power, ability, abundance, strength, violence, mighty wonderful work and enabling power." Jesus had become a man of authority! He had new strength, abundance and power.[4] This new invisible magnetic aura around Jesus was derived from prayer.[5] The response to his first sermon in Nazareth was amazing.

“AND ALL BEAR HIM WITNESS AND WONDERED at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.”

(Luke 4:22).

Jesus had equally great results in Capernaum. People were simply amazed with his preaching and ministry.

“And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. AND THEY WERE ASTONISHED at his doctrine: for his word was with power”

(Luke 4:31,32)

Where do you think this authority and success came from? Where did all these crowds come from? Why were people suddenly listening to this thirty-year-old man? This is what I call the "not-easily-defined, invisible, magnetic aura that surrounds a man of prayer."

Perhaps you don't have anyone to introduce you in ministry. Like Jesus, you can become a man of authority and receive recognition.[6]

3. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER MAKES YOU A MAN OF ANOINTING.

When you are close to someone, something rubs off on you. Whenever you spend time in prayer, you are spending time talking to God. The more you talk to someone, the closer you become to the person.

The closer you are to someone, the more things rub off on you. Do you want some of God's glory to be on you? Do you want the anointing to be on your life? I wish I could offer you an easier way but only prayer will bring you close to God.

The example of Moses tells it all. Moses went into the mountain and stayed in the presence of the Lord for a long time.

"And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights"

(Exodus 24:18)

You will notice that Moses was a man who spent long hours with the Lord.[7] After being so long on the mountain, the glory of the Lord was evident on him. Dear pastor, this is what will happen to you when you spend hours with the Lord. There will be glory on your life and ministry.

"But if the ministration of death written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold THE FACE OF MOSES FOR THE GLORY of his countenance"

(2 Corinthians 3:7)

4. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER BINDS DEMONIC ACTIVITIES IN YOUR MINISTRY.

Dear pastor friend, a church is not a secular organization. You need to bind the devil for several important reasons:

a. You must bind his activity that causes divisions and disloyalty amongst leaders.

b. You must bind his influence that causes backsliding, immorality and sin in your members.

c. You must bind the demons that cause poverty, depression and oppression in your members.

d. You must bind the spirits that raise accusations and slander against the church. Whether you like it or not, Satan assigns demons to attack and destroy the church. If you do not bind the devil he will bind you in your own church.[9] You will be unable to minister. No one will receive from you and you will wonder what is going on. The devil will scatter your congregation time and time again.[10] There will be a complex network of stories, accusations, slander and discussions that constantly divide the church. rise up today and bind Satan and demons in your church.[11]

5. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER CREATES AND GIVES BIRTH TO NEW DIMENSIONS IN MINISTRY.

"For as soon as Zion travailed, SHE BROUGHT FORTH HER CHILDREN"

(Isaiah 66:8).

A very important revelation about prayer is the fact that prayer has a creative potential.[12] If you are starting out in ministry, you will need to pray until something that doesn't exist comes into existence. Creating something is different from maintaining it. Many people can maintain what has been created but it takes a man of prayer to create new things. If you are sent out to do a pioneering work, be a man of prayer.[13] A man of prayer is a man who creates new spiritual dimensions. The Apostle Paul was a man of prayer. He said, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU"

(Galatians 4:19).

Paul had to travail for Christ to be formed in these Christians. Paul did not try to do it by any other means. Forming committees, organizing meetings, having Bible studies and showing love does not create new dimensions. I have been involved in establishing new churches, fellowships and ministries for many years. From my experience I can give you a little suggestion. The first suggestion is, PRAY. The second suggestion is also to PRAY. And the third is to PRAY!

6. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER IS THE FIRST APOSTOLIC COMMAND TO EVERY MINISTER.

The apostle Paul had a lot of good advice and teaching for his son Timothy. He was taught about every conceivable subject in the ministry. Paul taught him about Bible study, about training of pastors and even about how to handle rebels. However, a good analysis of Paul's instructions to his son Timothy will reveal that the first command was to pray.[14]

"I exhort therefore, that FIRST OF ALL supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. For kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour"

(1 Timothy 2:1-3)

This scripture is usually referred to when the church is being taught about praying for the government. I agree that this verse is teaching us to pray for our leaders. But I want to draw your attention to the fact that it was the first major instruction that Paul gave to Timothy. And it was an instruction to pray. The first chapter of First Timothy does not contain any major commands to Timothy. In this all important letter, the apostle found it important first of all to tell Timothy to pray. A minister has many things to do, but first of all he must pray![15]

7. THE TO GIVE UP PRAYER WHEN THEY WERE UNDER PRESSURE FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES.

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.[16]

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word"

(Acts 6:2-4).

When the early church grew the apostles came under pressure to become administrators.[17] The mystery of ministry is this - when you pray you will give birth to many souls and much fruit. These new fruits will demand care and time from you. Their needs will overwhelm you. You will have a genuine burden to help them. As you become engaged in helping these ones, you will find less time to pray.

As you pray less, your ministry will plateau or decline. Your greatest duty therefore, is to be able to balance the need to look after the souls and the need to pray. I find myself struggling with this all the time. Peter and the other apostles took the right decision and preserved their ministries.[18] The baton has been handed over to us. Our greatest need is to spend hours in prayer. Let us not succumb to the pressure that wants us to neglect our great responsibility of intercession.

If we neglect prayer, who will do it?[19] What is the difference between the living sections and the dead sections of the church today? It is prayer! The section that is alive is where the blood of Jesus is flowing and where people are being saved. Medically speaking, a person is alive when his heart beats and the blood flows through the body. A person is also declared to be alive when the doctor can hear air blowing through the lungs. Spiritually speaking, when the blood of Jesus is flowing through the body and people are being saved, we can say that the church is alive. When the Holy Spirit is blowing through the body we can also say that the church is alive. There are many churches where nobody is

ever saved or filled with the Spirit. These are the dead parts of the church. There have always been dead parts of the church. Do you want your church to die? Do you want to be classified as a dead church? I hope not!

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, AND ART DEAD"

(Revelation 3:1).

One of the hallmarks of what people call revival is prayer. Where do you hear shouting and prayer all night long? Where do you hear of long prayer meetings with people speaking in tongues? In such places you will see people being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit continually. Do not take the subject of prayer lightly! Prayer is the lifeline to your ministry. That is why the apostles did not give up the ministry of prayer even when they were under pressure.

8. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER WAS THE GREATER PART OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY.

1 unit of preaching: 571.4 units of prayer. Think about it. Jesus preached and taught for three and a half years. Since then, He has been interceding for us. Three and a half years of teaching compared to two thousand years of prayer! This gives us a ratio of one unit of preaching for every five hundred and seventy one units of prayer That is an amazing ratio! Most ministers have more than ten units of preaching to one unit of prayer!

Perhaps you didn't know that Jesus is still carrying out His ministry towards us.[20] The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus is our shepherd and that He cares for us. Consider if you were a pastor caring for a congregation who had to travel abroad. Would your heart not be with the people you had left behind? Would you not pray for them? Would you not send messengers to them? Would you not send gifts to the congregation to help them along their way? This is exactly what is happening to Jesus. He keeps sending messages, gifts and blessings to us. Notice these revealing scriptures.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION for them" (Hebrews 7:25). "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, WHO ALSO MAKET INTERCESSION FOR US"

(Romans 8:34).

Jesus is alive! He is able to save us to the uttermost. In other words, He is rescuing us from every extreme and distressing situation. We are being saved to the uttermost because of Jesus' prayer.

Salvation is affecting every part of our lives because of Jesus' intercession. Think about how your converts would be saved to the uttermost if you prayed like Jesus prayed.

Greatness In Ministry Depends On Intercessory Abilities

Even in the Old Testament, predictions were made about the great ministry of Jesus because he was going to be an intercessor.[21] Intercession truly makes you into a great man of God. I have rarely seen a great man of God who is not a man of prayer. The cycle is like this: man of prayer means man of faith means great man of God.

"Therefore will I divide him A PORTION WITH THE GREAT, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bear the sin of many, and MADE INTERCESSION for the transgressors"

(Isaiah 53:12).

Do you want to be numbered among the great and strong in God's army? Move away from debates, arguments and endless discussions. Become an intercessor today.

9. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER RELEASES CAPTIVES.

If your eyes were opened spiritually you would suddenly see millions of people in spiritual captivity. They are captive to demon powers that are loose on this earth.[22] "To preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18). In my opinion, the people experiencing the strongest oppression are the people who live in Europe.

Our duty as ministers is to weaken the grip of these demonic powers over the souls on this earth.[23] At best our spiritual warfare can dislodge, displace or temporarily relocate demonic forces so that God's kingdom can gain ascendancy for a season.[24] "Pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4).

The demons in the madman of Gadara wanted to stay in the area and they got their way in the end. Jesus only relocated them within the Gadara community. The Bible teaches that the devil has a right to be around. There is no use in trying to cast the devil out of the earth. Satan has a lease period that he is exploiting to the fullest. He reminded Jesus that he had a lease and a right to be around. He reminded Jesus that it was not yet time for them to be put out of the earth.

"Jesus, thou Son of God art thou come hither to torment us BEFORE THE TIME?"

(Matthew 8:29)

A time will come when Satan will be permanently removed from the earth. We will not have to do that job. It will be done by a mighty angel from heaven. Our duty is just to weaken the stronghold so that some captives can escape. We can weaken the stronghold of the devil by prayer.[25] This is why the

devil said: "have you come before the time?". The devil can also read and write and he sees his future judgment in black and white. When this happens he will no longer have the power to deceive and to destroy the people on this earth. read it for yourself.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and SHUT HIM UP, and set a seal upon him, that he should DECEIVE THE NATIONS NO MORE, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season”

(Revelation 20:1-3).

This is what happens after one thousand years.

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever”

(Revelation 20:10).

For now, the only thing we can do is to weaken the grip and hold of satanic power on the souls of men. When this grip is weakened, the captives will walk away in freedom. When you pray, the power of the devil to hold unbelievers is weakened. Our greatest weapon is prayer. That is why nothing happens when there is no prayer. That is why a lot happens when people pray! That is why the devil is doing everything to prevent you from praying.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the PULLING DOWN OF STRONGHOLDS”

(2 Corinthians 10:4).

We have no weapons in the natural, he often tries to keep us operating in the natural realm. What a mistake it is to function mainly in the natural, a realm where we are unarmed and 'weaponless'! May the Lord open your eyes to understand this revelation of prayer![26]

10. PRAY BECAUSE PRAYER AVAILETH MUCH.

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”

(James 5:16).

The Bible teaches that prayer has great effects.[27] Almost every Christian knows this famous scripture on the power of prayer. The term "availeth much" is a little blind to us. Here are ten different definitions of this expression.

“To avail much” means:

a. To succeed

b. To prevail

c. To overcome

d. To be able to do something

e. To be strong against an opposing force

f. To be helpful

g. To make an impact

h. To strike an impression

i. To be effective

j. To accomplish much.

I also enjoy these translations of the Scripture

James 5:16, “Tremendous power is made available through a good man's earnest prayer” (James 5:16 Philips Translation). “The prayer of a righteous man can bring powerful results” (James 5:16 Olaf M Norlie Translation). “The prayer of a righteous man - makes tremendous power available - dynamic in its working”

(James 5:16 Amplified Translation), “An upright man's prayer, when it keeps at work is very powerful”

(James 5:16 Williams Translation).

[Spiritual Warfare 13]

EIGHTEEN FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Spiritual warfare is the art of fighting against spiritual forces on the earth.[1] These forces have captured the souls of millions. Like the Bible says, the devil has deceived the whole world. We may not be able to get rid of him now, but we will definitely weaken his grip on the masses through our prayer. We know that one day he will be dealt with permanently.

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and SHUT HIM UP, and set a seal upon him, that he should DECEIVE THE NATIONS NO MORE, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season"

(Revelation 20:1-3).

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"

(Revelation 20:10).

Let me now share with you eighteen facts you should know about our battle with the

demonic hordes on this earth.[2]

1. OUR PRINCIPAL ENEMY IS SATAN AND NOT OTHER HUMAN BEINGS.

He is the leader of the hordes of demonic forces on this earth. Satan is a powerful being who fell from a glorious estate.[3]

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet"

(Isaiah 14:12-19).

2. SATAN, AN INTELLIGENT BEING, HAS RESORTED TO THE WARFARE OF DECEPTION, TRICKS AND FANTASTIC SCHEMES.

Satan, who is our principal enemy, knows that he does not stand a chance against the might of the church.[4] "Put on the armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the WILES of the devil"

(Ephesians 6:11)

3. IN ORDER TO DEFEAT OUR ENEMY, WE MUST KNOW AS MUCH AS WE CAN ABOUT HIM.

This is one of the most important rules of war.[5] This is where secular armies engage in reconnaissance and intelligence work. Without this knowledge you will be defeated easily. Ask the US Army what happened to them in Vietnam.[6]

4. SATAN HAS A CONTAGIOUS NATURE/CHARACTER WHICH HE PASSES ON TO HIS FOLLOWERS.

A lot of information about our enemy can be gleaned by analyzing the twenty names and titles of Satan. Know your enemy so that you can defeat him.[7]

5. SATAN HAS A RIGHT TO BE ON EARTH.

He told Jesus that. He showed Jesus the nations of the world and offered them to Him. Jesus did not tell the devil that he was lying. He knew that the devil had the power to hand over the nations of the world. He did not argue about that. If it was not so, Jesus would not have been tempted.[8] "And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it"

(Luke 4:6).

6. THE DEVIL KNOWS THAT HE HAS A LEASE ON THE EARTH.

This lease will expire soon and the devil knows it. Our enemy in spiritual warfare is the devil. Satan is aware of the expiry date on his lease.[9]

"And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us BEFORE THE TIME?"

(Matthew 8:29).

7. IT IS NOT OUR DUTY TO RID THE EARTH OF SATAN AND HIS DEMONS.

Even Jesus did not try to do that! You do not try to get a tenant out of your house before the lease expires. You know that he will fight you in court. Our duty as ministers is to weaken the grip of demonic powers over the souls on this earth. At best our spiritual warfare can dislodge, displace or temporarily relocate demonic forces so that God's kingdom can gain ascendancy for a season.[10] "Pulling down of strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4).

8. SATAN IS A VERY WICKED LEASEE.

A lessee is a person who holds a property by lease. Satan is the god of this world for a period. The Bible tells us that the whole world lies in Satan's wicked arms because of this.

"And we know that we are of God, and THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN WICKEDNESS"

(1 John 5:19)

The property that Satan the lessee has is trembling under his evil tenancy. One day that power will be broken forever.

9. EVEN THOUGH WE CANNOT GET RID OF THE DEVIL PERMANENTLY, WE CAN ENGAGE HIM IN DIFFERENT KINDS OF WARFARE.

We can wrestle with him (Ephesians 6:12). We can cast him out of people (Mark 5:13). We can bind him (Matthew 18:18). We can pull down or weaken his strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4). We can fight his deception with the Word (Hebrews 4:12).[11]

10. SATAN'S MAIN STRATEGY IS TO CAPTURE THE WORLD INTO GROUPS OF "STRONGHOLDS" WHICH THINK IN A CERTAIN WAY.

The devil's strategy is to make the world think in a certain way so that he can lead them into self destruction. [12] The great philosophies of this world: humanism, atheism, communism and Marxism are manifestations of the imaginations of the devil. It is these imaginations (trends of thinking) that lead masses of people into self destruction.

[13] "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"

(2 Corinthians 10:4,5).

11. MINISTERS MUST UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF THE WORD IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

The church must destabilize and weaken strongholds on territories, nations, people and churches. All ministers must ensure that the Word of God gains pre-eminence. As the Word of God increases, Satan loses his grip over the souls. read this amazing scripture and believe in the power of the Word.

"And the WORD OF GOD INCREASED; and the number of the DISCIPLES MULTIPLIED in Jerusalem greatly"

(Acts 6:7).

As the Word of God increases, the number of Christians will multiply. That is why I write books and preach as hard as I can and as many times as possible. I know what it does to the kingdom of darkness.

12. CHRISTIAN LEADERS MUST USE THE TWOPRONGED WEAPON OF PRAYER AND THE WORD TO DEFEAT SATAN IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

The ministry of prayer and the ministry of the Word is real ministry. That is the two-edged weapon that God has given to us. The apostles practiced this! They refused to be drawn away from the ministry of the Word and prayer.[14] Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to PRAYER, and to the MINISTRY OF THE WORD"

(Acts 6:2,4).

13. THE BEST EXAMPLE OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE WAS CHRIST JESUS.

He taught and he prayed. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth"

(Mark 1:35-38).

If we want to have the results that Jesus had, we must use the methods that He used. And his methods were praying and teaching.[15]

14. APART FROM WEAKENING STRONGHOLDS, MINISTERS CAN DISLODGE, DISPLACE OR TEMPORARILY RELOCATE DEMONIC FORCES SO THAT GOD'S KINGDOM CAN GAIN ASCENDENCY.

In the ministry of Jesus, he relocated demons from people's bodies into swine.

“And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea”

(Mark 5:13).

15. ANYTIME YOU DEFEAT (WEAKEN OR DISLODGE) THE DEVIL, YOU CAN EXPECT A COUNTER ATTACK.

When Jesus defeated the devil in the wilderness, the Bible says that Satan relocated for a season. The devil did not leave him forever. If you were the devil would you leave your enemy forever? No! You would retreat, regroup and attack again another day.

“And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him FOR A SEASON”

(Luke 4:13).

16. PRAYER AND FASTING ARE WEAPONS THAT WEAKEN AND DISLODGE DEMONIC FORCES.

Jesus taught that demons could be dislodged by prayer and fasting.[16]

“Howbeit this kind GOETH NOT OUT BUT BY PRAYER and fasting”

(Matthew 17:21).

17. THE WORD OF GOD ALSO WEAKENS AND TORMENTS SATAN.

You will notice how the demon shouted out when Jesus taught the Word.

“And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, LET US ALONE; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him”

(Mark 1:23-25).

In this story, Jesus did not pray or bind the devil. But the devil said, "Stop it! You are tormenting me! You are hurting me!" The Bible describes the Word of God as a sword. Anytime you are speaking words, you are releasing swords into the atmosphere. Every pastor must use this great sword to achieve success in ministry.[17]

18. EVERY MINISTER MUST BE CAREFUL OF OPERATING IN THE NATURAL.

The Bible has warned us that we have no weapons in that realm.

“For the weapons of our warfare ARE NOT CARNAL, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds”

(2 Corinthians 10:4).

Because the devil knows that we are disarmed in the natural world he tries to keep us occupied in human, secular and natural things. That is why many ministers of the Gospel today are teachers, administrators, managers, etc. Be careful not to fall into this trap.

Effective Prayer 14

FIVE WAYS FOR PASTORS TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY

“The EFFECTUAL fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Not all prayers are effective prayers. Some prayers are what I call doodling and dawdling prayers. It is important to pray effectively in the ministry. You might as well be out there doing something less spiritual if your prayers are not going to work! You might as well say "twinkle, twinkle little star", if your prayers are not going to work.[1] I want to share with you five steps to praying effectively.

1. PRAY FERVENTLY.

Praying fervently is one of the conditions for effective prayer. To pray fervently means to pray ardently, with passion and feeling. The word fervent means passionate, enthusiastic, zealous, fanatical, impassioned, keen, avid, burning, ardent and eager.[2] If someone is watching you pray, he should be able to describe your prayer with one of the words you just read. If that is how your prayer is, I assure you that you will have great results. Certainly, doodling and dawdling do not show fervency in prayer![3]

2. PRAY IN TONGUES.

Every minister should spend several hours praying in tongues. Tongues is a gift that God has given to us. The Apostle Paul was very proud of his gift of tongues. He boasted: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all"

(1 Corinthians 14:18).

By this gift we can speak to God in a supernatural way. The gifts of the Spirit are not intended to be unnecessary ornamental appendages that may or may not be used. Use what God has given to you and you will be blessed in ministry.

3. HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Prayer should be a two-way affair. If you want to develop in ministry you are going to have to learn to speak to the Holy Spirit. You need to hear His voice as well. The Holy Spirit is to us what Jesus was to His disciples. Somebody to talk to when you need to. Ministers who engage in conversations with the Holy Spirit are often very advanced in their walk with God.[4]

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”

(John 14:18,26).

Take your prayer a step further. Speak to the Holy Spirit and hear Him speak back to you. You will have supernatural direction like you never imagined.

4. PRAY FOR A LONG TIME.

Two-minute prayers are different from hours of prayer. There is no scripture that says that if you do not pray for long hours God will not hear you. However, Jesus, the ultimate minister prayed for long hours. The example of Jesus is compelling enough to follow.[5]

"And in the morning, rising up A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed"

(Mark 1:35).

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and CONTINUED ALL NIGHT IN PRAYER to God"

(Luke 6:12).

As you can see, Jesus prayed for several hours. Paul was also someone who prayed for hours. Notice what he said in his letter.

"NIGHT AND DAY PRAYING EXCEEDINGLY that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith"

(1 Thessalonians 3:10).

5. PRAY STRATEGIC BIBLE PRAYERS.

Let your prayers be guided by the Word of God. Pray the prayers that are recorded in the Word of God. For instance Ephesians 1:17-19 contains one of the most powerful prayers a minister should pray. I have prayed this prayer for myself for many years. I suggest that you do the same. Another important prayer is found in Ephesians 3:15-19. This "Bible strategic prayer'" will make you pray to be grounded in love. This is very important for every pastor. Pastors make great sacrifices for the ministry but if they don't have love, they will lose their heavenly rewards. It is God's will that you reap the full benefits of your ministry in Heaven.

"Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing"

(1Corinthians 13:3).

Become a Word person. Trust yourself to God and His Word. Believe in the Word more than you believe in yourself.

Six Reasons For Praying Strategic Bible Prayers

Bible prayers are prayer outlines that can be found in the Word of God. There are several prayer topics that are outlined in the Word.[6] I am not saying that these are the only things you should ever pray about. But I believe that if you make this your main prayer line you will see a change in your ministry. For further insight on this subject, see my book on "Strategies for Prayer". I want to give you six reasons why you should stick to Bible prayers.

Very often our desires are corrupted by our corrupt human estate. No matter how spiritual a man of God is, he is at his best, still a man!

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"

(1 Corinthians 15:53).

No matter how spiritual we become we are unable to see things clearly.

"For WE KNOW NOT what we should pray for as we ought"

(Romans 8:26).

"For now we see through a glass DARKLY"

(1 Corinthians 13:12).

This verse teaches us that we do not see things clearly. When you see a vision, what is actually happening is that you are being drawn towards the spirit world. The further out you are drawn, the clearer the vision becomes. In some cases, you are actually drawn out of your body. Like the Apostle Paul said, he knew a man who was caught up to the third heavens.

"I knew a man in Christ…such an one CAUGHT UP to the third heaven…How that HE WAS CAUGHT UP into paradise"

(2 Corinthians 12:2,3,4).

This man didn't even know whether he was in or out of his body. Most people are not drawn out very far and their visions are often a blurred picture that they are not certain of. In reality, a lot of what people call visions and prophecies are just impressions of things they see vaguely. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to guide us, even in prayer. When we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit controls our prayers.

However, the Holy Spirit has already given us guidance for prayer through the words of Jesus and the letters of Paul. If we follow these guidelines it will almost be equivalent to praying in tongues

because the Word will guide us on what to pray for.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord”

(Isaiah 55:8).

No matter how spiritual we become we are still human beings in a container of flesh. I have found God teaching me things that I thought I knew. I would have raised the dead many years earlier in my ministry, but His ways were not my ways. I prayed and fasted that God would use me to raise the dead father of a good friend. But God didn't seem to take any notice of me. I felt let down and disgraced. I had gone out there in faith, declaring that the dead would rise in the name of Jesus!

Unfortunately for me, my ways are not His ways. If that dead man had been raised, my entire life and ministry could have been ruined. God had His way and His way was to protect me and gently introduce me to real ministry.[7] Almost twenty years later, when a lady stood on my crusade platform testifying that her dead child had been raised as I ministered, I felt no emotion at all. I felt that if God wanted to raise the dead, it was entirely up to Him.

I knew that I was an observer on the crusade platform. If this had happened twenty years earlier, perhaps I would have backslidden out of pride. This is why we must pray more of Bible strategic prayers. God knows things that we do not know. Let us trust ourselves to His wisdom. The Bible teaches that many prayers miss the target. When your arrow misses the target, it means that it did not get where you intended it!

Why should you pray without your prayers getting to the Father? Why should you pray without your prayers having the desired effect? It's time to stop missing the target.[8]

“Ye ask, and receive not, because YE ASK AMISS”

(James 4:3).

Why do so many prayers miss the target? Once again, it's because we are human. We cannot see clearly so we miss the target by miles. Trust yourself to Bible strategic prayers.[9] If you go through the Lord's prayer, you will discover that every important area is covered. Under the Lord's strategic prayer, you pray for your daily needs, forgiveness, and protection for the work of God.

The Pauline prayers in the Book of Ephesians are a little more difficult to understand. The topics themselves seem to be mystical. Perhaps that is why they are even more important for us. You may never know the effect of praying for the Spirit of revelation and wisdom

(Ephesians 1:17).

For example, the second Ephesians prayer (Ephesians 3:17) teaches that we should be rooted and grounded in love.[10] Naturally speaking, it does not occur to most of us to pray that we will be established in Christian love. But when you understand that all good works that are performed outside Christian love amount to zero, perhaps you will understand why the Holy Spirit gave us that prayer.

Notice this verse in 1 Corinthians 13:3.

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it PROFITETH ME NOTHING"

(1 Corinthians 13:3).

It's a good thing for you to serve God, even paying the ultimate price for the ministry. However, in one stroke of a pen we are warned that without love all our good deeds will amount to zero. When you pray these prayers you will cover all important areas of your life. Perhaps you do not feel like praying for your government. There are some governments that one would naturally curse rather than pray for.

However, if you follow the biblical pattern of prayer, you will pray for them rather than curse them.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"

(1Timothy 2:1,2).

Deliver yourself from leaving out a vital area of prayer by following these biblical strategic prayers.

Fervent Prayer 15

SEVEN GOOD EXAMPLES OF FERVENT PRAYER

1. ELIJAH'S ARDENT PRAYER AS HE BENT OVER ASKING FOR RAIN, REMAINS THE MOST WELL KNOWN EXAMPLE OF FERVENT PRAYER.[1]

"And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and HE CAST HIMSELF DOWN UPON THE EARTH, AND PUT HIS FACE BETWEEN HIS KNEES. And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel"

(1 Kings 18:41-46).

This is the classic example of fervent prayer that was spoken of by James. I see you praying fervently to release the rain of God's blessing on your ministry! Look at the example of Elijah as he prayed to God for rain.[2]

2. HANNAH'S TEARFUL EMOTIONAL PRAYER FOR A CHILD ALSO YIELDED FANTASTIC RESULTS.

"So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, IF THOU WILT INDEED LOOK ON THE AFFLICTION OF THINE HANDMAID, AND REMEMBER ME, AND NOT FORGET THINE HANDMAID, BUT WILT GIVE UNTO THINE HANDMAID A MAN CHILD, THEN I WILL GIVE

HIM UNTO THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE, AND THERE SHALL NO RAZOR COME UPON HIS HEAD. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief

have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad"

(1 Samuel 1:9-20).

Hannah was in serious trouble. She desperately needed a breakthrough. She didn't just doodle and dawdle. To doodle and dawdle means to hang around, loiter, waste time and to make wavy impressions. She was dead serious about what she wanted from God. Dear pastor, fervent prayer will make you give birth to a new dimension in ministry.[3]

3. JACOB'S ALL-NIGHT WRESTLING PRAYER YIELDED TREMENDOUS RESULTS.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there WRESTLED A MAN with him until the breaking of the day"

(Genesis 32:24).

Jacob was blessed and so was his seed. Several thousand years have gone by but the fruit of this fervent prayer is evident for all to see. Israel still stands as one of the most favored nations on the earth.[4]

4. MOSES' BURNING PRAYER FOR VICTORY OVER AMALEK, IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF FERVENT PRAYER.

"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when MOSES HELD UP HIS HAND, THAT ISRAEL PREVAILED: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun"

(Exodus 17:8-12).

When your children's lives are at stake you cannot afford to laze about. Doodling prayers never helped anyone!

5. DAVID'S PASSIONATE REQUEST THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT BE NOT WITHDRAWN FROM HIM WAS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A FERVENT PRAYER

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of

thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in me. CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM THY PRESENCE; AND TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME"

(Psalm 51:1-11).

David knew what it meant if the Holy Spirit were to leave him. He couldn't afford to have that happen. God does listen to passionate fervent prayers. He looks disdainfully at Christians who while away time just waiting for the prayer meeting to end.

6. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH PRAYED FERVENTLY FOR THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE UPON THEIR LEADERS.

"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

By stretching forth thine hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness"

(Acts 4:23,24,30,31).

God heard their prayer and look at the results. When a church begins to pray fervently there are always results. Sometimes, I look at people who claim to be having a prayer meeting. Some of them are sleeping and others are just whiling away the time. How would you feel if someone fell asleep whilst talking to you? You would think that he is either disrespectful or very uninterested in you.[5]

7. JESUS PRAYED PASSIONATELY FOR THE WILL OF GOD TO BE DONE IN HIS LIFE.

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared"

(Hebrews 5:7).

The evidence of this was when He began to sweat blood. Fervent prayer always works. The ministry of Jesus was a great success! You will have great success in your ministry when you learn how to pray fervently. Whenever you don't know what to do, do what Jesus did. Jesus shouted when He prayed! Jesus prayed until He was sweating! Read it for yourself!

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”

(Luke 22:44).

SIGNS OF FERVENT PRAYER

Since fervency in prayer is so important to achieve results, how can you know that you are praying fervently? I want to show you seven signs of fervent prayer. As usual, the best examples are in the Bible.[6]

1. THE POSTURE

The ministry of Elijah has the most famous example of fervent prayer. It is interesting to note his posture when he prayed.[7]

"And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he CAST HIMSELF DOWN upon the earth, and put his FACE BETWEEN HIS KNEES"

(1 Kings 18:42).

Begin to observe yourself and those around you at prayer meetings. What is their posture? Your posture speaks volumes about the kind of prayer you are engaged in.[8]

2. A LIFTED VOICE

When Jesus was on earth He prayed with loud cries and tears. Are your prayers soft or loud? Jesus prayed with strong cries and tears. I prefer to follow the example of Jesus!

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with STRONG CRYING AND TEARS unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared"

(Hebrews 5:7).

There are no meaningless details in the Bible. These things were written for our example. Let us learn from the heroes of faith.

3. Weeping

Several Bible characters wept whilst they prayed. Our Lord Jesus was the best example. Jesus offered up prayers with tears. There is nothing wrong with weeping whilst you pray. Jesus prayed fervent prayers and was heard by His Father. Another famous prayer warrior was Hannah. Hannah was the mother of Samuel. The Bible describes her prayer time in graphic detail.

"And she was in bitterness of soul, and PRAYED UNTO THE LORD, AND WEPT SORE"

(1 Samuel 1:10).

4. EXHAUSTION

Physical energy may be exacted from you when you pray. Jacob prayed all night. That must have been tiring. Jesus also prayed till everyone around Him fell asleep.

"And he cometh (after praying) and findeth his disciples asleep"

(Matthew 26:40)

Moses prayed so hard that people had to help him lift up his hands.[9] "But Moses hands were heavy: and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands"

(Exodus 17:12).

5. QUIET GROANING

"And it came to pass, that she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, SHE SPAKE IN HER HEART; ONLY HER LIPS MOVED"

(1 Samuel 1:12).

This was definitely an example of fervent prayer. This woman prayed passionately for a child. There was no shouting or screaming. The Bible says that Eli could not hear what she was praying about. He even thought she was drunk. This is what I call quiet groaning.[10] Jesus was another example of someone who groaned in prayer.

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, HE GROANED IN THE SPIRIT, and was troubled"

(John 11:33).

6. INNER DETERMINATION

Determination is not easily manifested. It is a quiet resolve to pray until something happens. Anyone who is determined to pray until something happens is a passionate or fervent prayer warrior.[11]

"And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I WILL NOT LET THEE GO, EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME"

(Genesis 32:26).

People who come for prayer meetings without a determination to receive something from God often doodle and dawdle until the meeting is over. Be determined to get answers for all your prayer requests!

7. DESPERATE LANGUAGE

If you study the prayers of David as recorded in the Psalms you will find the language of a desperate man. David was a man who was looking for God's help. A man reaching out frantically for the hand of God. remember this: God listens to every word you say. The words you speak matter! Look at one example of King David's prayers.[12]

“In thee O Lord, do I put my trust; LET ME NEVER BE ASHAMED: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; DELIVER ME SPEEDILY: be thou my strong rock, for AN HOUSE OF DEFENCE TO SAVE ME. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name sake lead me, and guide me”

(Psalm 31:1-3).

NINE STEPS TO PRAYING FOR A LONG TIME

1. ACCEPT THE FACT THAT PRAYER THAT IS LESS THAN ONE HOUR IS NOT SIGNIFICANT PRAYER FOR A MINISTER.

"Could you not watch with me for ONE HOUR?"

(Matthew 26:40).

For as long as I can remember, I have always considered short prayer insignificant. I have always felt that unless I spent a long time in prayer, I would not accomplish much. This has been a good psychological guide for me. It has made me spend many hours of my life in prayer. When you believe that prayer for less than an hour is not enough, you will never be satisfied with five and ten minute prayers.

This will gradually propel you into lengthy periods of prayer. You will not lose anything by praying for long periods of time![13]

2. ALWAYS PRAY WITH A CLOCK OR A WATCH IN VIEW.

As soon as you begin to pray, look at the time. When you do that, you will be compelled to spend a decent period of time in prayer. When you do not look at your watch you will think that you prayed longer than you actually did. You will tell yourself, "Oh, I must have prayed for two hours" when you only prayed for ten minutes. Unless you are experienced in prayer, you will make wrong judgments about the length of time you have prayed.

Nowadays, I can tell when I have prayed for an hour. Initially, I would pray for ten minutes and think it was an hour. This is why you need to keep an eye on the clock.

3. PRAY WITH PREACHING TAPES.

I always pray with some kind of preaching or music in the background. There is a principle I want you to understand. The speed of preaching/music is a hundred times faster than the speed of silence. This means that time runs a hundred times faster when there is some kind of background preaching or music.

Have you ever been there when people were asked to observe a minute's silence? Have you noticed how long the period of silence was? Did you know that they never really spend a whole minute of silence? This is because of the principle I just shared with you: the speed of preaching/music is a hundred times faster than the speed of silence. When you pray with the sound of preaching or music in the background, time runs much faster!

Before you know it, you would have accomplished several hours in prayer! The sound of the preaching of the Word of God creates a very conducive atmosphere for spiritual things. Dear friend, we are constantly bombarded with the secular environment of our jobs, of godless friends and of television. This kind of atmosphere actually prevents prayer. The environment in our homes is often anti-prayer.

You need something that will keep you in a prayer mood for at least one hour. Sometimes the message on the tape will spur you on to continue in the Spirit! Try it and you will never be the same again.

4. PRAY WITH MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND.

"Now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that THE HAND OF THE LORD CAME upon him"

(2 Kings 3:15).

Godly music creates a beautiful worship environment. The Bible calls it the hand of the Lord. I always play music or preaching tapes when I am praying. Dear friend, the very atmosphere of our world is charged with demonic entities. The prince of the power of the air and his cohorts pollute the very air we breathe. It is difficult to pray in such an environment. This is the reason why many Christians do not pray for long hours. They are operating in a difficult atmosphere. But there is good news: You can have your own little church service wherever you are!

The Spirit of the Lord can move over you in your car. This has happened to me many times. I consider my car as a prayer closet. Invest whatever it takes to create the right prayer atmosphere. The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you as you stay in the environment of anointed minstrels.

5. PRAY WITH A PREACHING VIDEO.

Sometimes, the sound of preaching or the sound of music is not enough to get you into the right

flow for prayer. At times, you need to have the video dimension. Sometimes both seeing and hearing are needed to create the right atmosphere for successful prayer. I often pray with a preaching video. I receive great blessings when I operate in the right environment.

6. PRAY 90% OF YOUR PRAYER IN TONGUES.

Tongues are a gift from God. This gift helps you to pray whilst your mind is inactive.[14]

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful"

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

As you pray in tongues for hours, your spirit man will be edified and charged up.

7. READ THE BIBLE AND OTHER CHRISTIAN BOOKS AS YOU PRAY.

Because I pray in tongues for long periods, my mind is free for reading. I constantly read whilst I spend hours in prayer. My spirit prays to the Lord while my mind concentrates on the Bible that I am reading. This helps me to pray even longer hours.

8. DISCONNECT YOUR PHONE.

The telephone is a favorite tool that is used by the devil to interrupt your prayer. With the feeling that you might receive an important call lingering in your mind, you are unable to switch off your phone. Most of us are unable to switch off our phones. Needless interruptions break up our precious hour of prayer into thirty minutes of piecemeal five-minute sessions.

I don't know if it happens to you. But as soon as I am getting into deep fellowship with the Lord, the phone rings! Sometimes it is so painful to receive an unnecessary call at the wrong time. I have decided that if I am serious about praying I must disconnect my phone. The world can wait. Everything can wait until I finish talking to my Lord. When I do not disconnect my phone, it means only one thing: I am not serious about the prayer time!

9. ISSUE A 'DO NOT DISTURB' NOTICE.

Since you do not live on an island, you are going to need the co-operation of the people who live with you. If you are going to have an effective prayer life, people must know when you are praying. Just as they wouldn't disturb you if you were in the bathroom, they must not disturb you when you are in prayer! Do not be ashamed to let your friends and people at home know that you are in prayer and should not be disturbed.[15]

Whilst in school, I was particularly impressed with a friend's ability to issue strong "do not disturb" notices. I always remember the notice he put outside his box room to ward off other students.[16] It read something like this, “If you knock on this door and receive no response from within do not continue knocking or call for me. If you do anything which contradicts this simple instruction be it known unto you that this door will not be opened unto you no matter who you are!!!”

Such notices are very good! I once had to warn the workers in my house. I told them that if they called me whilst I was in prayer, I would dismiss them immediately. This gave me great freedom for prayer in my own home.

UNDERSTANDING THE LAWS OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER

The word intercede comes from the Latin word 'intercedere'. This word means to intervene, interfere or to mediate. “And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him”

(Isaiah 59:16).

God has called every minister to interfere with Satan's plans to destroy the church.[1] We have to rise up and intervene as the hordes of demons destroy young Christians. We must interfere with every demonic agenda to destroy the kingdom of God.

1. “TO INTERCEDE” MEANS “TO COME BETWEEN SO AS TO MODIFY THE COURSE OF EVENTS”.

Satan's plan is to lead entire nations to Hell. By the power of intercession, we will modify the course of history. People who should have gone to hell will be saved. Powerful men of intercession are constantly modifying the course of events.

2. “TO INTERCEDE” MEANS “TO BE SITUATED BETWEEN THINGS”.

God has called every minister to be situated between the devil and God's people. That is what a shepherd does. He is situated between the wolves and the sheep. The wolves and jackals do not have access to the sheep because of the shepherd's presence.[2]

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none”

(Ezekiel 22:30).

Intercession means to stand in the gap.[3] It means to become an obstacle to Satan and his agents. Dear man of God, you are doing a good work. Dear missionary, your presence in that nation stands as a veritable rock of protection for many souls. Do not give up! Keep up the good work! Pray for the people God has given to you! You are the last barrier between those precious souls and the enemy.

Reasons Why Every Pastor Needs An Intercessor

When you understand what intercession does, you will never stop praying for ministers. Our existence on this earth is constantly under threat. Although we don't realize it, we are in danger from so many things. Intercession comes in as a blockade between you and those perils. Sometimes we are so vulnerable and we don't even know it!

Remember that to intercede means to intervene, interfere or to mediate. Intercession means to come between so as to modify the course of events. An interceding person becomes situated between things. When Paul listed the dangers he had been through as a minister, he was actually making a list of things that he needed intercession for.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in LABOURS more abundant, in STRIPES above measure, in PRISONS more frequent, in DEATHS oft. Of the Jews five times received I FORTY STRIPES save one. Thrice was I BEATEN with rods, once was I STONED, thrice I suffered SHIPWRECK, a night and a day I have been in THE DEEP; IN JOURNEYINGS often, in perils of WATERS, in perils of ROBBERS, in perils by mine own COUNTRYMEN, in perils by the HEATHEN, in perils in the CITY, in perils in the WILDERNESS, in perils in the SEA, in perils among FALSE BRETHREN; IN WEARINESS and PAINFULNESS, in watchings often, in HUNGER and THIRST, in fastings often, in COLD and NAKEDNESS. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

(2 Corinthians 11:23-27,29).

The twenty dangers that the apostle Paul encountered are actually the twenty reasons why every minister needs prayer.

TWENTY DANGEROUS ENCOUNTERS OF AN APOSTLE

1. Labors more abundant (long hours of work)
2. Stripes above measure (unbearable physical afflictions)
3. Prisons more frequent (political and governmental harassment)
4. Deaths oft (near death experiences)
5. Forty stripes save one (special personalized intimidation)
6. Beaten with rods (having rubbish thrown at you)
7. Once stoned (mob attacks, breaking of walls and political hatred)
8. Shipwrecked three times (the danger of car, train and plane crashes)
9. The deep (the danger of drowning)
10. Journeyings often (the danger of travelling and accidents)
11. Perils of waters (the danger of eating and drinking things you're not used to)
12. Perils of robbers (theft of church properties, offerings, mobile phones)
13. Perils in the city (prostitution, immorality, muggings, armed robbers)
14. Perils in the wilderness (the danger of being a foreigner)
15. Perils of the sea (more dangers for the travelling minister)
16. Perils among false brethren (spies in the church, secret service agents everywhere, disloyal people)
17. In hunger (no money for food)
18. In thirst (no money for drinks)
19. In cold (danger of inadequate heating, risk of catching infections)
20. In nakedness (no appropriate clothes, winter coats, etc.)

GUIDELINES FOR INTERCESSION

1. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF DEGENERATION

Man's need for an intercessor is not always apparent. Throughout the Bible there have always been men who stood in the gap for other men. We often think that intercession just prevents the devil from attacking Christians. Intercession deals with much more than that. It deals with certain laws that are in place in the earth today. When you understand these things, you will always want to pray for your church members.[4]

Remember again the definitions of intercession: to intercede means to intervene, interfere or to mediate. Intercession means to come between so as to modify the course of events. An interceding person becomes situated between things.

2. INTERCESSION DEALS WITH THE LAW OF DECAY IN THE CHURCH.

"Yet I have planted thee a noble vine, holy a right seed: how then ART THOU TURNED INTO THE DEGENERATE PLANT of a strange vine unto me?"

(Jeremiah 2:21).

Whether we like it or not, there is a law of degeneration at work in the earth. Everything we create begins to decay the day after it is completed. Every building decays as the years go by. Our bodies gradually degenerate as the years go by. Just look at your picture ten years ago and you will understand what I am talking about.

Wealth does not remain in one place forever. You may be rich today but your wealth may decay into nothing after ten years. There are cities that were very wealthy years ago. Today, these places have degenerated into large slums. To degenerate means to gradually become of a lower type. It is a gradual falling off to a lower form of development.

The church is no different. We are all under this law of degeneration. This is why shepherds are advised to look to the state of their flocks. If you leave a vibrant fellowship of Christians for three years without investing into it, it will decay. And that without remedy! You have to invest into it spiritually.

"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For RICHES ARE NOT FOREVER; and doth the crown endure to every generation?"

(Proverbs 27:23,24).

The degeneration of a church can be defined as: "to sink below a former or normal condition or character". Degeneration also means to deteriorate from a former standard. This law of degeneration

is at work in your church, and in your members. It affects all of us. This is why you need to intercede for your people. The law of degeneration is making the zealous ones less zealous. The law of degeneration is working on the sweet prayerful Christians.

It is making them lose interest in prayer. The law of degeneration is working against the holy Christians. It is making them to deteriorate into immoral backsliders. Dear pastor, you cannot sleep anymore. The law of degeneration is at work in your church. You need to rise up and intercede! Have you noticed how people start their Christian lives with such a zeal for witnessing and preaching the Word? Not long after, you hardly find them in church. What has happened? The law of degeneration! This is why it is so important to keep intercession and prayer alive in the church!

3. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF THE WORLD

Intercession deals with the law of the world

"Love not the WORLD, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the WORLD, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the WORLD passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever"

(1 John 2:15-17).

The world has a pervasive influence on the church.[5] Much of the church has become worldly and secular. This happens because the church is "plum in the middle" of the world. Intercession needs to go on so that the church does not become worldly. The things that are in the world, the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, stick themselves on to ministers without our even knowing it.

Man needs an intercessor! Demas needed an intercessor. He fell in love with the world and backslid. Fewer of our church members will backslide when we intercede for them. Intercession deals with the law of the world.

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world"

(2 Timothy 4:10).

4. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF THE FLESH

Intercession deals with the law of the flesh. Man has a need for an intercessor! The law of the flesh works against everything spiritual.[6] Paul was afraid of his own flesh. He said he knew that there was nothing good in his flesh.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not"

(Romans 7:18).

At one point, Paul said that he had lost confidence in his flesh.

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"

(Philippians 3:3).

Dear friend, if Paul had lost confidence in his flesh, what should we do? The flesh is ready to take you to hell. The flesh is working against church growth. The flesh is working against the very life of

the church. Your flesh is working against your spiritual progress.[7] The flesh makes the church members desire the wrong things and do the wrong things.

It is the flesh that makes church members lazy. It is because of the flesh that most church members do not come to church every Sunday. When a pastor thinks of his children in the Lord, his heart must burn with interventionary prayer. Father, help your children! Don't let them fall by the wayside.

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”

(1 Corinthians 9:27).

Another need for intercession is in the area of sickness and disease. Intercessory prayer prevents disease from fastening its hold on people. Remember that it is easier to prevent diseases than to treat them. Intercessory prayer will prevent the pastors from conducting unnecessary funerals.

5. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF THE ELEMENTS

Intercession deals with the law of the elements What are the elements? The elements are then earth, the wind, the fire and the water. Whether you know it or not, these elements can turn against your existence. We need intercession so that these elements are kept at bay.[8] When the elements turn against you, your ministry could be over.[9] This is what happens when there are earthquakes, fires, floods and storms.

During Jesus' ministry on earth, He had to deal with the elements. The elements were trying to end His life and ministry.

“And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea: and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”

(Matthew 8:23-27)

The disciples were amazed at how the elements responded to prayer commands. As you intercede for your people, they will be protected from any antagonistic elements in the earth. Sometimes it's the elements that bring about plane crashes, car pileups and other disasters. I see you rising up with the spirit of intercession for your people! Your ministry will be transformed.[10]

6. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF HUMANITY

Intercession deals with the law of humanity. The law of humanity deals with human nature. Here, we deal with two main areas:

a) The reality of human nature

b) The reality of human error

The human nature of ingratitude, forgetfulness and wickedness is well known. You do not have to look far to see a real war taking place. The wickedness in human nature is there for everyone to see. The genocide and brutal killings are evident. Jesus was aware of how human beings could turn against Him.

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man"

(John 2:24,25).

When the tide of human nature turned against Christ, his miracles did not mean much anymore. They murdered him within forty-eight hours. Do not underestimate the evil that is in man. Our intercessory prayer works against the tide of human ungratefulness and forgetfulness in ministry. Dear pastor, when you pray for your congregation, it will help them not to forget the love you have bestowed on them. Human error is often the cause for human disasters like the Titanic sinking or the Paddington train crash in London or the Concorde disaster.

Intercessory prayer will intervene to prevent human error from eliminating you. As a doctor, I have seen other doctors make mistakes. I have watched people die as a result of human error. I once watched a consultant gynecologist perform a major operation (laparotomy) on a young eleven-year-old girl. He thought she had a tumor in the lower abdomen. When they opened her up, all she had was compact feces in the colon.

This poor girl had been subjected to a major operation because the doctor did not examine her properly. All that this poor little girl needed was some medicine to make her go to the toilet! Other patients have died because surgeons forgot to remove some swabs or scissors from the abdomen before closing up. Even when medicine is being practiced, intercessory prayer is needed for protection against human error.

This is why we pray for people when they are receiving any kind of medical treatment. I watched a documentary called Flights from Hell. On this documentary, a pilot discovered that one of the wheels on the undercarriage was not coming out. This was because somebody (human error) had forgotten to

remove the chock from the undercarriage. I watched the plane undergoing amazing maneuvers to get the wheel out. In the end, the plane was forced to land on one wheel. It was a very lucky escape for everyone on the flight.

On another of these Flights from Hell, there was a flight from Bogota, Columbia to New York City. When the pilot got to New York, he was asked to go into a holding position and wait for his turn to land. He was kept in the air for over an hour. The tragic thing about this story was that the pilot failed to communicate to the air traffic control tower that he was running out of fuel and how he urgently needed to land.

Can you believe that the pilot circled with this plane until every drop of fuel was finished and then crashed just outside the airport? Who ever heard of a jetliner crashing because it ran out of fuel? It was later established that the pilot failed to communicate the urgency of his situation (human error) to the control tower. I tell you, the people in that plane needed intercessory prayer very badly. The passengers were in the hands of a very dangerous man. Intercessory prayer will intervene to protect your people from human error and human nature.[11]

7. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF NATURE

Intercession deals with the law of nature. When nature works against you, you will find yourself sweating! Nature speaks of the cycles and the seasons of the earth. It is about the natural things that God has created. When natural cycles change their usual character there are all sorts of problems. For instance, there are droughts, famines, floods and tornadoes. What is happening is the distortion of natural things.

When a natural wave of the ocean becomes enlarged then you have a tidal wave. When you fall into the sea and the tide takes you away, you are in the hands of nature. Wild animals, insects, viruses, bacteria and parasites are all manifestations of nature turning against man. I was once on a safari in South Africa. There were all sorts of wild animals in the park. I asked our guide if it was safe to get out and walk. He said to me, "I wouldn't do that!"

You see, if I had walked alone in that safari park, I would have been at the mercy of nature. I would have subjected myself to the dangerous elements of nature. The psalmist teaches about how blessed it is to have nature working in your favor. He predicts that anyone who walks in the Word of the Lord will have the seasons and the cycles working normally for him. When a woman is unable to have a child, a very natural process has been interrupted.

“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).

Bacteria and viral infections are a further distortion of nature. Bacteria, if you like, are like microscopic wild animals that can kill you. When they cross your path, nature has begun to work against you. Intercession is needed to prevent the forces of nature from consuming you.[12] Intercessory prayer can even stop what people may call "natural deaths". Intercessory prayer leads people into the Word, so that they can have the blessings of Psalm 1.

When a person is ungodly, he falls into the hands of nature, and nature blows him away. Read it for yourself! “The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which THE WIND DRIVETH AWAY.”

(Psalm 1:4).

8. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF THE DEVIL

Intercession deals with the law of the devil The law of the devil teaches that there is a devil out there. This devil and his agents are actively working against our lives. I have seen the devil twice! On both occasions he was trying to destroy me. Suddenly my eyes were open and I was able to see my enemy clearly. This is what happened to Paul in Macedonia. He was harassed by a demon for several days. Suddenly the Lord gave him a manifestation of the gift of discerning of spirits. This allowed him to know exactly what he was dealing with. He cast out the devil and that was the end of the harassment.

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour”

(Acts 16:16-18).

I have seen the devil twice. On both occasions when I had a manifestation of discerning of spirits, the devil was at my right hand side. On one occasion, I saw the devil as a little monkey sitting on my bedside table. I was so surprised to see the devil so close! Suddenly, I was able to deal with this thing that was trying to eliminate me. If I had not dealt with that demon I may not be alive today. On another

occasion, my eyes were open to the spirit realm and I saw an eight-foot tall, blackened sooty figure suspended on the right side of my bed. I was startled and jumped out of bed and began to pray. The Lord had suddenly shown me the source of a severe and prolonged attack I had been experiencing in my ministry. I rose out of bed and the rest is history. On both these occasions, the devil came very close to eliminating me.

This is what is happening to pastors. This is why pastors need intercessors to pray for them. This is what is happening to your church members. The enemy is after their souls. Intercede for them! Intervene in the situation! Get in the way and stand between the devil and the sheep that God has given to you![13] Change your ministry by intercessory prayer.[14]

9. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF TIME

Intercession deals with the law of "time"

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace”

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

The law of time teaches us that there is a time for everything. In your life, there will be a time to sow and a time to reap. There will be times of rejoicing and there will also be times of sorrow. There will be times when you will be up and other times when you will be down! As the events of time unfold in your life, will you survive each season? When the time for prosperity comes, will you backslide or will you remain in the Lord?

The children of Israel were warned of a time of prosperity. Moses warned them not to forget their God at that time. People simply need intercession because they enter into a new time or period of their lives. Many people fall away in the day of their prosperity. Pastors need to pray for their congregations so that the little children (sheep) will not fall away in their time of temptation.

The Bible speaks of an evil day. An evil day is a day when things are not good. Intercession for believers will help them to stand in an evil day.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”

(Ephesians 6:13).

If you are not praying for your people, when they enter into an evil day, they will fall! It is the duty of pastors and shepherds to constantly intercede for the sheep. Every sheep is in a different time of his life. God is expecting you to pray for your people because every one of them is in a different season of his existence. Some people are in the season of temptation and death. They don't stand a chance unless you intercede for them!

10. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF CREEPING THINGS

Intercession deals with the law of creeping things

“And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth”

(Genesis 1:25,26).

What are creeping things? Creeping things are things that sneak up on you without you realizing. The Book of Genesis speaks of the different creatures created by God. One group of creatures was called creeping things. Spiritually speaking, there are things that move upon us stealthily. Great changes take place over a long period of time. Most people hardly notice when these changes are taking place.

a. Deception (e.g., the churches of Europe)

b. Wrong attitudes (e.g., laziness, complacency and unbelief)

c. Familiarity (e.g., not appreciating the gift of God in your midst)

d. Shifting of priorities (e.g., becoming health and educational organizations instead of being missionary societies)

How do you think the church in Europe degenerated from being a vibrant, missionary minded society to becoming an atheistic and godless organization? It did not happen overnight. The spirit of deception crept on the church slowly. Deception is a creeping thing. Familiarity is one of the most dangerous creeping things that invade the church. Without even realizing it, the church does not hold

their pastor in esteem. Of course, they claim they do, but in reality they do not! I noticed as familiarity crept into my own ministry.

What are the signs of this creeping familiarity? One of the things is a failure to appreciate the pastor. You will notice how the congregation responds to visiting preachers just because it's something new. I notice the level of response I receive when I am outside my church. I notice that the level of response I receive is higher outside my own church.

The miracles are more and the receptivity is higher. This is one of the most natural phenomena in Christian churches today. Intercessory prayer is necessary to keep out these spiritual creepers.

Intercessory prayer will fight that creeping familiarity that kills the flow of the Spirit.

11. INTERCEDING AGAINST THE LAW OF THINGS DETERMINED

Intercession deals with the law of things determined

"Seventy weeks ARE DETERMINED upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy"

(Daniel 9:24).

Daniel had been praying for his people. He wanted God to move on their behalf. Suddenly, he had an angelic visitor who gave him an astonishing message. You see, Daniel was trying to bring about a change in the situation of his people. However, it was not to be so. Daniel was informed that the divine laws of heaven had determined a seventy-week punishment for the people of God. There was nothing he could do about it.

By this Scripture I am drawing your attention to what I call determined things. These are things that cannot be changed. They will happen whether you pray or not! Intercessory prayer helps you to handle determined things. Do not misunderstand me; there are many things that are changeable. If they were not changeable there would be no point in praying. What I am showing you is that there are some things that are unchangeable (determined things).

War is sometimes decreed on certain nations. There is nothing you can do about it. If it is unchangeable the Lord will tell you that it is unchangeable and then He will show you what to do. Daniel was informed that seventy weeks of all sorts of punishments were definitely going to happen to Israel. There was nothing he could do about it. Death is often one of those determined things.

Look at this amazing scripture. It tells us that there is a definite time for you to depart from this earth. Because of this, there is no need to worry about death anymore.

“Is there not an APPOINTED TIME to man upon earth?”

(Job 7:1).

Job described the life of a man as the days of a hired servant. When the contract is over it's over. “Are not his days also like the day of an HIRELING?” [contract worker]

(Job 7:1).

There's nothing you can do about it. The difference here is that you don't know the last day of your contract. That is why you must be ready all the time. And that is why you must not be afraid. When intercession cannot change a determined thing, intercession shows you how to live with it or prepare for it![15] Even Julius Caesar knew that! He said that death "will come when it will come." Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste of death but once. Of all the wonders that I yet have heard, It seems to me most strange that men should fear, Seeing that death, a necessary end, Will come when it will come.

12. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF THE STARS

Intercession deals with the law of the stars. Traditionally, born-again Christians stay off the subject of stars. The Bible does not teach us to study stars or to use them for guidance. However, I want to mention what I call the influence of the stars. I would like to show you a couple of scriptures that indicate that the star shave some influence on the events on earth. For instance, Jesus' birth was shown to the wise men from the east by a star.

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen HIS STAR in the east, and are come to worship him. … When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, THE STAR, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw THE STAR they rejoiced with exceeding great joy”

(Matthew 2:1,2,9,10).

The influence or significance of stars was acknowledged in scripture in the birth of Christ. All I am trying to say is that there is some meaning and some import to these stars. It looks as though there is something arranged and determined over there. Notice these Scriptures:

“Canst thou bind THE SWEET INFLUENCES of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set THE DOMINION THEREOF IN THE EARTH?”

(Job 38:31-33).

The Orion referred to in this Scripture, is the constellation of stars known as the giant. The Pleiades is the name given to seven stars in the constellation Taurus. The Arcturus is a constellation of stars in the northern hemisphere called the great bear. The Mazzaroth are twelve signs of the zodiac. The zodiac is a belt of the heavens including all apparent positions of the sun, moon, and planets as known to ancient astronomers, and divided into twelve equal parts (signs of the zodiac).

The scripture above speaks of the sweet influence of Pleiades. This is the influence of the stars on the events on the planet earth. It asks the question, "Can thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" The dominion in the earth refers to the influence and control that this constellation of stars has on the affairs of men. I believe that through the power of intercessory prayer, every negative influence of the Mazzaroth or the Pleiades will not prevail![16]

Perhaps you did not know that there are so many factors in play that threaten our existence. God is giving you many more reasons to become a practicing intercessor. Every heavenly decree that is written in the stars against you will be changed in your favor as you intercede.

13. HOW TO INTERCEDE AGAINST THE LAW OF GOD

Intercession deals with the laws of God The law of God speaks of God's ability to implement judgment or mercy. In any given situation, Almighty God has two options - judgment or mercy. However, the Bible makes it clear that God prefers the mercy option. God prefers showing mercy to passing judgment!

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because HE DELIGHTETH [PREFERS] IN MERCY”

(Micah 7:18).

The Word teaches that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

“As I live, saith the Lord God, I have NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked”

(Ezekiel 33:11).

When God passes out a judgment, it is often very severe and irreversible. Because our God is a God of justice, He has no option but to pass out judgments when they are due. Abraham and Moses are two examples of people who stood in the way of God's judgment. When Sodom and Gomorrah deserved the judgment of fire, it was Abraham who prevented the wrath of God. His intercessory prayer is the greatest example of how God listens to a man.

Why would God listen to a mere man? God wants to have a reason to choose mercy and to avoid judgment. Any good leader with a heart for God is always looking for an opportunity to avoid judgment and to show mercy.[17]

"And Abraham drew near, and said, Will thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

(Genesis 18:23).

Unfortunately, Abraham was not able to secure the release of Sodom and Gomorrah from God's judgment. God could not find even five righteous people in the city. The Lord tried to avoid judgment but it didn't work! Moses, however, was able to secure deliverance for Israel.

"Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen STOOD BEFORE HIM in the breach, to turn away his wrath lest he should destroy them"

(Psalm 106:23).

Dear minister, God has called you to stand in the breach. As you stand in between God's judgment and the people, you will save many lives. Become an intercessor! You will save nations!

TRAVAILING PRAYER

"My little children, of whom I TRAVAIL in birth again"

(Galatians 4:19).

"Epaphras… always LABOURING FERVENTLY for you in prayers"

(Colossians 4:12)

Travailing prayer is the prayer that gives birth to new things. If you want to give birth to new dimensions in your ministry, you will have to go into travailing prayer. Stories have been told of people who engaged in travailing prayer until there were holes in the ground where they knelt to pray.[18] Many of the revivals in times past were birthed by travailing intercessors.[19] Travailing prayer is the prayer that labors passionately until the baby is born. So what is travailing prayer, and how can I know whether I am engaged in travailing prayer or not?

I want to give you some signs to look out for. These signs will tell you whether you are engaged in travailing prayer or not.[20] Women who have had children can best teach travailing prayer. They will describe the experience of the labor room in graphic detail! Just as there is no baby without the labor, there will be nothing new spiritually except you labor in prayer. How will you know that you are practicing travailing (birth-giving) prayer? It is very simple. Until your prayers have begun to

resemble what happens in the labor ward, you have not begun to pray travailing (birth-giving) prayers.[10]

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAVAILING (LABOR WARD) PRAYER

“Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For AS SOON AS ZION TRAVAILED, SHE BROUGHT FORTH her children”

(Isaiah 66:8).

1. LONG HOURS OF PRAYER

Most women experience labor for several hours. After several hours of pain, the woman will give birth to a new baby. You cannot claim that a three-minute prayer is travailing prayer. Nobody gives birth to a baby in three minutes. When you pray travailing prayers, you will give birth to a bigger church, new ministries and new things in God. Praying for a long time gives birth to new churches and ministries.

2. SUFFERING

When women are in the labor ward they suffer all sorts of afflictions. Every normal woman suffers in the process of having a baby. That is why it is called a labor ward and not a playing ward. It is a ward of struggles and pain.[11] Without the suffering, there is no breakthrough. When you engage in travailing prayer you may have to fast and sacrifice other pleasures. This is part of your labor experience. Paul said that he fasted often. “In hunger and thirst, in FASTINGS OFTEN” (2 Corinthians 11:27). I tell you, the rewards are great!

3. PAIN

There is a lot of pain involved in having a baby. The pain of fasting and the pain of sacrifice are part of travailing prayers.[21]

4. SHAME

Perhaps as you fast and pray you may not look very attractive. You may lose some weight from fasting and waiting on the Lord. Someone once told me mockingly, "Do you think that you'll go to heaven by being a skeleton?" I had been fasting and praying for the establishment of a new fellowship. I looked like a rake and my friends mocked at me! However, I saw the birth of a new Christian fellowship and that gave me great joy. One day I will also reap my reward in heaven.

One day in 1988, I had an experience in the labor ward. I was a medical student who was assigned to deliver at least twenty-three babies. That night I was hoping to catch a couple more babies. I was sitting on a chair when a woman in labor came up behind me and gripped my shoulder, shouting, "Doctor, when? Doctor, when?" I turned round to see who it was. To my surprise, here was a stark naked woman in labor.

She was walking around the ward to help ease her pain. She was in such pain that she could not be bothered about wearing clothes or anything like that. She felt no shame at al and neither did many of the women on the labor ward. I realized this woman was struggling and agonizing for a new life to come into this world. Dear friend, labor involves pain, suffering and shame. It is no joke.

5. TIREDNESS

You can get very tired as you pray fervently. If you are lazy, you cannot engage in travailing prayer. Travailing prayer is different from Bible study and listening to tapes. It involves the physical effort of praying for hours. Moses became so tired that he had to have people hold up his hands. Charismatic Christians want everything easy. The Bible says that whatsoever a man sows he will also reap. Travailing prayer will make you tired.

"Epaphras… always labouring fervently for you in prayers"

(Colossians 4:12).

Epaphras was a laborer. He toiled in prayer. He labored in prayer for the Colossian church. When women deliver babies they are often hungry and tired. It is natural to be hungry and tired after hours of hard work. Do not tell me that your ten-minute prayer is something that can make you hungry and tired. Do not tell me that your ten-minute prayer is travailing prayer. It is not!

6. HUNGER

This is part of the price you pay as you wait on God. Do you think a woman in labor gets up every five minutes to have a snack? Certainly not! She endures the hunger until it is all over. Ask any woman who has had a child and she will tell you that what I am saying is true.

7. THE NEW BABY

Laboring prayers always give rise to something new. After many hours of labor and suffering you can expect to have something tangible in your hand. Every woman looks forward to that baby. That is why it is such a terrible experience for a woman to go to the labor ward and to come back without a baby. Expect a new baby of ministry in your life.

As time passes, you will see that new thing in your hands and give glory to God. Perhaps it will be a new church or a new fellowship. Perhaps it will be a new phase in your ministry. It is not easy to labor in prayer, but it is worth it![23] The Word of God cannot be broken. If you are not prepared to travail in prayer then you are not prepared to have your baby.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing"

(Psalm 126:5,6).

Under the ministry of Jesus, we see travailing prayer in action. To every success story there are hours of hidden preparatory work that no one sees. People marveled at Jesus' ministry. They said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). They glorified God saying, "We never saw it on this fashion." (Mark 2:12).

Multitudes were converted under his ministry. The big question in town was, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" (Matthew 13:54). The secret of Jesus Christ's ministry was long private prayer times.“He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued ALL NIGHT in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). “A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35). Even when multitudes thronged him (His church was growing, the crowds were there) and when he became famous, he still made time to pray alone.

“But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And HE WITHDREW HIMSELF into the wilderness, AND PRAYED”

(Luke 5:15,16).

Sometimes when he had friends around him, he would send them away and pray.

“And when he had SENT THEM AWAY, he departed into a mountain to pray”

(Mark 6:46).

Decide to pray like Jesus prayed. I laugh to myself when people say I am a strategist. Many people think I am just a good administrator - that is why my church is growing. If you want me to share with you the real secret to the success, I will. It is prayer!

THIRTY-TWO REASONS WHY I PRAY IN TONGUES

"I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Corinthians 14:18). In my opinion the ability to pray in tongues is probably the best gift that God gave to ministers. I am sharing with you here why praying in tongues is very important and helpful for every minister.[24] Each of the thirty-two reasons has a biblical foundation and I want you to think about them for your own benefit.

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful" [My mind is a blank - TCNT]

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

1. When I pray in tongues I charge myself up like a battery

(1 Corinthians 14:4).

2. When I pray in tongues I am immediately inspired by the Holy Spirit[25]

(Acts 2:4).

3. When I pray in tongues I am praying from my heart (spirit)

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

4. When I pray in tongues my prayer is dictated and directed by the Holy Spirit[26]

(Acts 2:4).

5. When I pray in tongues I operate instantly in the spirit realm

(1 Corinthians 14:1).

6. When I pray in tongues other people do not understand what I am saying

(1 Corinthians 14:1).

7. When I pray in tongues devils do not understand what I am saying

(1 Corinthians 14:1).

8. When I pray in tongues I can hear the voice of the Spirit by interpreting my prayer

(1 Corinthians 14:13).

9. When I pray in tongues I can pray for long hours like Jesus

(Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12).

10. When I pray in tongues I can practice intercession for souls, families and nations[27s]

(Ephesians 6:18).

11. When I pray in tongues I can speak to myself and to God. This helps me to concentrate on God everywhere I am

(1 Corinthians 14:28).

12. When I pray in tongues I give thanks and praises very well

(1 Corinthians 14:17).

13. When I pray in tongues it is a sign to the world that Christ is in me

(Mark 16:17).

14. When I pray in tongues I have taken the first step into supernatural things

(Acts 2:4).

15. When I pray in tongues I am exercising faith

(Galatians 3:5).

16. When I pray in tongues I am doing what great men like Paul did (1 Corinthians 14:18;

Hebrews 6:12).

17. When I pray in tongues I can pray against my enemies (in their presence) without their knowing what I am saying.

18. When I pray in tongues I can pray and think

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

19. When I pray in tongues I can pray and study

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

20. When I pray in tongues I can pray and read my Bible

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

21. When I pray in tongues I can pray and read other books

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

22. When I pray in tongues I can pray and listen to tapes

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

23. When I pray in tongues I can pray and watch videos

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

24. When I pray in tongues I can pray and have my bath

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

25. When I pray in tongues I can pray and dress up

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

26. When I pray in tongues I can pray and walk

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

27. When I pray in tongues I can pray and write

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

28. When I pray in tongues I can pray and cook

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

29. When I pray in tongues I can pray and work in the office

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

30. When I pray in tongues I can pray and do my hair

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

31. When I pray in tongues I can pray and drive my car

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

32. When I pray in tongues I can pray and wait for the bus

(1 Corinthians 14:14).

VISITATION 17

THE POWERFUL EFFECTS OF VISITATION

Visitation is about going to people's homes and workplaces in order to minister to them. Ministering to people in their home settings is one of the greatest keys to an effective ministry.[1] Visitation is an essential part of real pastoral ministry. Visitation proves the genuinity of ministry. Every pastor must know that visitation will make such a difference to his pastoral ministry!

It gives rise to explosive church growth. Regardless of how much a pastor prays, he must still visit the sheep. The Bible clearly states that God expects pastors to visit their sheep.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and HAVE NOT VISITED THEM: behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord”

(Jeremiah 23:2).

TWELVE REASONS FOR PASTORAL VISITS

1. Every church member needs a visit.

2. Every church member deserves a visit.

3. Every church member expects a visit.

4. The more visits a sheep has, the more healthy he healthy he or she will be.

5. A visit makes a sheep a permanent church member.

6. God expects every pastor to visit the sheep.

7. Every sheep needs a repeated visit from the same pastor.

8. Every sheep needs visits from other pastors and shepherds.

9. The sin of neglect is the failure to visit.

10. Totally neglecting the sheep is the sin of abandonment.

11. Many of the sheep will fall away without visitation.

12. The church will not grow without visitation Not every problem can be solved in the church service or by a phone call. The Book of Ezekiel gives a description of sheep that were diseased, broken and driven away.

"The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was SICK, neither have ye bound up that which was BROKEN, neither have ye brought again that which was DRIVEN AWAY, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered"

(Ezekiel 34:4,5).

Sheep must be sought out. "Neither have ye sought that which was lost." (Ezekiel 34:4). The members of your church deserve a visit because Jesus died for them. Today, many shepherds are concerned with. Building their companies, businesses, houses and empires. No one cares about the sheep. Jesus asked Peter on three occasions whether he loved him. Peter answered that he did. That would have been our response too.

But Jesus made it clear that if a person loves him, he should feed his sheep. Sometimes, people need repeated visits because one visit is not enough to solve their problems. Sometimes nothing comes out of pastoral visits but there are other times when another visit to the same person brings about a breakthrough!

Failure to visit the sheep is neglect! In some cases, it is actually abandonment. A pastor should not be surprised when the wrath of God comes upon him because he refused to visit.

“Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood”

(Jeremiah 48:10).

THREE SECRETS BEHIND THE POWER OF VISITATION

Visits have life-changing power! Many pastors do not know the secret behind the power of visitation.[2]

Visitation is a combination of three forces:

1. Visitation is an expression of LOVE.

2. Visitation involves the ministry of the WORD.

3. Visitation involves the ministry of PRAYER.

The Word of God is powerful and life changing. The Bible says that it brings light where there is darkness. It is therefore not surprising that it has a powerful effect on people. Prayer is also powerful. The Bible says that it availeth much. That means it has great effect. But the Bible also says that love never fails!

There are many spiritual weapons that we use all the time. No weapon has been described as "never failing". This makes love a very powerful weapon. Sometimes, pastors minister the Word but people don't feel loved, however when there is a visit, the same Word is combined with prayer and love. The person who is being visited will feel that the pastor must really love him to go to his house. The act of journeying to someone's house at an odd hour demonstrates great love. Love is not demonstrated in words alone.

“My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in DEED and in truth”

(1 John 3:18).

Loving in deed involves going to people's homes and getting to know the real life situations that people live in. Sometimes the person who is being visited does not even hear the words that the pastor speaks. What remains with him is the fact that the pastor cared enough to come. A minister must not underestimate the effect of this powerful mixture - the Word, love and prayer![3]

GUIDELINES FOR FRUITFUL PASTORAL VISITATION

1. Every visit must accomplish something.
2. Every visit must begin with a relaxing social segment.
3. Pastors must remember that shepherding visits are not social outings.
4. Every pastoral visit must be a spiritual event with a spiritual impact.
5. Every pastoral visit must include the ministering of the Word.
6. A visit becomes effective when the power of God is released through prayer.
7. Every pastoral visit must end with a powerful prayer.
8. A visit must have a powerful lasting impact.

He came unto his own… But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"

(John 1:11,12).

Jesus accomplished a lot in his three-year visit to the Earth. Jesus did not waste time doodling in the ministry. He preached, taught and ministered to people. The first part of Jesus' visit to the Earth was a relaxing social segment. He fitted into the society and became one of their own.

"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man"

(Luke 2:51,52).

Jesus remembered that he was not just paying a social visit to the Earth. He preached and blessed the people. His prayers were so powerful that they raised the dead and cast out devils. After that visit, this Earth has never been the same again.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"

(John 21:25).

TEN RULES FOR VISITATION

1. A PASTOR MUST NEVER REFUSE A REQUEST FOR A VISIT.

The sheep does not always cry for help. When they do, the pastor must make sure that he responds. Paul did not ignore the cry for help.

“There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us”

(Acts 16:9).

2. EVERY PASTOR MUST DISCERN THE UNSPOKEN REQUEST FOR A VISIT.

Whenever a church member is in difficulty, the pastor must discern the need for attention. The Bible says that God has numbered our hair. Pastors must also follow this example by numbering the sheep and looking out for them. The anger of the Lord is upon the shepherds who ignore the problems of the sheep.

“The DISEASED have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was SICK, neither have ye bound up that which was BROKEN, neither have ye brought again that which was DRIVEN AWAY, neither have ye sought that which was LOST; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were SCATTERED, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered”

(Ezekiel 34:4,5)

This Scripture highlights the problems of church members: diseased, sick, broken, lost, driven away, scattered, etc. Pastors need to pray that God will open their eyes to see when there is a need for a visit. They must pray for God to give them the heart to care for his people.

3. EVERY PASTOR OR SHEPHERD MUST PRACTISE BOTH ROUTINE AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE VISITATION.

Every shepherd must have a routine for visiting his or her sheep. The shepherd's heart roams the field! He wonders where everyone is and whether they are all right. When special circumstances like death, sickness, bereavement, birth of a child, marital crisis, etc arise, it’s a call for extra visits.4.

4. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN A CHURCH MEMBER'S LIFE IS A CALL FOR URGENT PASTORAL ACTION.

“And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept thy father's sheep and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I WENT OUT AFTER HIM and smote him, and delivered it out of its mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him”

(1 Samuel 17:34).

When a lion attacks the sheep, it is definitely an emergency for the shepherd. This is not a routine event. It calls for rapid action. Whenever there is a special circumstance in someone's life, the pastor must be quick to respond. It means that the church member may be in the mouth of a roaring lion. Just like David the shepherd did, the pastor must go out after him. When people are broken by circumstances, it is a spiritual emergency.

When people are lost and are at the mercy of wolves, it is a spiritual emergency. I can just picture a member of mine in the realm of the Spirit. I see him in the mouth of the lion. How urgently he needs help. But this is just a picture of where many sheep are.

"The DISEASED have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was SICK, neither have ye bound up that which was BROKEN, neither have ye brought again that which was DRIVEN AWAY, neither have ye sought that which was LOST; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were SCATTERED, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered"

(Ezekiel 34:4,5).

We must respond rapidly if we want to save our sheep's lives.

5. EVERY PASTOR MUST PRACTISE BOTH SURPRISE AND EXPECTED VISITS.

Surprise and expected visits have different effects. they are both important and must both be practised.

6. SURPRISE VISITS REVEAL THE REAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CHURCH MEMBERS' LIVES.

Surprise visits often show the real state of affairs in people's homes. A pastor may find his church member smoking for instance or living with someone they are not married to. He is also likely to find some of his members living in abject poverty and misery even though they look so nice and polished in church. The circumstances of a church member's home can never be imagined. Surprise visits help the pastor to know who he is pastoring. It also helps the pastor to preach and minister aright.[5]

7. EXPECTED VISITS GIVE CHURCH MEMBERS THE CHANCE TO SHOW THEIR BEST.

When someone is expecting a visitor, he prepares the home. This enables the church members to put up their best. This gives them a sense of accomplishment as the pastor sees the best of them.

8. PASTORS MUST PROTECT THEMSELVES BY VISITING IN PAIRS.

“And sent them two and two before his face into every city” (Luke 10:1). Two are better than one. One strengthens the other. It means helping each other to preach and to share the Word. One puts to flight a thousand and two put to flight ten thousand. That is why Jesus sent his disciples out in "twos". As the pastor visits people of the opposite sex, nobody can easily claim that he is coming with ulterior motives because he does not go alone. This is the advantage of visiting in pairs.

9. IT IS SAFER FOR TWO MINISTERS OF THE SAME SEX TO GO ON VISITATION.

As the pastoral team frequently visit, they will find themselves bonding. However, a pastor may not wish to bond with the person with whom he is doing visitation if it is someone of the opposite sex.

10. PASTORS MUST NOT VISIT MORE THAN NECESSARY TO AVOID GIVING THE WRONG IMPRESSION.

“Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbours house; lest he be wary of thee and so hate thee”

(Proverbs 25:17).

If a pastor constantly visits a particular person, the mood of that person will change from exhilaration to uncertainty to irritation and then to anger. A pastor should not let his church members hate him because he visits them too often. The church members will begin to wonder what the pastor’s motives are.

SEVEN TIPS THAT FACILITATE VISITATION

1. You can combine your journey to and from church with a visit.

“Redeeming the time” (Ephesians 5:16). It is a way of "Buying up those moments which others throw away." When a pastor does this, he will achieve great things for God.

2. You can also combine your journey to and from work with a visit.

“Buy up those moments” (Ephesians 5:16).

3. You must always do multiple visits in one trip.

There are often a number of people who can be visited on one journey.[6]

4. You can visit all the people living in the same area in one trip.

A good pastor must know the people who live in an area. Anytime that he is in that area, he must know the potential visits that he can make.

5. You can visit people at work or in school when you cannot get them at home.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly… as wise” (Ephesians 5:15). Some people do not have home that can be visited. Sometimes they are living with uncles and aunts. Sometimes they

sleep outside on the street. A pastor can visit them at their workplaces or schools.

6. A pastor must use Sundays as his most valuable day for visitation. Sundays are great days for visitation. Most people relax at home on Sunday afternoons but a pastor can make the most of his Sundays. Sundays are working days for pastors. Pastors must work on Sundays and rest on Mondays.

7. A pastor must not be afraid of visiting late in the night.

Blessed are the people whom the master will find working in the second and third watches of the night. The second and third watches of the night were nine p.m. and twelve midnight respectively. This is the stamp of approval for servants who do God's work as late as 9.00 p.m. or midnight.

“And if ye shall come in the SECOND WATCH, or in the THIRD WATCH, and find them so, BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS”

(Luke 12:38).

Many people sleep late anyway. There are many people that can never be reached unless the pastor visits them at a late hour. The pastor should only make sure he does not visit alone. This provides safety in case someone thinks the pastor has a wrong motive.

FIVE VISITS OF LIFE-CHANGING POWER: THE VISITS OF JEHOVAH

1. A VISIT TO SOLVE MARITAL PROBLEMS

God visited Adam and Eve

"And THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD God amongst the trees of the garden"

(Genesis 3:8).

The Lord God visited Adam and Eve in the midst of a crisis. They were having problems because they

had done something wrong. Adam was blaming Eve for talking to the serpent. Eve was blaming Adam for not spending time with her. It was a veritable marriage crisis - they didn't have clothes to wear and they didn't have any money.

The Lord walked in at the right time. He showed them the consequences of their actions. He ministered the Word of God to them. Then He made some new clothes for the family. This visit changed the course of human history.

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them"

(Genesis 3:21).

2. A VISIT TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE

God visited Abraham

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, THE LORD APPEARED to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect… THOU SHALT BE A FATHER of many nations. Neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham"

(Genesis 17:1,5).

Abraham had been married for many years and had not been able to have a child. This was a great problem for his family. During a visitation by Jehovah, a word of encouragement was spoken. A pastor's words on visitation will have an encouraging effect on his church members in difficult situations.

3. A VISIT TO BRING ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

God visited Isaac

“And THE LORD APPEARED unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of”

(Genesis 26:2).

There was an economic crisis in Isaac's city. As he prepared to get a visa to travel, he received a visitation. During the visitation he received advice. The Lord told him not to travel with anyone else because he would look after him. Isaac's life was changed forever because of that piece of advice! Many people's lives are changed forever because of a visit that brings advice. As the pastor goes out on visitation, he must see himself as someone bringing advice and guidance to God's people.

4. A VISIT THAT MAKES A SHEEP COMMITTED, ANOINTED AND A TITHE PAYER

God visited Jacob “And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE; and I knew it not”

(Genesis 28:16).

Jacob received a visitation from the Lord. He was a backslidden person who had cheated many people. That night, his life was changed forever - a crooked person was made straight. From then on, he became a committed Christian. He decided to pay tithes and to help build the church.

“And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee”

(Genesis 28:20-22).

A pastor must talk to his members about commitment when he goes on visitation and teach them to pay their tithes. He must also teach them the blessings of divine protection and provisions. His visit will have a permanent effect on the lives of his members.

5. A VISIT TO GET A MEMBER'S ATTENTION SO GOD CAN SPEAK TO HIM

God visited Moses “And the angel of THE LORD APPEARED unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed”

(Exodus 3:2).

Moses was experiencing a "wilderness season" in his life. Things had not gone well with him for over forty years. One visit changed all of that. Sometimes a visit by the pastor can draw the attention of a church member to the fact that God knows him personally. The impact of this is often remarkable! There is a dramatic change as people realize that God has them in mind. As it was with Moses, a long season of backsliding can end through one visit.

FIVE VISITS THAT BRING A PERMANENT CHANGE: THE VISITS OF JESUS CHRIST

1. A VISIT THAT BRINGS SALVATION TO MANY LIVES

Jesus visited the world "But AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"

(John 1:12).

This is the best example of a powerful visit. It is a three and a half year visit that changed the world forever. This is the most phenomenal visit of all time because it changed the world forever. The fact that Jesus came to the Earth demonstrated the love of God to mankind. Many people have responded to this love. The fruits of this visit are everywhere. Every church building that exists is a result of this visit. Every Christian is a fruit of this visit. A visit can bring salvation.[7]

Christ's visit to the Earth brought salvation to millions. A pastor will have a chance of leading many people to Christ during a visit. The pastor must therefore minister to everyone who is not saved in the household on his visitation.

2. A VISIT THAT BRINGS HEALING

Jesus visited Peter's house

"And when JESUS WAS COME INTO PETER'S HOUSE, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them"

(Matthew 8:14,15).

During visitation, the pastor can also pray for the sick. He must believe God for the anointing to flow through him to heal. Visitation may be the only opportunity for the pastor to try out the gift of healing.[8]

3. A VISIT (ON REQUEST) THAT YIELDED MIRACLES

Jesus visited Jarius' house

"And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and BESOUGHT HIM THAT HE WOULD COME INTO HIS HOUSE"

(Luke 8:41).

Pastors are so used to seeing the power of God in a packed service. They often think that God can only move when there are thousands of people present. Pastors must realize that the best of Jesus' miracles, like walking on the water and rebuking the storm, were seen by only a few people. A

minister must feel free to minister the power of God wherever he finds himself. As pastors go on visitation, they should get ready for the demonstration of God's power.

4. A VISIT THAT BROUGHT TEACHING AND DOMESTIC ADVICE

Jesus visited Mary and Martha

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha RECEIVED HIM INTO HER HOUSE"

(Luke 10:38).

Jesus practised all kinds of visits. He visited two ladies and gave them good domestic advice. He told Martha that she was too involved in the kitchen. In other words, he advised her to become more spiritual. It is not everything a pastor can comment about in someone's home. If the pastor has the right relationship with the person being visited, he may be able to speak about issues. If he does not, he must keep quiet and move on otherwise the pastor might get into trouble by speaking about things he has no business commenting on. "A fool uttereth all his mind" (Proverbs 29:11).

5. A VISIT FOR GENERAL INTERACTION AND DIRECT REBUKES

Jesus visited a Pharisee "And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: AND HE WENT IN, AND SAT DOWN TO MEAT" (Luke 11:37). The Lord visited all kinds of people and therefore a pastor must visit all kinds of people. When he visited this Pharisee, there were a lot of rebukes. Jesus was not intimidated by the dinner that was set before him, neither should any pastor be.

"And when the Pharisees saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; BUT YOUR INWARD PART IS FULL OF RAVENING AND WICKEDNESS, YE FOOLS"

(Luke 11:38).

This visit turned out into one of the strongest rebukes that Jesus ever meted out to hypocrites. Jesus told his hosts that they were fools.[9]

VISITS THAT ESTABLISH CHURCH MEMBERS : THE PAULINE VISITS

1. A VISIT THAT LEADS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Paul visited the Ephesus Christians and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts CAME TO EPHESUS: AND FINDING CERTAIN DISCIPLES, And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied"

(Acts 19:1,6).

A pastor must not hesitate to minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit when he is on visitation. A visiting minister is a mobile church service. Good things can happen when the pastor is anointed of the Spirit.

2. VISITATION TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

Paul visited the church at Tyre

"And LANDED AT TYRE: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days… And when we had ACCOMPLISHED THOSE DAYS, we departed"

(Acts 21:3-5).

Sometimes a visit must be made to build a relationship. It is important for a pastor to build relationships with all or some of his church members. Visitation is one of the effective ways for building relationships. Paul had no other reason than to accomplish certain days at certain places.

3. A VISIT TO RECRUIT PASTORS

Paul visited Derbe and Lystra

"THEN CAME HE TO DERBE AND LYSTRA: and, behold, a certain disciple was there named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman… Him would Paul have to go forth with him"

(Acts 16:1,3).

Amazing things can happen during visitation. It was during visitation that Paul identified a potential pastor who turned out to be Timothy. If Paul had not done the visit to Derbe and Lystra, some people would not have had a pastor and the Book of Timothy would never have been written.

4. A VISIT TO STRENGTHEN CHURCH MEMBERS

Paul visited Galatia and Phrygia

“And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and WENT OVER ALL THE COUNTRY OF GALATIA AND PHRYGIA in order, strengthening all the disciples”

(Acts 18:23).

Paul is a good example of a minister to all pastors. Every time a pastor goes on a visit, he strengthens the sheep. Jesus approves of pastors who lovingly strengthen the Lord’s little lambs.

How to Develop Successful Teaching Skills 18

KEYS FOR BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL TEACHER OF THE WORD

"And I will give you pastors according to mine own heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding"

(Jeremiah 3:15).

A pastor's duty is to feed the sheep. You must aim to become a successful teacher of the Word for following these principles.

1. BE IN A STATE OF CONSTANT PREPARATION.

You may be called upon to preach at any time. When you are aware of this reality you will always be in tune.[1]

2. HAVE YOUR QUIET TIME EVERYDAY.

Most of my messages have come from my personal quiet time which I have everyday. If you are a minister and do not have a quiet time everyday, your foundation is weak.

3. READ BOOKS ALL THE TIME.

You must have a book that you are reading. I always have one book or other that I am reading all the time. They are often unrelated to what I am preaching about. This helps me to be in a state of constant preparation.[2]

4. LISTEN TO TAPES ALL THE TIME.

I always have a set of tapes that I am listening to. This is what I mean by a state of constant preparation. Sometimes, people wonder how I am able to cope with several preaching duties at the same time. I am able to do this because I am in a state of constant preparation.

5. BASE EVERY SERMON ON THE SCRIPTURES.

Stay with the mainstream of the Gospel. The Bible is your main textbook. Let it be the rock upon which you base your ministry. Do not replace the gold of the Word with the brass of secular teachings.[3]

6. HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE FOR EVERY MESSAGE.

What are you trying to achieve? Do you want to get people saved or healed? Having a clear purpose will guide you as to what to say.[4]

7. GIVE THE RIGHT KIND OF TITLE TO YOUR MESSAGE.

There are three main types of titles: Evangelistic titles, Exhortational titles and Teaching titles.[5] Evangelistic titles are dramatic sounding titles. They are intended to jolt the congregation. They sometimes bring fear into the hearts of sinners.

Examples of these are

a) "Rain, rain go away"

b) "You are entitled to your own opinion"

c) "Silence in Heaven"

d) "Judgement Day 1,2 and 3"

e) "They went to hell"

Exhortational titles are short, catchy phrases. These are intended to encourage the congregation. Examples of these are:

a) "Daughter, you can make it"

b) "Daughter you have tender eyes"

c) "Woman, thou art loosed"

d) "Can I wash my hands?"

Teaching titles give a clear message. They usually show a number of steps, principles or keys. You can convert any exhortational message into a teaching message by giving it the right title. You can have several different teaching sermons out of one exhortation. Let us do a little exercise and convert an exhortational message (Woman, thou art loosed) into a teaching message.

a) "Three steps to becoming a woman who is loosed"

b) "Seven principles to becoming a woman who is loosed"

c) "Four reasons why you should be a woman who is loosed"

d) "Ten benefits of being a woman who is loosed"

e) "Six Laws of the woman who is loosed"

f) "Seven ways you can become a woman who is loosed"

g) "Five Mistakes of a woman who is loosed"

h) "Ten things every Christian should know about the woman who is loosed"

i) "What it means to be a woman who is loosed"

j) "Twenty-five Keys to becoming a woman who is loosed"

k) "Four phases in the life of a woman who is loosed"

l) "Eighteen Methods by which you can become a woman who is loosed"

m) "Twelve Secrets of a woman who is loosed"

n) "Eleven Strategies of a woman who is loosed"

o) "How you can become a woman who is loosed"

p) "Seven Signs of a woman who is loosed"
q) "Four Symptoms of a woman who needs to be loosed"
You can make this a formula to help you produce more organised teaching messages. You first of all choose any number of points you want. Then pick the right word (whether principles, laws, keys, secrets) to go with it. You will discover that your teaching ministry will jump to another level when you have the right kind of title.

8. THERE MUST BE ORDER IN THE SERMON.

An easy way to ensure order in your message is to preach in points. You can teach in three, five, seven or as many points as you want. Let people see the progression that you are following. remember this: if you are preaching a one-off sermon, three points are often adequate. The maximum for a one-off sermon should be seven points. If you try to teach twenty-five points in one sermon, you will certainly run into difficulties.[6]

9. CONCLUDE YOUR SERMON ON A HIGH NOTE.[7]

10. DO NOT PREACH FOR TOO LONG OR TOO SHORT.

11. NEVER PREACH WITHOUT WINDOWS (ILLUSTRATIONS, STORIES, PARABLES, ETC).

A message without illustrations and personal examples is like a building without a window. Jesus never taught without illustrations and windows. The story of the prodigal son, the story of the man who was attacked on the way to Jericho and the story of the Lazarus and the rich man are vivid examples of this style of teaching. Children never forget these stories and neither do adults. The greater your teaching ministry the more like Jesus' it will be.[8]

12. ALWAYS DO AN ALTAR CALL FOR SALVATION.

The main thrust of the Kingdom of God is to bring souls to Christ. We do a great disservice to the Gospel when we fail or forget to invite people to Jesus.[9]

13. STAY WITH REVELATION.

Preach about things that God has given you a revelation of. If you just preach somebody's sermon without having a personal revelation of it, you will make no impact! You may actually look foolish! Avoid complex things that you do not understand. There is enough to preach about without getting stuck on difficult terrain![10]

14. HEAD FOR THE ANOINTING.

As you preach frequently, you will know when the preaching anointing comes upon you. You will also know what to do to make the anointing flow during the sermon.[11]

Two keys to preaching in the anointing are:

i. You must learn to break icy atmospheres and enter the anointing by openly speaking a few phrases in tongues.

ii. Staying with revelation also releases the anointing for preaching. Move from dryness into anointed preaching by sharing things that you have a personal revelation about.

15. LOOK FOR THE FIVE SIGNS OF THE ANOINTING WHEN YOU ARE PREACHING.

Preaching with the anointing is characterised by five important signs.

a. It is preaching with authority (Mark 1:22).
b. It is preaching with life-changing effects (Acts 4:4).
c. It is preaching which causes crowds to gather (Mark 1:32).
d. It is direct and cuts to the heart (Acts 2:37).
e. It is relevant (Luke14:4,5).

REASONS WHY PASTORS MUST SEE THE FLOCK AS GOD'S GARDEN

"For we are labourers together with God: YE ARE GOD'S HUSBANDRY [GARDEN, FARM, FIELD], Ye are God's building"

(1 Corinthians 3:9).

Every pastor should see the congregation as God's garden, God's field or God's farm. When you see the congregation as God's farm, it will help you understand what the ministry of preaching and teaching does. When you are preaching, you are actually pouring seeds into God's farm. The type of seeds you pour into the ground determines the type of harvest you are going to get.[12]

1. EVERY PASTOR MUST SEE HIMSELF AS A FARMER WHO PLANTS SEEDS WITH EVERY SERMON.

Once you understand this revelation, you will know that there is no mystery to the type of congregation you have. If you have a congregation of soul winners, it is the harvest you have earned for yourself. Every farmer gets what he plants. If you plant corn, you will get a harvest of corn. If you plant pineapples, you will harvest pineapples.

The pastor is the farmer. The congregation is a garden. Whenever the pastor preaches, he is planting a particular kind of seed. He will have a harvest that corresponds to the type of seeds he has planted.[13] It is no wonder that some churches are full of prosperous successful people. This is because their pastor teaches prosperity and success on a regular basis. Some churches are full of missionary minded people.

This is because the pastor preaches about missionary work all the time. Some churches preach about miracles. It is no wonder that miracles take place in those churches. Some pastors teach about church growth and they experience it.

Dear pastor, is it a mystery if a farmer reaps a harvest of tomatoes? Certainly not! He must have planted tomatoes! What are you planting in God's garden? Are you preaching poverty, fear and failure? Or are you preaching victory, prosperity and faith?

2. THERE ARE SHORT-TERM HARVESTS OF THE WORD.

What do I mean by short-term harvests? During each service, whatever you preach is a seed for a short-term harvest. If you preach a sermon of doubt and fear, you will not reap a harvest of miracles. If you preach about salvation, you will get people saved. I remember preaching at a crusade. As I taught about salvation, there was a calm response from the audience. They listened earnestly to the message of salvation.

At a point, I began to speak about healing. I told the crowd that God would heal them. There was an almost immediate response from the congregation! Cripples came out of wheelchairs and the sick began to get healed as I spoke about healing. At that moment, I was reaping a short-term harvest. I had spoken about miracles and I was reaping a harvest of miracles. I used to think that if God was God, He should move in the same way after every sermon.

However, as I have grown in the ministry, I have realized that it is not so. The reality that we are God's garden has dawned on me. If I want to have a miracle service, then I must teach about miracles and healing. I know that the congregation listening to me are God's field. If you are not surprised when the farmer next door reaps a harvest of wheat, then do not be surprised if Benny Hinn reaps a harvest of miracles in his ministry. He preaches about miracles all the time. It is only in order that he should reap a harvest of healing from God's garden.

3. THERE ARE LONG-TERM HARVESTS OF THE WORD.

Without knowing what I was doing, I sowed certain seeds in God's garden. I have taught about loyalty and I have reaped a harvest of loyal people from the garden! I have preached about the ministry and missionary work. As the years have gone by, God has blessed me with many workers and missionaries.

4. YOU MUST BELIEVE IN THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S GARDEN.

This principle will guide you into preaching the right things. Do not be in a hurry to reap a harvest. There is always a period of time between sowing and reaping. From this time onwards, carefully select what you will speak about in your church. Preach about what you want and not about what you have! As the years go by, you will realise that you have a congregation of people that are exact products of your teaching.

SEVEN REASONS WHY A PASTOR SHOULD TEACH IN SERIES

Some pastors have a new sermon every Sunday. They come up with an inspiring, exhortation every week. This is commendable. However, the sheep cannot live on inspiration! They need regular, sustained and balanced teaching.[14] If your church is to grow, you will have people staying in your church for many years. You have to have something to give them on a regular basis. This is why I believe that you must teach in series. Of course, there are times that you must give inspirational messages that are not in series. Here are seven reasons why you must learn to teach in series.[15]

1. Preaching in series is the best way to sustain a congregation of regular attendees. Since you will have the same people listening to you every week, you need to have an appropriate message.

2. Preaching in series is easier for the pastor than preaching a different message every week. This is because a series is actually one message that has been broken down into little sermons. The preparation for one long sermon lasts for a long time and can be released to the sheep in stages.

3. Preaching in series makes the members have something to look forward to the following week. It creates an air of expectation.

4. Preaching in series makes the members come back week after week because they want to hear the conclusion of the series. This improves the attendance in church.

5. Preaching in series is the only way to cover lengthy but important topics that must be taught in the church. For instance, it is not possible to cover all that must be taught about marriage in forty-five minutes.

6. Preaching in series enables the pastor to shorten the services to a reasonable length of time.

The pastor is not under so much stress to say everything in one week. He knows that he will have the opportunity to complete his message next week.

7. Preaching in series establishes a bond between the pastor and his congregation. They depend on him for a regular meal. You are always attached to the people who feed you regularly!

KEYS TO AUGMENT YOUR TEACHING MINISTRY

Perhaps your teaching ministry needs a boost. You can go higher. Let me share with you four steps that will move you on to the next level.

1. PREACH WITHOUT NOTES.

It is much more impressive to preach extemporaneously than to be seen reading out of notes. Even if you have notes (like I do), do not appear to depend on them for every sentence you say.[16]

2. PRACTISE TEACHING WITHOUT NOTES BY MEMORIZING THREE CARDINAL POINTS WITH THREE CARDINAL SCRIPTURES AND THREE CARDINAL "WINDOWS".

Windows are life's examples, illustrations and stories. When you are preaching extemporaneously, it is easier to remember three main points rather than ten main points. These three points will naturally link themselves up to three Scriptures and three 'windows'.

3. CONSTANTLY SOAK IN TEACHING TAPES THAT ARE UNRELATED TO YOUR SUNDAY SERMONS.

Start preparing for preaching opportunities a year in advance.

4. TEACH REGULARLY.

You must have a weekly opportunity to minister the Word. Anyone who preaches regularly is bound to improve. If you preach only once in a while, your preaching ministry will always remain at a low level.

WHY LISTENING TO PREACHING TAPES WILL CHANGE YOUR PULPIT MINISTRY

"So then faith cometh by HEARING AND HEARING by the word of God"

(Romans 10:17).

1. Listening to tapes will help you to know the Word of God.

Every minister needs to have an in-depth knowledge of the Word of God. An easy way to memorize the Word of God is by listening to tapes. You will hear the preacher quoting scriptures and this will help you remember the Word.

2. Listening to tapes will help you to soak in the voice of God.

As you soak in tapes you will receive direction for your ministry. There are always several messages within a message. As a pastor, you will hear God speaking to you about different things concerning your ministry.[17]

3. Listening to tapes will help you to stay in the presence of God.

Once the Word of God is being preached, an anointed atmosphere is created. Every pastor must endeavour to remain in such an atmosphere because he may be called upon to minister at any time.

"Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine"

(2 Timothy 4:2).

4. Listening to tapes will help you to catch the anointing.

As Peter preached, the Spirit fell on the congregation (Acts 10:44). Most definitely, as the Word of God is coming forth, the anointing is falling. The more you listen to tapes, the more you will be anointed.

5. Listening to tapes will help you to develop a unique style of preaching.

As you listen to tapes, you will develop a unique style of preaching. It is important for you to develop a distinctive style of preaching as this will appeal to the people God has called you to. As the saying goes, "Different strokes for different folks." Not everyone will be attracted to your ministry. But God has definitely raised you up for a people.

6. Listening to tapes will help you to acquire general information that a minister needs.

There are many side-benefits to listening to tapes. You will always glean a lot of useful information as you soak in tapes. It is nicer to listen to a preacher who is knowledgeable about many areas of life.

For instance, a good knowledge of history, politics, science, medicine, law, geography, literature and economics greatly enhance the delivery of a message.

7. Listening to tapes will help you to have a constant unintentional training for the ministry.

The training of a minister revolves around the Word of God. As you soak in the Word, you constantly receive some counsel. What a blessing to receive counsel without even asking for it.

ESTABLISHING DOCTRINE IN THE CHURCH

When the sower went out to sow, only one out of four seeds flourished in good ground. The Bible teaches us that the Word of God was that seed (Mark 4:14). If only a quarter of the congregation responds properly to a message, it means that you have to preach that message several times before it becomes established. When a subject is occasionally preached in a church, it does not lead to that doctrine being established in the congregation.

It is important to establish certain truths in the congregation so that the church can be perfected. Perfection will not come if the principles and doctrines are not established.[18]

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection"

(Hebrews 6:1).

If your congregation is still struggling with the concept of church leadership, you have a problem. If your congregation still struggles with the concept of tithing, your income will be skimpy. Dear friend, how can you move on to greater things if the foundational doctrines are not established? Let me share with you six steps that will establish a doctrine in your church. These steps are based on a simple scripture.

"That in the mouth of two or three witnesses EVERY WORD [DOCTRINE] MAY BE ESTABLISHED"

(Matthew 18:16).

Where there are two or more preachers saying the same thing, a doctrine will be established. Any church, which has all the ministers saying the same thing, is blessed! The Word of God will go forth with strength when it is taught over and over again.

SIX STEPS THAT WILL ESTABLISH A DOCTRINE IN YOUR CHURCH

1. Teach a series about the subject in question.

2. Teach another series on a sister topic.

For instance, if you teach about prayer you could also teach about fasting.

3. Teach the same subject a second time.

4. Later on, get your assistants to teach on the same topic.

5. Yet again, instruct your cell leaders or shepherds to teach the same thing on another occasion.

6. Get visiting ministers to teach the same topic to your congregation. When the senior pastor, his associates, other leaders and even visiting ministers teach a doctrine, that doctrine is bound to be established. Sometimes I am invited to teach on loyalty but I know that one sermon is not going to change a culture of disloyalty into one of loyalty. The message must be preached over and over until it is established. The mouth of two or more messages will establish the doctrine! Some things will need more than a year of constant teaching before they will be established.

REASONS WHY PASTORS SHOULD PREACH THE PURE WORD OF GOD

1. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD YOUR CHURCH MEMBERS WILL HAVE DIRECTION FOR THEIR LIVES.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"

(2 Timothy 3:16,17).

The Bible contains the written Word of God. It is a reliable source of direction for us all. The Word of God is given to us for direction in our lives. Everything we do must be according to the Word of God. In a very general way, the Word of God is the perfect guidebook for our lives. The Bible is a unique book that contains instruction on every possible issue that may arise. There are many that think that the Bible is not a practical and relevant book for today.

One lady told me that she believed she could practice fornication because the Bible was out of fashion. Three years later, when her boyfriend of many years ditched her, she suddenly realized that the Bible was not so archaic after all. The scripture is profitable, useful, relevant and practical for every Christian today! There are many Christians who do not want you to open the Bible; they just want a prophecy or a word of knowledge.

2. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD, THE CONGREGATION WILL HAVE LIGHT FOR THEIR DARKNESS.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). There is so much darkness in the world. We often do not know what to do, but God has provided a light for Christians. What is this light that God has provided for Christians? Thy Word is a light for my path and a lamp to my feet. God's Word is a lamp and a light for us. It is only when you put on the light that you know where to go. It is only when you put on the light that you can prevent yourself from stumbling over furniture. Jesus Christ called himself the light of this world.

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have THE LIGHT OF LIFE"

(John 8:12).

You need light in this life! Jesus (the Word) is the light for your life. People who have tried to live their lives without Christ and the Word have discovered that it is painful to stumble around in the darkness.

A young man approached me and informed me that he was having terrible problems in his marriage. He wanted me to help him. He wanted to know the way out of his marital difficulties. As I talked with him, I realized that what he needed was the Word. But he said to me, "Are you going to pray for me to have my deliverance?" I asked, "Why do you need deliverance?" He answered, "Oh, it has been detected that my wife has a marine spirit." I asked him, "What is a marine spirit?" He said, "Oh, it's something they say I have to be delivered from. So I want you to deliver me." I thought to myself, "This man wants a quick fix. He does not want the Word. He does not know that nothing sets you free like the Word of God does."

“And ye shall know the truth, and THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE”

(John 8:32).

I continued to question him, "Are you a born-again Christian?" "Yes I am." "Are you faithful to your wife?" I asked. He smiled, "Um… not really.""Actually," he continued, "I have not been faithful to her at all!" I advised this man to have a pastor and belong to a church. I told him, "Your marine spirit is the least of your problems. What you need is the Word of God to guide you in this life. You need the light of life, otherwise, you will continue to grope in darkness."

There are people who wonder how I know the things I preach. I remember arriving in Johannesburg for a convention. I was met by a South African delegation. When they saw me one of them asked, "Are you the Bishop?" I said, "Yes I am." "Really! We were expecting someone much older! We have listened to your tapes and read your books. Somehow, we thought you were a much older person." When you have the Word of God, your wisdom will be beyond your age. You will seem to be maturer than people of your age group.

3. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD THE CHURCH MEMBERS WILL BE WISE.

“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).

Dear pastor, do you want to have wise church members? Do you want to have stable intelligent people in your congregation? Then preach the Word of God. The Word of God will make you wise in this life. Advice and direction for business are found in the Word of God. There is more instruction for a businessperson in the Word of God than in any teaching on business management. There is more relevant practical knowledge on philosophy, political science, literature and history in the Bible than in any other book I know.

4. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD THE CHURCH MEMBERS WILL NOW WHAT TO DO.

I sometimes smile when people say, "God has called them to do such-and-such for Him." If you do not obey the simple instructions in the Word, do you think that God is going to give you a greater instruction? He that is faithful in little is faithful in much. If you do not obey the Word of God that says to pay your tithes and offerings, do you think God is going to speak to you about other things? “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee” (Micah 6:8).

God will minister His Word through pastors and shepherds. That is why it is important to have a good church and a pastor who teaches the Word of God.

5. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD CHRISTIANS WILL KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THEIR LIVES.

In the last days, God is giving pastors who will feed us with knowledge and understanding. Receive the knowledge and understanding that God is giving you through your pastors now!

“And I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding”

(Jeremiah 3:15).

Apart from knowledge and understanding, God will use a man of God to give instructions to Christians. These instructions help us to become better people in life. There are times your pastor will give a commandment to fast and pray. It is important to follow these instructions. The Bible teaches that we should obey those that have spiritual authority over us.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls”

(Hebrews 13:7).

Church members must listen to the voice of their shepherds. God has delegated the destiny of the sheep to the shepherd. God will bless your life and lead you through the voice of your shepherd. Jesus is the good overall shepherd and he told Peter to look after the sheep. That means that he was delegating the care of his sheep to under-shepherds. Dear pastors, we have an awesome responsibility and we can only do it by staying with the Word.

“And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers”

(John 10:4).

6. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD, SIN IS BURNED OUT OF THE CONGREGATION.

Do you want to have a congregation of sinners? Do you want to have a congregation of immoral people, prostitutes, drug dealers, liars, thieves and murderers? I hope not! It may sound strange to you but I have seen congregations like that. By preaching the Word of God, you ignite a fire that burns up sin. "I will make MY WORDS IN THY MOUTH FIRE, and this people wood, AND IT SHALL DEVOUR them" (Jeremiah 5:14). "Is not my word like as a FIRE?" Jeremiah 23:29).

7. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD IT KNOCKS SENSE INTO STUBBORN PEOPLE.

"Is not my word… like a HAMMER that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

(Jeremiah 23:29).

There are always stubborn people who need to attend the school of hard knocks. Preaching the Word knocks sense into stubborn people.

8. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD PEOPLE WILL BE GENUINELY SAVED.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"

(Romans 1:16).

When the Word of God is not preached people are not genuinely saved. They may be members of the church but they will not be sincerely saved. Salvation is a product of the Word of God being preached. Secular teachings on success do not have the power of salvation!

9. WHEN YOU PREACH THE WORD OF GOD YOU DEAL WITH THE INNERMOST THOUGHTS OF THE CONGREGATION.

There are many people who do not express their innermost thoughts. You never know what they are thinking. They are often evasive and do not answer questions directly. It is only God's Word that can get to their hearts and minister to them!

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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"

(Hebrews 4:12).

REASONS FOR TEACHING THE LEADERSHIP

I believe that every pastor should have special sessions with his leaders. Teaching leaders is one of the most productive activities a pastor can engage in. When you teach leaders, you generate sons and daughters in the ministry. Do you realise that two of the most important letters in the New Testament were written to a leader?

1st and 2nd Timothy are books that were written to a pastor. These teachings were not intended for the benefit of the whole church. They were the Apostle Paul's teachings to his junior pastor, Timothy.[19] Pastors and leaders need to be taught. They need to be separated from the rest of the congregation in order to receive special teachings.

I do this all the time and it has yielded hundreds of sons and daughters in the ministry. It has raised up pastors and shepherds all over the world. If you do not have special regular sessions with your leaders, your church will not have the right kind of workers. Church growth will be stunted when leaders are not trained specially. Dear friend, find out what there is to teach and begin to train your leaders yourself. Perhaps this is the key that your church needs.

"THOU THEREFORE, MY SON, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"

(2 Timothy 2:2).

1. When you preach to leaders you are actually preaching to many more people. You are also teaching the followers of this leader.

2. Pastors must know the principle of explosive growth: If you want GROWTH, teach your members but if you want EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, teach your leaders!

3. Teaching leaders establishes authority over the leaders who work under you. This is because the authority over the leaders is demonstrated by your ability to feed them.

4. Teaching ordinary members is an investment into the church of today. Teaching leaders is an investment into the future. The leaders you teach will carry on into the future when you are gone. Success without a successor is failure!

5. Every pastor must teach leaders because Jesus Christ taught leaders all the time. Pastors must spend more time teaching leaders than teaching ordinary church members. This is the pattern set by Christ Jesus.

6. Teaching leaders is your greatest key to true expansion. You will not have anyone to delegate if you have not trained leaders.

7. Every pastor must teach his leaders because the leaders will never know what to do unless you teach them. Many pastors assume that the potential leaders around them will acquire vital knowledge by osmosis. People feel that leadership is for special people who are born that way. Osmosis is not the key to leadership - teaching is!

AVOIDING "PSEUDO WORD" AND DOCTRINES OF DEVILS

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and DOCTRINES OF DEVILS"

(1Timothy 4:1).

1. DOCTRINES OF DEVILS

When you preach the Word of God you avoid the mistake of deviating into false doctrine or "pseudo Word" teachings. Openly false doctrines are easy to spot. You can tell them a mile away! Doctrines of groups like Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons are well known examples of erroneous doctrines. Most Christians have no difficulties spotting these things. Most pastors would not preach such flagrant error.

2. "PSEUDO WORD"

The real danger lies in what I call "pseudo Word" teachings. "Pseudo Word" teachings come about because of seducing spirits. These seducing spirits lure ministers into enticing areas of ministry. Pastors are often enticed into exciting areas of debate. There are many social causes that need a champion. There are many political and moral issues that need a spokesman. The question every pastor must ask himself is, "Did God call me to champion a social cause? Am I supposed to leave the foundational doctrines of the Word of God and move into these "grey" areas?"

I call them "grey" areas because it is uncertain whether they are secular topics or spiritual topics. If your call is to stay in the "grey" areas, God will bless you over there. If not, then you have been seduced and enticed by a clever devil. Every pastor must be careful about the doctrine he is teaching.[20]

"TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF AND UNTO THY DOCTRINE; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee"

(1 Timothy 4:16).

Examples Of "Pseudo-Word" Doctrines:

a. Teachings about good things or good causes.

Something may be a good cause but that does not make it the Word of God.

b. "Pseudo Word" teachings include things like secular leadership training,

c. Secular wisdom teachings,

d. Secular success teachings,

e. Political discourses,

f. Social campaigns about social and moral issues.

There are many topics such as gender issues, race and colour issues that stir up passion. These things in themselves are not evil. The only problem with them is that they are not the central doctrines of the Bible. I am not saying that it is wrong to preach on these issues. I am sure that God has called some people to address these things. However, you must know that these are not the foundational doctrines of the Bible. They are not the mainstream of the Word of God. They are not the gospel and they do not have the power of God unto salvation!" (Romans 1:16)

Make sure that you do not swerve away from the mainstream of preaching God's Word. It is the Gospel that has the power to save! Secular success teachings do not have power to save souls. Dear friend, if God has not called you to address these topics and you make them your emphasis, I am sorry to say that you have swerved aside into fruitless ministry.

"From which some HAVING SWERVED have turned aside unto vain jangling"

(1 Timothy 1:6).

As far as heaven is concerned, you may have turned aside into vain jangling (worthless noise making). "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES"

(1 Timothy 4:4).

INTERACTION 19

REASONS WHY INTERACTION IS IMPORTANT IN EVERY CHURCH

Interaction is an important part of ministry where the pastor makes personal contact with the people and establishes an important connection between himself and the congregation. He engages in informal discussions and establishes personal relationships with all sorts of people. Interaction is a key 'outside-the-pulpit' ministry that must be fully developed in order to achieve church growth.[1]

1. INTERACTION MAKES PEOPLE STAY IN THE CHURCH.

Dear pastor do not forget this! People may join the church for various reasons. However, people stay in a church because of the people they know and the friends they make! This is what I call church cement. If you want your church to grow, interact with the members and encourage them to interact with one another![2]

2. INTERACTION MAKES PEOPLE FEEL IMPORTANT.

Every soul is important! In fact, every hair on the head of every soul is important. When the Lord told us that He was numbering the hairs on our heads, He was telling us that we are very important to Him. It is important for people to feel that they are important. Personal interaction is the key to making people feel important.

“But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered”

(Luke 12:7).

3. INTERACTION MAKES PEOPLE FEEL THAT THEY ARE NOT JUST A NUMBER OR A STATISTIC.

Jesus said that He had not lost any of the sheep the Father had given Him. Everyone is important to God! Not even one person must be lost! No one is just a number. No one must be treated as a mere statistic. Interaction is the key to ensuring this.

4. INTERACTION MAKES PEOPLE FEEL THAT THEY ARE NOT OBJECTS BEING USED TO MAKE THE PASTOR FAMOUS.

“In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince” (Proverbs 14:28). People know that where there are large crowds, the pastor (king), is honoured. Sometimes the people feel that they are being used to make the pastor famous. Personal interaction will prevent church members from thinking in that way.

5. INTERACTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE PERSONAL CONTACT CHANGES WRONG IMPRESSIONS!

The queen of Sheba had a wrong impression about who Solomon was. However, after having a personal interaction with him, she changed her mind. She was so impressed with king Solomon. She said, "You are better and greater than I thought you were." “And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts and of thine wisdom: Howbeit I believe not their words until I came, and mine eyes have seen it: And, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: FOR THOU EXCEEDEST THE FAME THAT I HEARD”

(2 Chronicles 9:5,6).

I have had several people telling me about the negative impressions they had about me before they knew me personally. Some people could not believe that I was so different from what I was portrayed to be. Interaction kills wrong impressions very quickly indeed!

6. INTERACTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE PERSONAL CONTACT HELPS PEOPLE TO BECOME MORE COMMITTED.

Perhaps you have tried to get certain people committed to your church by preaching hard from the pulpit. Personal interaction with them may be the key that will turn them into committed members.[3] When Jesus interacted with Nathanael on the beach it resulted in a life commitment. Notice Jesus' personal interaction with Nathanael and how it made him a committed disciple.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! “Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel”

(John 1:47-49).

7. INTERACTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE JESUS INTERACTED.

Jesus is our great example setter. We can best learn about ministry by following his example. I want to do what Jesus did. I want to be more like Jesus.

“Now as HE WALKED BY THE SEA OF GALILEE, HE SAW SIMON AND ANDREW his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men”

(Mark 1:16,17).

8. inTeRAcTion MAkes peopLe FeeL speciAL.

Everyone wants to stay around someone who makes him or her feel special. Nobody wants to be a number or a statistic. Make your people feel special and they will stick to you like superglue!

HOW TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE

1. MAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE YOU DO NOT KNOW.

It is not easy to talk to total strangers. We naturally gravitate towards things we know. In every man is the fear of the unknown. This makes us reserved and overly cautious. Break out and allow the rivers of living waters that are in you to bless humanity.

2. DECIDE TO DO DEEP-SEA FISHING.

Deep-sea fishing involves going into the midst of the large crowd and interacting with total strangers. You can do it! Decide to talk to five total strangers every Sunday. All pastors and leaders must be involved in talking to total strangers after each service. This will lead to the church growth we have been praying for.

3. SHOW A GENUINE INTEREST IN THE PEOPLE WHO COME TO CHURCH.

Do not look like an official of the church who is just doing a duty. Do away with fake smiles and decide to be genuinely interested in the people.

4. HAVE A FRIENDLY SMILING FACE.

"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24). Practise smiling in front of your mirror. Some people have naturally stern faces; these ones need to practise smiling the most.

5. KILL THE SPIRIT OF HYPOCRISY BY INTERACTING WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE.

Hypocrisy leaves a nasty taste in the mouths of everyone. Avoid it at all costs! Do not only ask for the names of wealthy looking people. Be genuinely interested in people who look poor and uneducated. Jesus interacted with every kind of person. He spoke to tax collectors, Pharisees, Centurions, fishermen, blind men, mothers, noblemen and even the dead![4]

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?"

(James 2:1-4).

6. ASK THE SEVEN BASIC INTERACTION QUESTIONS:

a) Ask people what their names are.

b) Ask where they live.

c) Ask people where they work.

d) Ask people where they attend school.

e) Ask people whether they are married or getting married soon.

f) Ask people whether they are committed to the church.

g) Ask if you could be their friend.

EIGHT WAYS TO MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL

1. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY CALLING THEM BY THEIR NAMES.

When you call people by their names they feel special. They think to themselves, "The pastor knows me. I am one of the few people whose names he remembers. I must be one of the special few."

2. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY SMILING AT THEM AND LOOKING AT THEM IN THE EYE.

Some faces are "smile-less". Some people naturally have a serious disposition. This serious look can be misread to be unfriendliness. If you are one such person, I repeat that you must practise smiling in front of your mirror. I had to do that! Ask your colleagues to help you to remember to smile. I asked my wife to help me to be friendly and she did!

3. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY BEING SINCERE AND NOT EXAGGERATING WITH THEM.

When you flatter people, they tend not to take you seriously. At a point, people will think that you are scoffing at them. They may even curse you in their minds. When you say genuine things, no one will take you seriously anymore. If you want people to believe your compliments, you must learn to say what you mean and mean what you say!

“He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse”

(Proverbs 24:24).

4. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY LOOKING FOR GOOD QUALITIES IN THEM.

Everyone has good and bad qualities. If you want to build a meaningful relationship with anyone you must focus on the good things in the person. As you go along, you may have the opportunity to address real problems. Always remember this: if God were to address all your bad qualities on a daily or hourly basis, you would probably give up!

That is why God changes us slowly as the months and years roll by. Be like God and acknowledge peoples' strong points. There will be a time to address shortcomings.

“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the ACKNOWLEDGING OF EVERY GOOD THING which is in you in Christ Jesus”

(Philemon 1:6).

This verse does not say that our faith becomes effective as we acknowledge our sins! Our sins are before us everyday. Most people don't need anyone to remind them of their failures. This verse tells us that our faith becomes effective as we acknowledge good things and not bad things.

5. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY GIVING GENERAL COMPLIMENTS - IT MAKES THEM FEEL GOOD.

Say things like this:

a) I'm always glad to see you.

b) I always thank God for your life.

c) You are a real blessing.

General compliments make people happy. People do not know why they are happy when they are complimented! Happiness just wells up within them. But make sure that you do not exaggerate or flatter anyone. Be genuine and you will always be taken seriously.

6. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY COMPLIMENTING THEM ABOUT SPECIFIC THINGS - IT MAKES THEM REPEAT THEIR GOOD DEEDS.

For instance, you could compliment people specifically like this:

a) I'm impressed with the way you come to church early.

b) I like the way you pray fervently.

c) You look very smart. When you compliment people about specific things, they are so happy that they unconsciously decide to repeat that particular action.

7. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY COMPLIMENTING THEM IN FRONT OF OTHERS.

When you say nice things about someone in front of other people, it adds more spice to the compliment. No one can buy a special compliment at the supermarket! When a pastor or church leader gives a compliment to a member, he is doing something that no one else can.

8. YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SPECIAL BY COMPLIMENTING THEM AT MEETINGS.

When you compliment people in front of their colleagues, they feel rewarded for their hard work. The people we are trying hardest to impress are our peers! This is a fact of life. Many people are doing things just because their friends and colleagues are doing them. By complimenting somebody in front of his peers, you are putting a feather in his cap. Surely, this person will gravitate to you without even knowing why.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTION AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS

Interaction between church members is one of the most important keys to church growth. Not only must the pastor interact with the members, but the members must interact with each other.

1. ENCOURAGE THE CONGREGATION TO SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE SERVICE!

Do not dismiss the church service without encouraging members to say hello to each other. I often jokingly tell the members to say to each other, "I want to come home with you today for lunch." Sometimes I ask them to say to each other, "Are you married? Have you considered marrying me?" This makes everyone laugh but it loosens the atmosphere and encourages interaction.

2. ORGANIZE CHURCH CAMPS AND SOCIAL EVENTS THAT MAKE CHURCH MEMBERS INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER.

Camps are one of the best forums for interaction. People are relaxed and get to know each other in an informal setting.

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house”

(Acts 2:46).

3. ENCOURAGE CHURCH MEMBERS TO MARRY EACH OTHER.

Let the church members know that the kind of person they want to marry can be found within the congregation. Once the church members begin to intermarry, you will have more stability in the church.

4. ENCOURAGE THE CHURCH MEMBERS TO EMPLOY OTHER CHURCH MEMBERS.

“Neither was there any among them that lacked” (Acts 4:34).

The relationships within the church become deeper as the interaction goes deeper. Employers and employees sit together under the same pastor. Every large church has lots of members interrelating and interacting. It is this myriad of relationships that helps to stabilize the congregation!

5. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHURCH MEMBERS TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN TIMES OF CELEBRATION AND MOURNING.

Let the church members know that it is their duty to participate in the events of others. You must realize that people will do what you tell them and they will believe what you say. This is a biblical instruction “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”

(Romans 12:15).

6. encouRAge The chuRch MeMbeRs To MAke FRienDs AnD To inviTe eAch oTheR To TheiR hoMes.

“And ALL THAT BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER, and had all things common”

(Acts 2:44).

Once people have friends in the congregation, they will be glued to the church. Leaving the church becomes a little more complicated. Leaving the church now means leaving all your friends. Interaction between church members is truly a key to stabilising the congregation and encouraging church.

SECTION III

Church Growth

BUILDING LARGE CHURCHES 20

REASONS FOR BUILDING LARGE CHURCHES

"Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase"

(Job 8:7).

Should our churches be big or small? Many people feel happy in a small church. They often say it is cozier and more like a family. "We get to know each other and have better relationships," they say. These statements are true. But let us ask ourselves a question. Do we want to do what is cozy or do we want to do the will of God? God has shown us His will in His Word. Your starting may be small but God is expecting your latter end to be greatly increased. If it is not explicit in Scripture, it is implicit.

"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, THAT MY HOUSE MAY BE FILLED"

(Luke 14:23).

In Luke 14, the Lord gave us an important revelation. The master said to his servant, "I need my house to be filled." The master in this story represents Jesus. Jesus wanted his house to be filled. In other words, Jesus wants his churches to be filled. God wants full churches! The master in this story was not content with having just a few people at his party. He could have had the party anyway, but he wanted many more people. And more especially he wanted the house to be filled. Through this story, God is showing his will for the church. His will is more people! His will is filled rooms! His will is overflowing churches! His will is the MEGACHURCH!

REASONS FOR BUILDING A MASSIVE CHURCH

1.oUR HARVEST FIELD IS THE WORLD.

God did not send us to a suburb of your town. Neither did He send us to a few villages. He sent us to the whole world. If we had a small field to harvest from, then we could not expect a large quantity of harvested fruits.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"

(Mark 16:15,16).

The fact that the entire world is to be reached implies that the harvest of souls that we will bring in must be very large.[2] It will definitely be a major portion of the world's population. If a major section of the world's population is to be saved through the preaching of the gospel, then every church should be bursting at the seams for lack of space. Remember that there are over six billion souls out there waiting for us to reach them with the gospel.

2. THE WORK STANDS UNDONE.

During the time of his ministry, Jesus made a very important statement. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). This means there are plenty of winnable souls. There is plenty of work for us all. There are plenty of people to fill our churches.

3. MANY PASTORS ARE DECEIVED.

Many pastors are deceived by the fact that their little halls are full. Many ministers feel that they have "arrived" in ministry. You receive a nice salary and have a nice car. God has blessed you and all your expenses are paid for. This does not mean that you have "arrived". Do not let the devil blind your eyes to the real work we have to do. It is Satan who fans the church to sleep!! He whispers to the hearts of many ministers: "Everything is O.K." "This is it." "You have made it." "This is how far you can go." "This is everything you can achieve for God!" Such ministers have had their spiritual and visionary eyes blinded by Satan. The enemy whispers to their heart, "Everything is okay. This is it! You have made it!"

Satan wants your church to remain small. The fewer people you have in your congregation the more captives he has. The size of your church shows you to what extent you are depopulating Hell. When you have a mega church, it means that you are establishing more souls. It also means that more souls have escaped from the clutches of the devil.

4. A MASSIVE CHURCH RELEASES MULTIPLE MINISTRIES.

It is important to desire to have a large church. Pastors must dream of having large congregations. A large church results in the multiplicity of many ministries. It results in the multiplication of several important activities in the church. For instance, it multiplies the ministry of music. Initially, our church had only one choir. Now we have no less than six choirs in addition to numerous other singing groups.

What does this mean? It means that a large church has resulted in vital multiplication. It is the will of God that more of his children sing for him. The more singing groups we have, the more God is glorified. The number of choirs you have depends on the number of people in the church.

5. MORE PRAYER BREAKS THE POWER OF THE PRINCE OF THE AIR.

When you have a mega church, more prayer will go forth unto the Lord. Therefore, more people will be saved and established. When the Lord sent me to establish churches in Europe, he showed one key role that we were going to play in rebuilding his kingdom in that continent. You see, Europe has virtually become a continent of atheists. They have put God out of their minds. Many Europeans do not believe that God even exists.

Years ago, Europe sent out missionaries to the world. But now, they have fallen to the lowest state of demonic blindness and godlessness. The Lord showed me that one of our duties as a church was to release prayer into the atmosphere concerning the Church in Europe. Our presence in countries like Switzerland, The Netherlands and England, has resulted in much more intercession being made in those nations.

Our church in Geneva has all-night prayer meetings every Friday, praying from midnight until 6 a.m. They engage in spiritual warfare in a land where God is forgotten. As more churches like ours go into the nations, then more prayer will take place. This is one of the primary reasons why a large and branching church is important.

When the church I pastor, The Lighthouse Cathedral, grew to a certain size, we were able to successfully have all-night prayer meetings everyday. We had so many small groups within the church that it was possible to set up a rotation so that one of these groups could have an all-night prayer meeting everyday.

Thus, we had a different group praying every night. The larger the church, the more prayer groups are created. More prayer is possible in a mega church! That is why the devil wants the church to remain small!

6. A LARGE CHURCH GENERATES LARGE CROWDS WHICH CREATE GREAT EXPECTATION.

Through experience I have noticed that the larger the crowd, the greater the expectation. When there is a large gathering of God's people, there is an air of excitement, expectation and real faith. Why is this? This happens because the faith of everyone is heightened by what they see. The sight of a large crowd inspires faith and creates excitement.

The combined faith of the crowd is greater than the faith of just one person. That helps to draw out the gift of God from the minister. I have preached to small groups and to very large crowds. The spiritual atmosphere of these two situations is often different.

"And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not"

(Luke 3:15).

Whenever there is great faith, you can expect more power and miracles of healing. Jesus often said, "Your faith has made you whole." It is faith that generates the miraculous! I know some people will misunderstand me on this. I am not saying that God does not move in small congregations. I often minister in small congregations, and I see God moving in a wonderful way. God certainly does miracles in small churches.

All I am saying is that, generally speaking, when there are more people, there is more faith, more expectation and therefore, more miracles. I think even the simplest Christian can understand this simple logic. A bigger church means more people, which means more faith, which means more power, which means more miracles, which results in more testimonies! Don't you want more glory, power and anointing to flow in your congregation?

Dear pastor friend, believe God for a bigger church. With a bigger church, many more blessings will flow from the throne of God to his people.

"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"

(Mark 16:20).

7. A LARGE CHURCH MEANS MORE EVANGELISM!

One of the side effects of having a larger church is that more evangelism takes place. Our Cathedral is divided into about fifteen chapels. Under each chapel, there are several ministries and under each ministry several fellowships. It is our policy that every ministry has at least one major outreach

during each month. Since our church has many ministries, it is possible that fifty different outreaches by fifty different groups will be taking place at the same time at many different locations!

More soul winning has taken place simply because the church has grown larger. It is God's will for your church to grow larger so that more souls will be won for the Lord.

8. A LARGE CHURCH LEADS TO A GREATER INCOME FOR THE GOSPEL.

Having more people also means having a higher church income. If a church has a good pastor, the money of the church will be used for the right things. Unfortunately, some pastors are more like vampires – they suck the blood of the church rather than pour their lives into the ministry. A higher income means many more spiritual goals are achievable. Money is not an evil thing. Money is neutral! It is the love of money that is evil! Money is a weapon in the hand of man. If a good man has money he will use it to do good things. A good minister will use the income of a mega church to build the church and promote the gospel!

I had a dream that we would one day have trucks driving around the nation, holding crusades in every town and village. Once upon a time, that was just a dream. Now, with a larger church we have been able to purchase a truck and have begun crusading all across the nation. How was that possible? We had more people and therefore more money, and we could do more for God!

9. A LARGE CHURCH MEANS MORE LABOURERS!

There will always be a certain percentage of the flock who are real labourers. No matter what you do or say, a certain percentage of the church will not get involved in the real work of ministry. There will always be the spectators and observers. There will always be the commentators. The labourers will always be in the ministry. The larger the crowd you have, the more labourers will be sent forth. And the more easily you will be able to finance them.

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest"

(Matthew 9:37,38).

10. SPECIAL MINISTRIES DEVELOP WITHIN A BIG CHURCH.

As the church grows, it becomes more diverse in its composition. This results in specialist ministries being developed. When you have a small church, there will usually be very few special ministries like a ministry to the poor, refugees, and to orphans. As the church becomes larger it is possible to get involved in some of these other areas. When a church is able to be involved in these special areas,

many blessings are released! Look at the blessings that are available to churches that minister to the poor.

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies”

(Psalm 41:1,2).

These are powerful blessings for those who are able to grow to the point where they minister to special needs. Often when a church is small, it does not have the capacity to reach out in these areas. Have a vision of building a mega church. Other special areas of ministry will develop within it. You will have people with the ministry of giving being released. There are churches which have men and women with a heart for financing the gospel.

“He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity”

(Romans 12:8).

It is rare to come across church members who have the ability to make a difference in the church through their giving. Every pastor would love to have members who take care of major expenses for the church. In the earlier stages of our church’s life, I had no one who could do things like that. But now, there are people who have the ability and the ministry of giving. Other special areas that can develop are ministries to the poor and to the disabled.

I have a dream to establish an orphanage. I’ve had this dream for a long time. But, it will take a large and strong church to be able to support such a venture. If you have a hundred orphans in your orphanage, you have to pay for three hundred meals a day. You also have to buy clothes for a hundred people. You then have to pay the hospital bills for a hundred children. After that you have to pay several professionals to care for these motherless and fatherless people. I think that you will agree with me that it will take a truly mega church to set up such a ministry.

11. A BIG CHURCH IS LIKE A NATION.

As the church increases in size it will become a powerful community. It virtually becomes a nation of its own. Governments begin to fear the power and influence of a mega church, but they despise small churches. Governments know that a large church means a lot of people, which means a lot of votes. The politicians fear the power of the masses. They know that popular opinion keeps them in power.

They know that pastors are influencing people's minds. Small things are easy to despise. The Bible says, "For who hath despised the day of small things?"

(Zechariah 4:10).

Politicians can no longer despise the reality of the Kingdom of God when it is massive! They cannot attack the pastors in the churches when they know the number of people they lead. Our church was once attacked and the walls around us broken. The people behind the attack thought that they could get away with it easily. They did not appreciate the magnitude, strength and scope of influence of the church they were attacking. The "people behind the scenes" were very surprised when the attack led to a nationwide crisis. Several churches and the general public rallied together against the perceived attackers.

The politicians had to act quickly to prevent nationwide demonstrations and civil unrest. As you read this textbook, I want you to believe God for a mega church. I want you to receive the anointing to rise out of smallness into the largeness that God has destined for you.

12. MORE BELOVEDS, MORE WEDDINGS...IN A BIG CHURCH.

You will be blessed with more weddings within your church. A healthy growing church is one that has numerous marriages taking place. I always pray that my members will find husbands and wives. Years ago, when our church was much smaller, a young lady said to me, "My type of man is not in this church." When I looked throughout my congregation, I realized that what she said was true. There was no suitable person for this woman to marry.

Some years later she went ahead and married an unbeliever. At another point another lady said, "There is no man who is old enough to marry me. So I'm going to a larger church where I can find a man to marry me." You see, she was thirty-nine years old and there were no forty-year-old bachelors in the church. All of the bachelors we had in our church were in their twenties and thirties.

However, today we have had brides and bridegrooms of all ages. In a mega church, even people over the age of seventy have become bridegrooms and brides.

13. MORE CONTACTS, MORE JOBS IN A LARGE CHURCH.

The larger the church the more contacts and "connections" can be made. Let's face it, many things in this world depend on "who you know!" You may get a breakthrough just because you belong to a certain church. I have employers in my church to whom I can recommend potential employees. When our church was smaller, it was only full of students.

Now, many people can find jobs through the church. People always like to stay in a place which leads to blessings and security. The church members enjoy these fringe benefits of making contacts and finding jobs. Another benefit of a mega church is that it gives rise to large branches. Big branches are offshoots of the main stem.

Many churches have branches or satellites. The larger the main church, the larger the branches will be. As your church grows larger, it will make it possible for churches that spring forth from your ministry to become larger. I have noticed that our branches have grown larger as the main church expanded. "And shooteth out great branches" (Mark 4:32).

14. TWENTY-FIVE PER CENT– THE BIBLICAL QUOTA

The Bible teaches us that the sower went out to sow the Word of God in a city. The result was that, one out of four (25%) of his seeds yielded good results. If we win only a quarter of our cities to Christ, I can assure you that there will be no more half-filled churches. It is time for the Church to achieve its biblical quota of twenty- five percent of the population. How many people are there in your city?

There are about four million people in the city of Accra, Ghana. According to my little theory, at least twenty-five per cent of them should have responded to the Word of God. This means that at least one million of these people should be safely established in the Church. However, I wonder how many people darken the doorways of church buildings in Accra every Sunday morning. Several thousands do, but I doubt whether it reaches our biblical quota of twenty-five percent of the population.

"And when he sowed, some [25%] seeds fell by the way side… some [25%] fell upon stony places… some [25%] fell among thorns… But other, [25%] fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit"

(Matthew 13:4-8).

If the church of God attains the twenty-five percent goal, there will be many large churches scattered all over the city. Every church will have multiple church services from morning to evening. Calculate it for yourself! You will see that the Church is no where near attaining that twenty-five percent goal. How many born-again Christians attend church on a Sunday morning in your city? What is the population of your city?

Total citywide born again church attendance = 25% Total population of your city? When I did this calculation for my own city, I realized that we were far from achieving the results of that "sower who

went out to sow". But I prophesy that churches shall be filled in the last days. The land shall be filled with mega churches. God wants big churches because He is expecting at least twenty-five percent of the population to respond positively to our preaching.

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts"

(Haggai 2:9).

The Bible predicts that the glory, which means beauty, of the latter day church, will far exceed the glory of the former one. I believe that we are in that latter day. When I consider what the Lord has done in Ghana over the last fifteen years, I realize that God is bringing a greater glory to His end-time Church. The largest churches some fifteen years ago would be the youth groups of some of the mega churches that God has raised up today! Let me share with you some very important secrets.

1. God does not work with only one person.

The Spirit of God does not move in only one church.

2. If a pastor has been able to achieve great growth in your city, it is a clear sign that the grace of God is abundant for the work of church growth there.

3. People who think that God is only using one man are deceived! The Lord ministered powerfully to Ahab the king through Elijah the Tishbite (1 Kings ,21:17). But there was another powerful prophet called Micaiah who was used to rebuke Ahab the king. God does not limit Himself to one man. Elijah made the mistake of thinking he was the only one who was faithful to God.

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left"

(1 Kings 19:14).

But the Lord showed him that He had seven thousand other faithful prophets. "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him"

(1 Kings 19:18).

GOD IS RAISING UP MEN AND WOMEN OF INTEGRITY TO PASTOR HIS PEOPLE

Many big churches are springing up. Flow in it. Catch the spirit! You will also walk in the glory of the latter church. Learn the strategies of church growth. Obtain the power and the wisdom of God. Walk in love towards the brethren. Love even those who slander and betray you. Every great work of the Holy Spirit is as a result of love, unity and teamwork.

I really want to emphasize and stress this great truth that God does not work with one isolated person. Did you know that when Ezekiel was prophesying between 622-600 B.C., Daniel the prophet was also raised up and prophesied between 616-536 B.C. It was a time when God was moving through great prophets – people who yielded themselves to the call were used greatly in the ministry.

Interestingly enough, Jeremiah also ministered between 685- 616 B.C. You will notice that the time periods often overlap. This is because the Spirit of God does great works with many people at the same time. Isaiah (792-722 B.C.), Nahum (786-757 B.C.) and Micah (772- 22 B.C.) were raised up in the ministry around the same period of time.

You must buy into the move of God when the season comes. Zechariah and Malachi both prophesied about the end-times. Their ministries, interestingly enough, spanned the same period of time 557-525 B.C. What am I trying to say? I am showing you that God is using many people to do the same thing in a particular season. He is building mega churches now! Jump on the train and become the pastor that God wants you to be.

Did you know that God moved in a spirit of reform during the sixteenth century? Did you know that He did not only work through Martin Luther in Germany? At the time the spirit of reform was flowing through the ministry of Martin Luther, the spirit of reform was also flowing through a man called Zwingli in Switzerland. If Martin Luther had thought he was the only anointed reformist he would have been making a big mistake! God moves in waves!

There is a wave of church growth right now. There is a wave of massive harvesting of souls! Get in on this move of God! Allow God to use you to build a mega church!

a. Be open to learn new things that you do not know.

A common statement in my church is, “You don’t know everything! You and I are learning. Everyday of our lives should be a living classroom. Everyone you meet can teach you something!”

b. As we study the subject of church growth through the power and wisdom of God, decide that you can do it.

Do not let the failures of yesteryear keep you down. Be a “Can-do man”. rise up in your spirit and say, “We are able to possess the land. We can do it!” “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are

well able to overcome it”

(Numbers 13:30).

When you say, “I can,” the Holy Spirit will rise up to perform that which He has called you to do. Remember, you did not call yourself. Faithful is He that called you and He will do it. You are the believer and God is the doer. I remember when our church had only one member that owned a car – me! I prayed that we would have more people in our church with cars. I confessed and believed that we had ten people in our church who owned cars. After some time, I received what I believed God for. Believe that the God who called you, will do it.

“Faithful is he that CALLETH you, who also will DO it”

(1 Thessalonians 5:24).

I recall walking up and down the streets adjacent to the canteen we had rented for our church services. I spoke to the street and said, “Be filled with cars.” I spoke to the empty benches and said, “Be filled with members.” Today there are countless numbers of cars and members in our church

SEVEN TYPES OF COUNTING

I do not normally say how many members I have in my church. There is an important reason for this. I believe in real numbers and I have learnt that many people count the same thing differently! If I gave you a number of the members in my church, you may not know exactly how I arrived at that figure. Consequently, I may end up giving you the wrong impression. It is important for the credibility of pastors that we say what we mean and mean what we say.

I used to get confused by the numbers that certain pastors claimed to have in their churches. I have visited these churches at night and counted the chairs in their halls (I am an expert at counting chairs quickly). I would ponder, "How can they claim to have so many thousand members in their church?" However, as I checked and rechecked the number of chairs, I realized that there was no way that those numbers could be accurate.

Even with the addition of canopies and multiple services, there was no way that I could correlate the numbers that I heard with what I had actually seen. Maybe they were counting all the people who were present in spirit, but not in the flesh. After all, Paul claimed that he attended the Corinthian church in spirit. "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit" (1 Corinthians 5:3). I could not bring myself to believe that the pastors were telling lies.

I prefer to think that they were just counting in a different way. I realize that there are different ways of counting. There are seven types of counting that I have observed in the Body of Christ. And I think it will do us all some good to know which type of counting is being used.

TYPE 1 COUNTING

'Type 1 counting,' is the counting of the number of human beings physically present at a particular meeting. It is the headcount of people in attendance. This is the headcount. I believe this type of counting is the most informative of all the types of counting. However, it is probably the least used way of counting because it is usually the lowest! When I ask my data officer for numbers in the church, I get the Type 1 numbers. I need to know the Type 1 figures. I work best with Type 1 Counting. The fact is that only a fraction of your members come to church on Sundays. If you use the Type 1 Counting, you are only talking about a fraction of the real number of people that God has given you to look after. In spite of this, I still prefer to work with Type 1 Counting because it provokes me to work harder.

TYPE 2 COUNTING

This is the total number of people on the church register. Many churches quote this Type 2 number as their membership. The Type 2 Counting is larger or smaller depending on how far back the church

will go in counting its registered members. The figure also depends on whether the church updates or revises its membership lists frequently. It also depends on how a church revises the membership list. Some churches have what we call “active members”. For some people, an active member is someone who attends a service at least once a month.

For others it is someone who attends every Sunday service. I consider an active member to be someone who comes to church during the week, i.e., not only on Sundays. For others it is someone who belongs to a smaller cell group. All of these can vary the eventual outcome of the Type 2 Counting. What this means is that my ten thousand figure may be different from your ten thousand figure. That is why I prefer to stay with Type 1 Counting because there can be no variation in the method of counting heads who are actually present. Some pastors give a Type 2 figure as their regular attendance. When you attend their church and see the actual number of people, you may be very disappointed.

There is often a sharp contrast between the number of people physically present and the number of people the pastor claims to be his members. You may even think the pastor has a problem with lying or exaggeration. I have seen situations where the Type 1 Counting is as low as ten percent of what they claim to be their membership. The church may claim to have ten thousand members, but only one or two thousand are present in the service.

TYPE 3 COUNTING

This type of counting is often used during conventions and crusades that run over a few days. It is the cumulative count. The total number of people who attend the meetings is counted. For instance they could say that the convention was very successful and that, ten thousand people were in attendance. What they actually mean is that two thousand people came each night for five days! This type of counting is often misleading, as it does not give an accurate picture of the truth.

TYPE 4 COUNTING

This is where the seating capacity of the building is used to estimate membership. Sometimes a building has a maximum capacity of three thousand. During a programme, the pastor could say that there were three thousand people in church. This is because the whole church looked full, so the assumption was that three thousand people were there. This is a wrong assumption.

A Type 1 Counting could have easily revealed that only two thousand people were present. A hall, that is capable of seating three thousand people, can "look" full when only two thousand people are present. Once again, this is why I feel that Type 1 Counting will help us all to know where we are and where we need to go.

TYPE 5 COUNTING

This is when pastors give rough estimates. They try to give a reasonable assessment of the crowd. The pastor thinks he can assess the numbers present in the crowd. He makes estimates based on experience, and concludes for instance that there are about three hundred people present. Sometimes these rough estimations are quite accurate but at other times they can be totally misleading.

The pastor of the local church is likely to give a higher Type 5 Counting than the pastor of a sister church who is visiting and observing. The local pastor would say, "There are about two thousand people present." The visiting minister would say, "I think there are about one thousand two hundred people present." The visiting minister would not like his rival's church to look too big, so his figure would therefore be much more modest.

TYPE 6 COUNTING

Type 6 Counting is what I call 'wild and unreasonable guessing'. Some years ago when we had about eight hundred people attending our church, I met someone in London who told me, "I heard you had a convention and there were seven thousand people present." I asked him, "Who told you that?" He gave me the name of the woman who had said that. She had said, "I was in the meeting myself and

there were about seven thousand people present." I always wondered "How did she get the figure 'seven thousand'?" She must have had a shot at Type 6 Counting - wild guessing!

TYPE 7 COUNTING

This type of counting aims at outdoing everyone else. A pastor mentions a figure that is higher than any other figure being mentioned in town. If the largest church in town is said to be around five thousand, he will always have around six or seven thousand members. This pastor is suffering from the spirit of lying and exaggeration.

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR NUMBERING

We need to ask ourselves - is all of this counting biblical? Is it scriptural to be concerned about numbers? Should we not be concerned about quality and not quantity? The answer is implicit throughout the Scriptures. Numbering was done in the Old Testament. There is an entire book in the Bible dedicated to numbering – the Book of Numbers. In that book, the number of people, the number of soldiers and the number of tribesmen were recorded.

However, there was a time when God was angry with King David because he had numbered the people. It is clear from this that when numbering is done for the wrong reason it displeases God. For instance, if you put your faith and trust in your numbers, you are making a grave mistake.

"For there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few"

(1 Samuel 14:6).

God will pull down whatever you put your trust in. He wants you to have your faith in Him and Him alone. In the New Testament, different reports of numbering were mentioned. Everyone knows that Jesus had only twelve disciples. We know that Jesus sent out seventy disciples. It was reported that Jesus appeared to five hundred people after He rose from the dead. We also know that one hundred and twenty people were waiting for the Holy Spirit in the Upper room.

The Book of Acts records that Peter ministered to three thousand people at one time. At another time, we know that five thousand responded to an altar call at Peter's crusade. If these numbers were not important, then why were they recorded in the Bible? God through the Holy Spirit was teaching us that the numbers of people involved in any spiritual event is a significant indicator. The numbers are important. The Bible says that God will reward us for the quality of work we have done.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest… of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians 3:13). But Luke 19 shows us that God will judge us for how much we have done in His name.

"A certain nobleman went into a far country…when he was returned, having received the kingdom... then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading"

(Luke 19:12,15).

God is interested in what sort of work you are doing. But He is also interested in how much.[1]

THREE DANGERS OF NUMBERING

1. THE PRESSURE TO IMPRESS, LIE AND EXAGGERATE

Many pastors are under pressure to say things that sound impressive. If everyone around you claims to have so many thousand members, you can look foolish if you just have a few hundred. It's almost as though you have not been called by God. God is not going to reward us because of the number of people in our churches. He is going to reward us for our faithfulness to Him. I once attended a convention of a great church. I counted all the people that were seated there. As I said, I have become an expert at counting seats and human beings very quickly. There were a few thousand people present.

Later, I heard a claim from the pastor who had held that meeting, that several thousand people had attended the meeting. This pastor was probably under the pressure to impress and to exaggerate. I was there myself! I counted the human beings present, personally. Yet I heard a figure for that meeting which was several times more than the facts. Perhaps the other thousands were present in spirit. If the people you are counting are there in spirit, please tell us so that we stop looking for them in the physical!!

2. SELF-DECEPTION AND COMPLACENCY

It is easy to deceive yourself if you use the wrong counting method. I heard one minister say, "The whole area outside the building was full." He continued, "People were sitting under canopies." That is how he knew that things were getting better. But that is deception. I have learnt not to trust this type of counting. I don't want to be self-deceived. I want to know the reality.

When you are self-deceived, you think you are what you are not! You think of yourself more highly than you ought to, but this will lead to your downfall.

"To every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think"

(Romans 12:3).

3. DISCOURAGEMENT

You can also be discouraged when you count too often. Counting should be done so that you have a baseline figure you can use as a reference point. This will help you to know whether things have gotten any better over the months. However, if you want to put on weight, for example, I would not advise you to weigh yourself everyday. You will become depressed because you will not notice any change.

Growth should not be and cannot be measured so frequently. Church attendance can fluctuate so much that following it on a weekly basis can lead to a weakening of the pastor's heart. I have the head usher

or data officer in my church do a Type 1 Counting every Sunday. But I only ask for the figures after several months have passed. This helps me to see if there is any improvement.

FOUR BENEFITS OF NUMBERING

1. NUMBERING LETS YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE.

When you know where you are, you can more readily plan your future. (When you know where you are, you know where you want to go.) It helps you to see the reality of what you are doing. It is easy to deceive yourself. Checking the true numbers will help you to move forward with God.

2. NUMBERING HELPS TO CHECK BACKSLIDING.

There is a law of degeneration at work in this world. Everything starts to decay the moment you take your eyes off it. The Bible teaches that you should look diligently to know the state of the flock.

"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For riches are not for ever"

(Proverbs 27:23, 24).

Numbering is a diligent way of knowing the state of the flocks. When you are fed with information that things are decaying, you will sit up! When you are stimulated by the veritable facts, it generates a greater vision within you to do God's work. It makes you rise up to build the Kingdom of God.

One day I asked my data officer to tell me the attendance for that Sunday. He told me how many people were in attendance on that day. I was very discouraged because I thought it was a very small number after all my years of hard work. However, when he added the total number of satellite and branch churches, the real fruit of the ministry became clearer to me and I was a bit more encouraged. I decided to start more churches and press on for more growth in the central church.

3. NUMBERING STIMULATES GROWTH AND GENERATES A NEW VISION AND COMPASSION FOR THE LOST.

You become dissatisfied with smallness. It leads you to pray. Knowing the true number of people in my ministry has always made me pray more, fast more and seek God more often. You know that prayer changes things, and prayer can change those ugly numbers.

4. NUMBERING THE SHEEP HAS BEEN A VALUABLE TOOL FOR ME TO HELP MONITOR THE INCREASE AND DECREASE OF THE CHURCH.

It will guide you when you need to emphasize on visitation and when you need to judge yourself in areas that may be hindering growth.

FOURTEEN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS

There are some important figures that every pastor must always be constantly aware of. Each of these figures has some significance. I have discovered that each meeting has its special role to play in the life and development of the church.

1. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE PHYSICALLY PRESENT ON SUNDAY MORNINGS (TYPE 1 COUNTING OF SUNDAY SERVICE)

This number is only a percentage of your true membership. In a normal church a large number of people are absent on some Sundays. This is why the number can fluctuate so much. The Sunday service attendance is the best number to use for monitoring progress in a general way.

2. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE PRESENT AT A WEEKDAY SERVICE

This tells you the number of the very committed members you have. Most serious Christians make time to attend church during the week. You will find that the anointing and flow of the Spirit is different on a weekday service. A corporate anointing manifests because of the gathering of faithful ones. Lukewarm and religious attendees do not dilute the atmosphere.

3. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE PRESENT AT SMALL GROUP OR FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

This number shows you how developed the internal structure of the ministry is. There are some churches which can command thousands of people for a special convention, however they are not able to mobilize fifty people on a regular basis for small group meetings. It is important to have these small groups so that they can meet the needs of the members at a personal level.

4. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ATTEND FASTING AND PRAYER SESSIONS

This tells you the number of spiritual soldiers you have. This is very different from the swelled up convention attendance. It should be the goal of every pastor to build up a large core of spiritual warriors. These people may be more dependable.

5. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT A CONVENTION

The convention crowd contains many people who are moved by excitement. There are many "miracle seekers" and "sign watchers" in attendance.

6. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABSENT AT EACH CHURCH SERVICE

This is a very important number. It tells you how many people are falling away. It is probably an indication of how hard the pastors and shepherds are working. Perhaps they are not being prayed for and they are not being visited.

7. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CHOIR OF THE CHURCH

The choir of a church is like the flower of a plant. It is often the part of the church that the outside world sees. It is often a reflection of the organizational skills of the church. It tells us how well the pastors are making use of the talents within the congregation.

8. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CITY WHERE YOUR CHURCH IS LOCATED

A church's size is always related to the size of the city in which it is situated. The largest churches in the world are found in the largest cities in the world. For example, if 0.1 % of people in Accra (a city of 4 million) are in the Lighthouse; then our church population would have to be four thousand. If the membership shoots up to six thousand, we would still form only 0.15% of the population. This figure makes us relatively insignificant.

The figure must be determined every year for us to know how great an impact we are making in the city. If this percentage is insignificant, it must motivate us to have more visitations, more prayer, more fasting and more witnessing. It means that we must have more pastors, more shepherds, more churches, more ministries and more fellowships. We must invite more people, do more follow-up, have more crusades and release more power.

9. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO GIVE THEIR LIVES TO CHRIST EVERY SUNDAY

This tells you how conscious of lost souls the pastor is. It shows you whether members are inviting non-Christians to church. It tells us whether the church is fulfilling the Great Commission in getting people born again.

10. THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO WERE SAVED IN THE CHURCH

Occasionally, it is interesting to find out how many people got saved in the church. This tells you how original the church is. Many of my members were saved at the Lighthouse Cathedral. Some churches are made up of breakaway members of other churches. Since this was the source of the majority of their members, they often don't know how to win souls for themselves. Every church must know how to intentionally win souls and assimilate new converts.

11. THE NUMBER OF NEW CONVERTS WHO ARE STILL IN THE CHURCH AFTER TWO MONTHS

This tells you whether follow-up is being done.

12. THE NUMBER OF LAY WORKERS IN THE CHURCH

This shows you how involved the general congregation is in the ministry. It tells you what percentage of the church is asleep. When a human being is asleep only eight percent of his body is at work. If

only eight percent of your members are active, it means your church is asleep.

13. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO PAY TITHES

This is a reflection of the number of truly loyal people you have. The Bible says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It tells you how many people in the crowd have their hearts solidly planted in the church.

14. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ATTEND THE 31ST DECEMBER NIGHT SERVICE

Traditionally, this is a very well attended service. From my experience, it is the best attended service in the whole year. Superstitious people run to the church so that God will see them in church as the new year dawns. All of those you haven't seen throughout the year may finally show up on 31st December. The pastor is usually encouraged by the 31st December crowd. This swollen number usually regularizes within a few weeks.

The Anointing of the Holy Spirit 22

HOW THE ANOINTING IS RELEASED

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"

(Zechariah 4:6).

One thing all of us must realize is that ministry is different from any other secular job. In the secular world, many things are important for success. Zerubbabel was trying to build the temple. We are trying to build the Church. Building the church and building the temple are one and the same thing. The instruction that applied to Zerubbabel applies to us. The Bible is making it clear that it is not by any form of power that the Church will be built. The Church will be built by the power of the Holy Spirit – end of story![1]

There are people who look at me and say, "Oh, he's succeeding because he's educated." But it is not by the power of education. There are educated people in the ministry whose churches have not amounted to a "hill of beans". It is not by education, it is by the anointing. I read a newspaper article which said, "The pastor of the church is so handsome. That is why so many young ladies go there." But I know that there are pastors who are not handsome per se, whose ministries have grown into thousands. Still others say, "Oh, it is their background." "Oh, it is the location of the church." "Oh, it is the wealth of the members." "Oh, it is the exciting music." "Oh, it is the instrumentalists."

Everybody tries to give a reason why something does or does not work. There are pastors who have said to me, "You have the strategies!" They think I have loads of hidden tactics to make my ministry work. Some people think I am an expert administrator, that is how come things are working. In this section, I will introduce you to the most important factor that will make you start out and accomplish something substantial for God.

I believe in education. I believe in administration. I believe in strategies. But above all, I have come to the conclusion that the Prophet Zechariah came to - it is not by any form of might, it is not by any power, it is by my Spirit says the Lord. We need to know some facts about how the ministry relates with the anointing.

1. THE SPIRIT IS THE SAME THING AS THE ANOINTING.

The Bible says in Acts 10:38, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." You will see from this Scripture that the substance that God anointed Jesus Christ with, was the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can conclude that the anointing is the Holy Spirit. We need the anointing to do the work.[2]

2. THE MINISTRY IS NOT A HUMAN OR NATURAL THING.

As soon as all ministers get that in their minds, the better it will be for them. When you see a successful minister, look beyond the physical and see into the realm of the spirit. Observe the anointing at work. There is an invisible cloak over that person which allows him to succeed at what he is doing. That invisible mantle is what I call the anointing. It explains why some people succeed and some don't. It explains why some people have greater degrees of success under exactly the same circumstances.

A pastor cannot oversee a very large church, unless he is anointed to do so. I have been in the ministry for nearly twenty years and I know from the Word and by experience that it is by the anointing and nothing else!

3. NOBODY CAN HAVE POWER IN THE MINISTRY UNLESS GOD GIVES IT TO HIM.

Jesus told Pilate that all the power he possessed was what God had allowed him to have.

"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above"

(John 19:11).

I believe that God selects people and specifically anoints them to accomplish certain purposes. When I look back on my life, I can see that I was specifically anointed to do what I'm doing. This is different from a genuine in-filling of the Holy Spirit which every Christian has. Since the anointing is so important, we must ask ourselves, "How do we get this vital ingredient?"

It is very important to realize that the anointing is not taught it is caught. How does this special ingredient come onto a person? Is it something that we can all have or is it reserved for the special few? God is the one who introduces the anointing into the earth. He does it in His own sovereign way. I have noticed different ways by which the anointing is released on the earth.

EIGHT DIFFERENT WAYS THE ANOINTING IS RELEASED

1. TERMINATED TRANSFERRED ANOINTING

In this type of transfer, a man of God's life is terminated and his anointing is transferred to someone else. The person who has received the anointing usually starts ministering after the death of the originally anointed vessel. A good example of this is Joshua. Joshua became anointed to lead the people of Israel after Moses' life was terminated.

A transferred anointing is something that is moved from one person to another. This transfer can occur when a man of God dies or leaves the scene. His mantle then falls directly on someone else. The departure of Elijah from the scene resulted in the anointing on his life being transferred to Elisha. This resulted in the same anointing being present on the earth, but operating through another human being.

God is concerned about finishing His work and will use which ever vessel is available. I call this terminated transfer because death terminates the life and ministry of one man and the anointing is transferred to another. This also happened under the ministry of Jesus. As soon as Christ was off the scene, the anointing that operated through Him whilst He was on earth began to function through His disciples. People were amazed. The only explanation that they could give for Peter and John's new charisma, was their association with Christ.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,… they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"

(Acts 4:13).

2. LIVING TRANSFERRED ANOINTING

The next type of transfer is living transferred anointing. In this case, the anointing on one person is transferred to someone else whilst that man of God is alive. A man of God who is blessed with long life may see the anointing that is on his life working through others. For example, the anointing departed from Saul and was replaced by an evil spirit. Meanwhile, his successor, David, was anointed while Saul was alive. Saul saw the anointing to be king on another man and was afraid of him.

This is a common occurrence in the ministry. Even the Prophet Samuel was afraid to anoint David while Saul was yet alive. He knew that it would provoke much jealousy and hatred.

"And the Lord said unto Samuel… fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me"

(1 Samuel 16:1,2).

Some older men of God can see that their anointing has left them and moved on to another person. his sometimes leads the older man of God to fight the new one upon whom he sees the anointing. Have you not seen this in your city? The older and insecure men of God fight to keep their position, whilst God works through others. God allowed Saul to fight David in order to test David's character. All things do work together for good to them that are called.

3. ANOINTING SHARING

This is when God takes the anointing on one man and shares it with several other people at the same time. You will notice several men of God in the same era, operating in a similar way. In Bible times, several of the prophets lived and prophesied around the same time. God took of the anointing that was upon Moses and shared it amongst seventy people.

"Gather unto me seventy men… and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them"

(Numbers 11:16,17).

All seventy men were anointed. They shared in Moses' anointing and accomplished God's will. I have seen the anointing on my life being shared to many of my pastors. I can see them operating under the same anointing. I have watched them catch the anointing.

4. MODIFIED ANOINTING TRANSFER

The next type of anointing transfer is what I call a modified anointing transfer. In this case, the anointing is transferred from one individual to another but in the process, it is modified. In such a case, the recipient of the anointing may be notably different in ministry from the one from whom the anointing was transferred. An example of this can be seen under the ministry of Moses and Joshua. It was Moses who laid hands on Joshua and imparted the Spirit (anointing).

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

(Deuteronomy 34:9).

Basically, Joshua was anointed to do battle and take over new lands. Moses did not conquer any new lands, however you could see a similarity between Moses and Joshua. Joshua crossed the river Jordan using the "Red Sea Crossing Anointing" which he had received from Moses. He ruled the people with the authority of Moses. But apart from this and a few other occurrences, Joshua was quite different from Moses.

5. DIMINISHING ANOINTING TRANSFER

The diminishing anointing transfer occurs when the anointing from one is passed to another, but is reduced in its strength and glory. It is often God's way of fading out a particular ministry. You will see a clear example of this under the ministries of King David and King Solomon. David's kingly anointing was transferred to his son Solomon and then to Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Solomon's sons did not have the grace of God on their lives to rule over all of the twelve tribes of Israel. We cannot even remember the names of the other kings who lived after Solomon. This is because the kingly anointing was fading as the years passed by. God showed Solomon before he died, that the anointing on his son Rehoboam would be greatly diminished.

"But I will take the kingdom out of his son's [Rehoboam] hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe"

(1 Kings 11:35,36)

Some American universities started out as Christian institutions with a Christian vision. Today, there is not even a trace of Christianity in some of those colleges. The initial anointing is diminished!

6. ENHANCED ANOINTING TRANSFER

This is when the anointing transfer from one person to the other is upgraded. For example, Elisha had twice as much of the anointing that Elijah had and performed twice as many miracles. This type of anointing transfer is unusual. You will notice that Elijah told Elisha that he had asked for a hard thing; that is, to have an enhanced anointing transfer.[3] "Thou hast asked a hard thing" (2 Kings 2:10).

7. FORMER ANOINTING REINTRODUCED

This type of anointing transfer can be seen in the case of John the Baptist and Elijah. God decided to reintroduce the Elijah anointing through a man called John the Baptist. This is because God was doing a work, which needed a dramatic Elijah-type of ministry.

"And if ye will receive it, this [John] is Elias, which was for to come"

(Matthew 11:14).

I believe that some of the apostolic and prophetic anointings of the early Church are being reintroduced into the Church at this time. There is therefore a resurgence of the miraculous and the prophetic. There are much more larger churches with ministers preaching to three thousand and five thousand members like Peter did in the Book of Acts. The Bible predicts that two prophets with a peculiar anointing will arise in the Last Days to challenge the Anti-christ. The Bible says that these two prophets will do certain things.

A closer look at the ministry of these two Latter Day prophets reveals a great similarity between their anointings and those of Moses and Elijah. Once again, this is the principle of the reintroduced anointing at work. These two prophets will have power to call down fire from heaven. They will also have power over the weather to prevent it from raining for three and a half years. This sounds very much like Elijah.

The Bible also says that they will have power to turn water into blood and command plagues to appear at random. Once again this sounds like the anointing that was on Moses.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sack cloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will"

(Revelation 11:3-6).

Once again, it looks like God is reintroducing a former anointing in order to do a vital job. The anointing on Moses' life was introduced to fight against a despotic and repressive Pharaoh. The anointing on Elijah's life contended with one of Israel's most detestable and incorrigible kings, Ahab. The Antichrist, one of the most tyrannical and evil men the Bible speaks about, will need to be trounced by a combination of these two strong anointings. Perhaps the Antichrist himself will combine the evil spirits that worked through both King Ahab and Pharaoh.

You will learn from this study, that God does specific things for specific reasons. You may want a miraculous ministry to impress people but God wants to fulfil His purpose. He may not want you to do any miracles. All He may want you to do, is to teach His Word. John the Baptist did not perform any miracles but he fulfilled his ministry. He prepared the way for Christ. Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest prophet.

"Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist"

(Matthew 11:11).

You can only line up with God's purpose. God will not do anything outside His purpose. When you fulfil God's purpose for your life, Jesus will call you "great". Find out the purpose of God and flow with it. It is the purpose of God that will be achieved at the end of the day, and not your purpose. This

is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

"For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

(Isaiah 14:26,27).

8. A NEW AND ORIGINAL ANOINTING

In this case, a person comes on the scene and God anoints him to do new things. This is not very common! A study of the Bible will show you that God rarely introduces a new and original anointing. The more common way by which God introduces anointing, is through people. Elijah the Tishbite is somebody who appeared with what I believe was a new and original anointing. Two other people, Elisha and John the Baptist, have operated in the same anointing that was on Elijah. The difference was that, Elijah was walking in a new and original anointing! Elisha was walking in an enhanced transferred anointing and John the Baptist was walking in a reintroduced anointing.

UNDERSTANDING THE ANOINTING

It should be the desire of every real minister to catch the anointing. Without the anointing, your ministry is reduced to philosophy and your church to an ideological institution. If you want to have a big church, you need an anointing. If you want to teach the Word, you need an anointing. If you want to be a prophet you need to be anointed. Without the anointing, you are no nearer being a minister than I am to becoming the Prince of Wales. There are a few important facts that people need to know about catching the anointing.

FIVE IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE ANOINTING

1. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET AN ANOINTING.

"Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing"

(2 Kings 2:9,10).

Although this Scripture is usually referred to in terms of being anointed with a double portion, I believe that it also refers to the act of receiving an anointing. It's a hard thing because few people have the anointing. Many people try to get it, but few succeed. I can see why it is a hard thing. Why is it that there are few doctors (relatively speaking) in the whole world? The answer is simple. It is because it is a "hard thing" to become a doctor. Many would like to be doctors, but few end up becoming doctors. In Ghana, like other countries, it is only the very best students who gain entry into the medical schools.

As I look around, I realize that there are not so many "truly" anointed ministers. Many may call themselves pastors, but few are really anointed to stand in that office. If they were anointed we would both know and see it. Though many have certificates and qualifications from Bible schools, few are actually anointed. This leads us to ask, "Why is it such a difficult thing to be anointed?"

2. YOU MUST HAVE A STRONG DESIRE FOR THE ANOINTING.

I want to show you why it is such a difficult thing for you to be anointed. One reason why God does not readily give His anointing to just anyone is because the anointing is the Holy Spirit (God Himself).[4] The Holy Spirit is a precious gift from God to the Church. However, God does not haphazardly bestow that higher anointing needed for ministry on anyone. God does not cast His pearls before swine – you wouldn't! If you don't value the anointing, God will not give it to you!

I once had an old car that I had used for a number of years. I wanted to give it to somebody. I searched earnestly for someone whom I could give it to. I knew that the car was very valuable and would cost millions of Ghanaian cedis (thousands of dollars) on the open market. However, because the car was slightly used I knew that if I gave it to the wrong person, he could mistakenly think I was getting rid of a worthless wreck. He would not appreciate it at all. Because of this, it took me a long time to decide whom to give it to.

There were many around me who desperately needed a car. But because I wasn't sure whether they would appreciate it or not, I decided to give it to a particular person. When I eventually gave the car away, I was happy with his response to the gift. I felt that he genuinely appreciated it. I am sure there

were people who wondered why I didn't give the car to them. God has a very precious commodity! He is looking for someone who really wants it and will appreciate it. Often, those who should be obvious recipients miss out on the blessing. The anointing then passes on to someone else, to the surprise of others.

Many wonder why God anointed someone like me. A visiting pastor once stood in my pulpit and overwhelmed by the huge crowds, he said, "The tables are turning. Many people are asking, 'Why Dag? Why is God using Dag?" He was surprised that God had given me an anointing. Perhaps, in his estimation I shouldn't have received it. Have you ever asked yourself why God loved Jacob and hated Esau?

3. JACOB DESIRED THE ANOINTING.

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"

(Romans 9:13).

Was Jacob not a heel snatcher and a deceiver? He was, but he desired the anointing. Often other earthly desires drown the desire for the anointing. You may be surprised that not meeting this qualification (of desiring the anointing) eliminates many people, as it did with my car gift. Jacob strongly desired the birthright (anointing), but Esau did not care much about it.

Something that should worry us is the fact that God hated Esau. If God hated Esau, then it is possible that God can hate you! If God hated Esau because he didn't care about the gift, then God can hate you because you don't care about the gift of His anointing. People have wondered why God used Kathryn Kuhlman, a healing evangelist. She married someone's husband and later on divorced him. I believe that she strongly desired the anointing.

4. GOD ANOINTS THE DESIROUS.

God will pass over a thousand people who don't care much for the anointing and will give it to a person who strongly desires it. I see God passing over many people to get to you now! Did you know that Elijah's first servant was not Elisha? Did you know that Elijah's first servant was bypassed when it was time to be anointed? This servant was active in ministry but he was not chosen to be anointed by God. It was this servant who Elijah sent seven times to see if the rain clouds had appeared.

"And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times"

(1 Kings 18:42,43).

Why did this servant not receive the anointing? Why did Elisha, who was not even in the ministry, receive the anointing? Elisha was involved in business. He was plowing a field with his other business partners.

"So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth"

(1 Kings 19:19).

What happened to the servant? Why wasn't he anointed? Why didn't he become the next great prophet? Please learn this important principle right now! God will pass over a thousand people who don't care much for the anointing and will give it to a person who strongly desires it. Desire the anointing more than anything else in this world. That is the first step to becoming "anything" in the Kingdom of God. God told Pastor Timothy to look for people with a desire to be bishops. It is people with strong desires who get spiritual gifts. Paul said,

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts" [anointing].

(1 Corinthians 14:1).

If we could paraphrase this, it would say, "desire the anointing". "But covet [desire] earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

5. YOU CAN DESIRE ANOTHER MINISTER'S ANOINTING.

I have learnt that you can specifically desire the anointing you see on a particular man of God. You can covet the gift that God has given to him. This is possible because Elisha specifically requested for the anointing that he saw on Elijah. Look around and see which man of God's ministry or gift you would like to have. I see that gift coming on you now! Why would God tell you to desire something you cannot have?

The anointing is the principal tool for ministry. Without the anointing, all of your Bible school knowledge and certificates are useless. You need an anointing. Anointing does not come by going to school. Anointing is not taught, it is caught! When I was coming up in ministry, I did not know what I am teaching you now. God led me personally into this revelation. I loved the ministries of certain men and I followed hard after them. The anointing that I unknowingly coveted began to operate in my life. I will share more about this later.

God often uses a man or several different men to impact your life with the anointing. When you have decided which gifts and anointing to covet, there are several hard steps or filters that you will have to go through. I call them filters because as people go through them, many "drop out". There are people

who desire the anointing but never get it. It is because they are not able to pass through these tests. The steps are filters, which differentiate between the receivers and all others.

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE ANOINTING

One thing that we must be aware of is that there are different levels of anointing within the same office or calling. Though a group of people may be called to minister as prophets, they will operate in this ministerial office with varying levels of anointing. I want to show you this truth from three different points in Scripture.

1. TWO LEVELS OF THE PROPHETIC ANOINTING

Firstly, notice the example of the prophets Elijah and Elisha.[5] Though they both operated in the office of a prophet, Elisha eventually operated on a level of anointing that was twice that of Elijah's. The Bible records that Elisha asked to be able to operate on a level two times higher than that of Elijah, his father-in-ministry.

"Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, LET A DOUBLE PORTION OF THY SPIRIT BE UPON ME"

(2 Kings 2:9).

Obviously, Elisha knew that there was something higher within the office of the prophet that he could attain. He did not want to be something else, like a pastor or teacher. He wanted to remain a prophet, but within that office, he wanted to be a prophet of a higher degree. This principle applies to the pastoral office. You too can desire to go higher within any calling that God has set you in! Ask and you shall receive! Elisha asked and he got what he asked for. Jesus said,

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"

(John 15:7).

2. THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF ANOINTING

Secondly, under the ministry of Jesus, Jesus ministered as a pastor in addition to the other four offices.[6] He was someone who operated in a limitless measure of the anointing. In other words, Jesus operated at the highest possible level within the gifting of a pastor.[7]

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: FOR GOD GIVETH NOT THE SPIRIT BY MEASURE UNTO HIM"

(John 3:34).

3. NOTICING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE ANOINTING

Thirdly, Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians and asked them to notice certain things about their calling.

"FOR YE SEE YOUR CALLING, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"

(1 Corinthians 1:26).

As you observe different people in the office of a pastor, it is obvious that some are operating in a higher shepherding anointing. Just observe different ministers operating in the same office. You will soon notice that some speak with much more power than others do. There are times that I have sat in meetings and heard great men of God preaching from the same verses that I have preached. I then ask myself, "Why is the effect so different when this man preaches from the same simple scripture?" The answer is - different levels of anointing. Yes, that minister was ministering the same thing, but with a different level of power and anointing.

You will discover that larger crowds gather to hear someone who is on a higher level of anointing. One of the characteristics of the anointing is that it attracts crowds. Pastors who are operating on a higher level of pastoral anointing tend to have larger churches than shepherds who have less of the pastoral gift. In reality, some shepherds have only three church members whilst others have three thousand. This does not mean that the shepherd with three members is not a shepherd. Just that he is a shepherd with a different level of anointing.

You will notice that more miracles and revelations occur in a prophet who moves in a higher level of anointing. Elijah performed sixteen miracles, but Elisha had thirty-two spectacular miracles and revelations. One of the ways we are expected to develop our calling and office is by observing what God is doing with you. You can actually see certain things about your calling and your office by watching yourself and observing your natural gifts. When I say natural gifts, I don't mean human talents. I mean God-given abilities for the ministry.[8]

"FOR YE SEE YOUR CALLING, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"

(1 Corinthians 1:26).

Your Calling Can Be Identified

You can actually see things about your calling. There are two ways God puts you into an office. Sometimes God can actually tell you that from this time onwards He has called you and put you in an office. You are then expected to flow in that area and follow Him as He leads you step-by- step. At other times, God expects you to notice your calling by seeing what you do naturally in the ministry. Anytime you find yourself doing something effortlessly on a consistent basis, you may have a calling in that area. You see (observe and notice things about) your calling" (1 Corinthians 1:26).

SEVEN STEPS TO THE ANOINTING

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF VESSEL CHANGE

The anointing is like liquid that is poured into a vessel. Every liquid has a corresponding bottle or vessel. For instance, Coca-Cola will only be found in Coca-Cola bottles. Sprite has its own bottle. In order to be filled with Sprite you need to be a Sprite bottle. This is because specific fluids are associated with specific bottles. It is the same thing with the anointing. Specific anointings are associated with certain types of people.

An evangelistic anointing will go with a certain type of personality and character. A pastoral anointing will fit into a certain type of vessel. The Bible says that in a large house there are many types of vessels. You and I are those vessels.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

(2 Timothy 2:20)

If we want to be filled with a Coca-Cola anointing we need to be Coca-Cola bottles, so that the anointing will fit into us.

If you study the Prophet Elijah, you will see a particular kind of anointing on his life. The prophetic anointing (1 Kings 18:36) on Elijah's life led him to do certain things. The anointing allows you to achieve certain things. He rebuked the kings of his day (1 Kings 21:17-20), fought with religious leaders (1 Kings 18:20-24), challenged sins and evil, was dramatic (1 Kings 18:30-39), and had his ministry ended by a woman, Jezebel (1 Kings 19:3,14,16).

The Bible tells us that John the Baptist operated in the same prophetic anointing as Elijah (Luke 1:76). We therefore see John the Baptist, rebuking the king of his day (Mark 6:17- 20), confronting religious leaders (Matthew 3:7- 10), fighting sin and evil and having a very dramatic ministry (Luke 3:7-14 e also see his ministry terminated by a woman, Herod's wife (Matthew 14:6-10). This was the anointing of Elijah at work. Elijah's anointing operated in John's life because he was changed into a vessel that could receive it.

Note that both John the Baptist (Mark 1:4) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:4) lived in the desert. Both Elijah and John the Baptist ate weird things - locusts (Matthew 3:4) and worms (1 Kings 17:6). Both John the Baptist (Matthew 3:4) and Elijah (2 Kings 1:8) wore clothes made of camel's hair. To receive such a heavy prophetic healing anointing such as that on Elisha, a person cannot have problems such as lying, stealing and covetousness.

The anointing of Elisha does not fit into lying and covetous vessels. Unfortunately, Gehazi did not pass the test of lying and stealing. He lied and misrepresented Elisha! If a prophet is a liar, how will you know when he is speaking the Word of God? How would you know when he is speaking his own mind? Although Gehazi was close to the anointing, he did not obtain it! Elisha eventually cursed Gehazi for his unethical behaviour as a prophetic student.

The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

(2 Kings 5:27)

If you desire a particular anointing, God will mould you into the type of vessel that can contain that anointing. If God wants you to be a great pastor, he may work on your education. He may work on your knowledge of administration and law. To receive the anointing you must allow Him to work on you! Some people are not educated, nor do they educate themselves by reading. Yet, they desire the anointing to be leaders of large numbers of people.

Don't you know that pastoring a large number of people means that you will have several highly educated people in your congregation? How will you relate with all of these people? God may be working on your language. He may try to polish your manners and general etiquette! He may send you to a Bible school for training. He may send you off to a secular university for moulding. I've had seven years of university training. Those years molded me into a suitable vessel. God may take you through various humbling experiences. All He is doing is preparing a vessel that can handle the anointing. This is the principle of vessel change.

If you desire a strong prophetic anointing, God is likely to require of you a life of solitude. You cannot have such an anointing if you do not make time to wait on the Lord. You see, many changes may have to take place in your character and moral life if God is to use you for great achievements. Those who refuse to change and to modify are refusing to be recipients of the anointing. This first step alone can explain why many people desire the anointing but never get it.

Nobody pours Coca-Cola into a fuel tank. It is only petrol that is poured into a fuel tank. If you are a fuel tank, you will never receive Coca-Cola - you will receive fuel! There are different containers for different anointings. Please accept this simple reality.

2. SERVANTHOOD

Throughout the Bible, those that received an anointing were servants. Joshua was a servant of Moses.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, [servant]

(Joshua 1:1)

Elisha was a servant of Elijah.

Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water [servant] on the hands of Elijah

(2 Kings 3:11).

Peter, James and John were the servants of Christ.

HENCEFORTH I CALL YOU NOT SERVANTS [the disciples were ushers, bodyguards and errand boys]; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends

(John 15:15)

The position of a servant is a humbling one. You do not have your own mind! You must work for your master, taking him to be right all the time. When you become a servant, you are like a grown up child, ready to receive every instruction that is meted out to you. No one is above the Word of God. If Joshua had to be a servant before he became an anointed General, so will you!

This is another reason why some people never become anointed. They are simply too big to ever become servants of anyone. They are too conscious of their age and position in society. They feel that their status must be constantly recognized. No wonder God has raised up many young people to receive an anointing. Many old dogs could not be taught new tricks.

Although God has given me several thousand people in my ministry, I have been a servant for many years. I have served as an usher, drummer, arranger, sound technician and organist. There is hardly any department of the church, in which I have not been a servant. I marvel at those who want pastoral positions based on their having a Bible school diploma. They are no nearer to becoming pastors than I am to living on Mars. Some people just attend services and want to be appointed elders in the church, without serving their way to the top. These are the signs of a servant. Ask yourself if you are a servant or a boss.

Thirteen signs of a servant

a) A servant has a master. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master.” (Malachi 1:6)

b) A servant is at the beck and call of his master. “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” (Matthew 8:9)

c) A servant is one who executes the command of another.

d) A servant cannot be inconvenienced by any job or task.

e) A servant does not see himself as equal to his master. He doesn't say things like, “We are all

classmates. We are all engineers. We all have children."

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (Philippians 2:6)

f) A servant carries out the wishes of his master. "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again" (Titus 2:9)

g) A servant cannot be embarrassed by his job. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8)

h) A servant does menial jobs: picking up crumbs, serving food.. "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." (John 6:12) Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah (2 Kings 3:11)

i) A servant promotes his master while he stays below. "He must increase, but I must decrease. "(John 3:30)

j) A servant does not expect thanks or acknowledgment. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10)

k) A servant does what his master wants in the way his master wants it."Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22)

l) A servant ministers to his master of his substance

"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 8:2,3)

m) A servant has a reward. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name (Philippians 2:9)

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)

3. RECEIVING A FATHER

When God leads you to follow a man of God, (like Elisha followed Elijah) it is important for you to receive him as a father. You will notice from the story of Elisha that he had an earthly father called Shaphat. Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat. (2 Kings 3:11). However, by the time Elijah was taken away, Elisha referred to Elijah as his father. He did this effortlessly and naturally.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father

(2 Kings 2:12)

I used to have a junior pastor who preferred to call me boss. I always felt uneasy when he called me boss, but I didn't know why. You see, when someone calls you boss, it means that he sees himself more as a hired hand. A few years later this pastor departed under unpleasant circumstances. Then I realized why I had felt uneasy. A servant or an employee does not stay around forever. He's only there for awhile and will leave when it suits him.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

(John 8:35)

So, if you have a relationship with a man of God which becomes a father-son relationship, then you can expect a spiritual inheritance of anointing to flow effortlessly from him to you.

How to receive a Father

i. When someone is your father, he can speak freely into your life and you trust what he says. A child usually believes that his father really cares for him, no matter how much the father disciplines him. If you have doubts in your mind about someone, or are suspicious of him, that person cannot be a father to you.

A pastor can be a good man of God to some people, but to others he becomes a father. When a person becomes a father to you, one of the main features is an attitude of fullest trust in him. That attitude makes you admire and open up to him. You can never really open up your spirit to someone unless you trust him.

ii. Maintain great respect and admiration for anyone you want to receive as a father.

Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

(Matthew 6:9)

Let the will of your father in ministry be done. If he tells you to pray and to fast, because you believe it is for your own good, allow that thing to happen.

iii. Accept the father's position and authority. Every time we pray the Lord's prayer, we end it by saying, “thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.” We constantly affirm the position of our heavenly father. In the same way, every son must overcome the temptation to fight his father's authority and rule. Never fight a father, it is a dangerous violation. Instead, give the honour to the fathers.

The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

(Proverbs 30:17)

4. FOLLOW THE MAN OF GOD CLOSELY

Another important step is to follow the man of God closely.[10] All the examples of people who received anointing, stayed close to their mentors. Elisha stayed with Elijah to the very end. Elijah tried on many occasions to get Elisha to stay behind, but he followed him to the very end. It was at the end that he caught the anointing.

There are three ways you can follow a man of God closely.

a. Three Ways to Follow the Man of God

i. Physical association and close interaction

The first way is through physical association, close interaction and personal acquaintance with the

anointed servant of God. Joshua associated with Moses as his personal servant and minister. Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister (Joshua 1:1).

Elisha desired a double portion of the anointing on Elijah's life. He knew that through service to the man of God he could obtain the anointing he desired. Elisha became known as the person who physically washed the hands of Elijah. Close association of this sort may lead to a transfer of anointing.

Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands [cleaned and ministered] of Elijah.

(2 Kings 3:11)

ii . Follow his words closely.

The second way by which you can follow a man of God is to follow his words closely. Not many people will have the privilege of interacting personally with their mentors. So how can anyone catch the anointing on a great man of God? The answer is simple. Is it the pouring of water or the doing of menial jobs that leads to a transfer of anointing? The answer is no! The physical interaction exposes you to his words.

Jesus said to His disciples, the words that I speak to you, they are Spirit (anointing) and life. The anointing is in the words. The disciples of Jesus soaked in the words of their master until He left them. They took His words seriously because He had told them that the anointing was in the words. Thank God that today the words of anointed ministers are available in books, tapes and videos.

The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit [anointing], and they are life.

(John 6:63)

The anointing enters you as you listen to the Word. The Word is not just some philosophical discourse. It is different from a lecture in college. The Word is able to impart an anointing into your life. Look at this amazing Scripture in Ezekiel! The prophet said he could feel the anointing enter him as the Lord spoke to him.

And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me.

(Ezekiel 2:2)

I have always wanted the opportunity to live close to and serve certain men of God. But that opportunity was never practical. However, following some of these men through videos, tapes and books has greatly blessed my life and ministry. The fact that you are reading this textbook is evidence

that an anointing I received some years ago is real. The Bible records that Elisha soaked in the words of his spiritual father. Elisha didn't just wash Elijah's hands. He didn't just wash and clean in the house. Just like Jesus and the disciples, Elisha and Elijah engaged in lots of important conversation.

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked

(2 Kings 2:11)

iii. Decide to stay close to the very end until the anointing which you desire is flowing through your ministry. Elisha walked so closely to Elijah that God had to separate them Himself. Don't allow anyone to separate you from your spiritual father. Do not allow circumstances to keep you away from your man of God.

There appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder.

(2 Kings 2:11)

5. SPIRITUAL MINISTRATIONS

We must be careful not to make any mistakes. God will give you the anointing. No man can give you the anointing. Yet, He does it through men. It is important to pray and ask for the anointing.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

(Luke 11:13)

Another way you can receive the anointing is through the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands is a foundational doctrine of the Church. It is the principal way in which an impartation or gift is given. It is such an important procedure that God tells us not to hurriedly impart gifts through the laying on of hands.

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure

(1 Timothy 5:22)

Timothy, the pastor, had hands laid on him and he received spiritual gifts. The Bible plainly declares that he received the gift of God through the laying on of hands.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands

(2 Timothy 1:6)

This means that the manifestation of the gift and anointing must have begun to operate in Timothy's life after hands were laid on him. Thank God for the preaching of the Word of God. There is a place for the laying on of hands. The disciples received an anointing when Jesus breathed on them and said.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost

(John 20:22)

These different spiritual ministrations are ways by which God can impart His gift to you.

6. THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Time is a very important element in the development of any ministry. The Word of God teaches us that Jesus adds to our gifts when He recognizes that we are faithful to what He has given to us.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much

(Luke 16:10)

With the passage of time your faithfulness will be tested. Your faithfulness will provoke God to give you additional gifts and a greater anointing. You will discover that certain realms are inaccessible to you until time elapses. Unfortunately, there is no substitute for the test of time.

Some years ago, I tried to raise the dead but I did not succeed. I often wondered why God did not honour me then. If He had, I probably would have backslidden by now. I now see certain things happening in my ministry, which I didn't see before. If I had had that level of anointing some years ago, it could have destroyed me. It is important to trust God to allow time to pass so that He Himself can lift you up at the right time.

7. MINISTER TO THE MAN OF GOD.

The last but not the least step I want to share with you is about ministering to the man of God with your substance.

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 8:2,3)

You must be able to minister to the man of God out of your own substance. If money is a problem to you then you cannot be a minister. The Bible teaches that people who have been taught should share

their good things with those who teach them.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things

(Galatians 6:6)

The man of God will minister spiritual things to you and you will minister back to him in physical things. The anointing is provoked when you minister to the man of God. Anytime I have had the opportunity to be near those who have been a blessing to me, I have ministered to them out of my substance. When the woman with the alabaster box of ointment ministered to Christ, He said that she would be remembered. When you pour an alabaster box on a man of God you will provoke a blessing and be remembered.

Your ministry will have a longer life span as you decide to honor those before you. Your ministry will be remembered by many. You will provoke the favour and anointing of God over your life. Notice what great men like Abraham did when they met with greater men of God. They immediately ministered to the man of God out of their substance.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him…And he [Abraham] gave him tithes of all

(Genesis 14:18- 20)

THE POWER OF WORDS 23

HOW I CAME TO BE ANOINTED

I had no formal training in the ministry, no Bible school and little contact with any great man of God (and lots of critics). Some of the men of God I came into contact with, ended up opposing and fighting the call of God on my life. I had no option but to tap into the anointing that was on other more distant men of God. I was forced to catch the anointing through tapes and books. I believe that I am anointed with the Holy Ghost to stand in my office of ministry. I have too much evidence all around me to doubt the reality of the anointing on my life.

I also believe that the electronic and technological development in the world is for the benefit of the Kingdom of God and the ministry. The technology of this world can help you to get near to people who are anointed. It's the anointing that you need. When God sends you a man of God, you are given a chance to receive him and catch the anointing that is on his life. The anointing is the principal thing that you and I need to do God's work.[11] The prophet Zechariah knew that the most important thing was the anointing. It was he who said,

It is not by might and it is not by power but it's by my Spirit

(Zechariah 4:6)

Elisha also realized that the thing which made Elijah's ministry successful was the anointing. When he had the opportunity he asked for the anointing. Some people may have asked for the money, the education or the qualifications that Elijah had. But Elisha just wanted the anointing!

Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me

(2 Kings 2:9)

In this section, I want to share about a channel of anointing that is not usually spoken of. It may sound new to you, but it is very real. If there is any way by which you can receive the anointing, please take it! I am not presenting this as the only way that God can anoint you. I am sharing with you what I have received from the Lord. I am sharing with you what is biblically and scripturally sound.

Many people have received the anointing through listening to tapes and reading books, but they do not understand what has happened to them. Many people who have received the anointing through this channel cannot teach it because they do not fully understand it. I believe that it is my duty to teach this simple but real method of catching the most essential ingredient of ministry - the anointing. I have shared about the importance of associating closely with the man of God in order to receive the

anointing. Why do you have to associate with anointed men of God? What exactly do you acquire through association?

As you closely associate with a man of God you will hear him speaking over and over. These words are what contain the anointing. When Elisha associated himself closely with Elijah he heard him speaking over and over again.

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked

(2 Kings 2:11)

FOURTEEN SECRETS ABOUT THE POWER OF WORDS

Jesus told His disciples that His words contained two important things. They contained life and the Spirit! What is this Spirit? The Spirit is the anointing! The Scripture says that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power (Acts 10:38 Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and therefore the Holy Ghost is the anointing (the substance with which He was anointed. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

(John 6:63)

For many people, the close association we speak about is not possible except through the medium of books and tapes.

1. BOOKS AND TAPES CONTAIN THE WORDS OF ANOINTED MEN OF GOD.

2. THE WORDS OF ANOINTED MEN OF GOD CONTAIN THE SPIRIT AND THE LIFE

Soaking in books written by anointed men is a very valuable way of fellowshipping with them.

3. THE TIME YOU SPEND READING A BOOK IS TIME YOU SPEND FELLOWSHIPPING WITH THE ONE WHO WROTE THE BOOK.

What a great privilege to interact with someone for three hours in the privacy of your home. As you read this textbook you are fellowshipping with me and I am fellowshipping with you. I feel that I am talking to certain people through this textbook. I am ministering directly to as many as would take the time to receive.

Just as Elisha listened to the words of Elijah, and the disciples listened to the words of Jesus, you are listening to my words as you read this textbook! The disciples listened to the words of Jesus, that is why they were anointed. The anointing makes people take notice of you.

And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus

(Acts 4:13)

4. YOU CAN BE WITH JESUS TODAY BY READING HIS WORDS IN THE BIBLE.

I constantly become amazed at the number of ministers who do not read the Bible. They just use the Bible as a tool for preaching. The Word of God is, first of all for your benefit. You will not be a minister of substance if you do not have your own personal fellowship with the Lord. I do not mean a last-minute check of certain Scriptures before you preach. A quick check of a Scripture is different from fellowshipping with somebody through the written Word.

Fellowship with Jesus everyday. God wants to interact with you. He wants to fellowship with you. God's desire since the days of Adam has been to fellowship with man. When Moses came down from the mountain after fellowshipping with the Lord, the glory of the Lord was upon him. The glory of the Lord will be upon you when you fellowship with God.

When I woke up in this world, I found myself in Ghana, West Africa. I realized that I was very far from the great men of God in America. I desperately wanted to fellowship with them but there was no way possible. I did not even have a visa to America. I had no money to buy a plane ticket. Even if I had been able to get there, many would have seen me as a crazy black man who was trying to get too close! They would have called their security guards to protect them from me.

So God showed me a way that I could fellowship with some of the great anointed people of this generation. I have fellowshipped with many people through their books. I have gotten to know their minds through their books. I have interacted with the Lord Jesus by reading the Bible and studying His words and actions. One of my favorite portions of the Bible are the Gospels. In the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), I can see what Jesus said and I can hear Him talking to me personally.

Two Types of Receivers

There are two types of people who receive the anointing: a. Those who are physically near b. And those who are physically afar off You see, some people have the opportunity to be physically near the anointed vessel. The apostles, Peter, James and John were physically close to the Lord. They touched Him, they held Him and they even had dinner with Him.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled

(1 John 1:1)

The Apostle Paul loved his books. Unfortunately, Paul did not have the chance to physically interact with Christ as the other apostles did. Paul was just like me, he had to depend on books! That is why he sent urgently for his books and parchments (booklets). He had to study and fellowship with the Lord and other great men of God like Isaiah through the written Word.

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)

If Paul had lived in our generation he would have used all the technology available to receive even more of the Word and the anointing. Paul would have listened to tapes and watched videos. Books contain the written Word, but tapes contain the spoken Word. You can catch the anointing from the spoken Word.

5. SOAKING IN TAPES MEANS TO LISTEN TO THE WORDS OVER AND OVER AGAIN UNTIL IT BECOMES A PART OF YOU AND UNTIL THE ANOINTING PASSES UNTO YOU!

Soaking in tapes is a scriptural practice. When a tape is fully soaked, both the Word content and the spirit content are imbibed into your spirit. The anointing is not something you learn, it is something you catch. Do not assume that the soaking of the tape is just an educational exercise. It is a spiritual act.

6. FAITH COMES BY SOAKING IN TAPES

One important thing that happens when you soak in a tape is that you receive faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word (Romans 10:17).

7. THE ANOINTING ENTERS INTO YOU AS YOU RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD.

The Spirit enters a person as he receives the Word of God. That is why many people experience radical transformations by just listening to a powerful message of the Word of God. That is how come people are saved when they hear the preaching of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit enters into them as the preaching goes forth and they are born again. The Bible says that we are born of the Spirit.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

(John 3:6).

Being born again is not an educational experience. Being born again does not mean that you have learnt something new. It means that a spiritual change has taken place. Your spirit is recreated by the Holy Spirit. This experience of being born again completely and forever changes a person's life. It happens when people listen to the preaching of the Word. That is why we invite people to church. We want them to be exposed to the preaching.

In the same way as you are born again and experience a spiritual transformation, you can experience a further spiritual transformation that will convert you into a minister. This spiritual transformation that makes you a minister is what some call receiving an anointing or being anointed. There are too many people who are called ministers who have not received a call to ministry and an anointing to minister.

8. WHEN YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ANOINTED, YOU ARE DRY AND LIFELESS.

I used to go to church every Sunday and I hated it! It was a lifeless and boring experience. I only went because my parents had asked me to go. Unfortunately, not only are some so-called ministers not anointed but they are not even born again. This is even worse! You do not become a minister by obtaining a certificate.

You become a minister when God calls you and anoints you! Churches do not grow because there is no anointing for church growth. Pastors everywhere must desire the anointing.[12] It is the anointing that makes the difference! Once you know the anointing, you will not want anything else.

9. INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATION ARE NO SUBSTITUTES FOR THE ANOINTING!

You will not succeed in the ministry by being clever. Desire the anointing! Go for it! It is the main thing! And the main thing is still the main thing!

10. JESUS DID NOT ATTEMPT ANY FORM OF MINISTRY UNTIL HE WAS ANOINTED.

The first sermon that Jesus preached was about the anointing. The first thing that He said when he began His ministry was that He was anointed.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor

(Luke 4:18)

Jesus knew that the ministry depended on the anointing. I recently visited a beautiful large church. The pastor himself was not around so the janitor took us around the building. The main hall had hundreds of beautiful mahogany pews. It was a beautiful building with two huge pipe organs and surrounding balconies. I asked the janitor, How many people does this building seat? He answered, This building seats at least eight hundred and eighty people. Wow, I remarked, That's a lot of people! He continued, But, we don't have many people coming to church anymore. I see. How many people come to church nowadays? I asked inquisitively. About twenty, with a maximum of thirty people. He added, Only old people attend church now. The young people don't come to church anymore.

I thought, How sad. Such a large church has been reduced to a fellowship of twenty old and dying people. Obviously there was no life. But that was not all. The janitor continued, the services from this month are being held every two weeks instead of every week. I thought to myself, We hold church services on almost everyday of the week. There is so much life in our church. It is full of mainly young people who want to serve the Lord. What a contrast! What makes a difference between a growing and a dead church is the anointing.

11. THE ANOINTING IS THE LIFE OF GOD IN THE MINISTRY.

Oh, how we need the anointing! We can't do without the Holy Spirit. So how do we come by this Holy Spirit? That is what this section is about. God is trying to show you that you need an anointing. You may be ministering the Word. You may even be ordained. But it is only when you are anointed that your ministry will begin to make a difference to the lost masses of humanity. I see the anointing on you right now as you read this book!

12. THE PROPHET EZEKIEL EXPLAINED THAT HE RECEIVED THE ANOINTING AS HE WAS LISTENING TO THE WORD.

The anointing entered Ezekiel’s life one day. He described exactly how and when the anointing came upon him. Ezekiel sensed that the power and anointing of the Spirit had entered into him whilst he was listening to the Word.

And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me

(Ezekiel 2:2)

Ezekiel said very clearly in this Scripture that the Holy Spirit entered into him when he was being spoken to. Peter, the apostle, also noticed this phenomenon. He noticed that the power of the Holy Spirit fell on people as he preached. Do you remember when Peter was preaching to the Gentiles? The Bible says that as he ministered the Word, the Spirit of God fell on the people.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word

(Acts 10:44)

If the gift of the Holy Spirit could fall on people whilst Peter was preaching, then surely the gift of the Holy Spirit can fall on you when any other anointed man of God is preaching. This is simple logic.

A Personal Encounter With The Anointing

At 5 o'clock in the morning on the 1st of January, 1987 I decided to obey the call of God on my life. It was in the early hours of the first day of that new year when I decided to take up the mantle and become a pastor. I knew that I had been called and I had decided to obey and become a pastor. At the time, I was in my fourth year of medical school. I began the church with a few nursing students and laboratory students in the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital where I was studying medicine. I had no one to direct or guide me so I struggled quite a bit during that first year.

By the end of 1987 many friends had expressed their lack of confidence in me and deserted me. I was criticized until I felt like killing myself, just to make my enemies happy. I remember looking at the ceiling fan as it twirled above my bed. I often thought of hanging myself on it. I wanted to vanish out of the view of all those who hated me and criticized me. I had very little guidance, but I was sincere and I had a lot of faith and many enemies. It is amazing how people hate you when you decide to follow the call of God.

This was the precarious and doubtful beginning of my ministry. I started out by faith and began teaching and preaching what I knew. A few nursing students responded. At the beginning the church met in a little classroom in the School of Hygiene. After a while many people left and some stayed. The little church stabilized with about forty members. But something happened to me in 1988 that made a big difference to my ministry. It transformed the ministry from a little classroom full of nursing students to a ministry that impacts thousands of people around the world today.

Sometime during the middle of the year 1988, I had to fulfill what is called a 'Community Health rotation'. Every class in medical school is divided into groups. Each group rotates through different fields of medicine throughout the year. That is why it is called a rotation. I had to complete four rotations in my final year, one each for surgery, medicine, specials and community health. During the Community Health rotation, I had to travel outside the city of Accra to a smaller town called Suhum, in another region of the country.

Whilst there, I lived in the Suhum Government Hospital for one month. I was to gain practical experience in running a hospital and working out on the field where conditions are different from the bigger cities. Although I was fulfilling my medical requirements, as usual my mind was on the ministry. By the second week, I took advantage of a more relaxed timetable and decided to fast and pray. On my way out of Accra to Suhum, I had passed through a Christian bookshop and bought some Kenneth Hagin tapes. I felt that I needed something to soak in whilst I was in Suhum.

I had been a great follower and admirer of Kenneth Hagin's ministry. Actually, I had already listened to those tapes many times but I thought I would just have something to listen to. No one had ever told

me to listen to tapes. I just enjoyed doing it. I loved the Word and I loved the minister of the Word. No one had ever told me to listen to tapes over and over. I wasn't trying to memorize the message although I ended up remembering almost every sentence.

Listening to tapes never replaced Bible study and personal quiet times for me. I wasn't losing my personality! I wasn't becoming a clone. I was being blessed tremendously! One night I was praying, fasting and listening to one of these tapes that I had bought. I remember that day as if it was yesterday. I was using a small red Sony auto-reverse tape recorder. The message that was being played was something about dealing with demons. It was a message I had enjoyed listening to many times. The tape played nonstop throughout the night.

“From Now You Can Teach”

At about 3 a.m. in the morning, I was kneeling by the bed praying. I could see the tape recorder situated at the other end of the room. Then suddenly, something literally jumped out of the tape which was playing and moved into my belly. I could feel it entering me. Then I heard a voice saying, From now you can teach. I didn't know what that was but I thought to myself, ‘that's good, because I want to teach.’

I didn't know at that time that I had received a major impartation of anointing through the channel of soaking in tapes. At that time, my church comprised about forty students. The Bible teaches that we should prove all things, so I decided to try out this new gifting. I was invited to teach at a Full Gospel Businessmen's breakfast meeting in Suhum. This was my first ministration after my impartation experience. I tell you, I noticed a difference.

After the ministration someone asked me where my church was. He was surprised that I was an unknown minister. Inside me I knew that something had happened that was making a difference. When I got back to the church after a month, I noticed a difference in my ability to teach and preach. The anointing had arrived and I began to build up. The first series I preached was about the prodigal son. I preached this on a weekday and the attendance and interest in the service began to increase steadily.

I tell you, I noticed there was some life and Spirit in the ministry. It is difficult to describe it but when it's there you know it's there! The anointing is a bit like beauty - when you see it, you know it! You can't easily explain how or why you recognize beauty. But when you see beauty or anointing you know that it is there. I have no reason to give for what I am sharing except but to help you.

Evidence Of The Presence Of The Anointing In Ministry

My ministry has grown in leaps and bounds because of an anointing caught from soaking in the Word on a tape. Today, you are reading one of the several books that I have written under that same teaching anointing. At the time, I did not have any biblical basis for what I had experienced, so I did not talk about it. Later, as I studied the Word of God, I realized that the mystery of impartation of anointing through the soaking of the Word is a reality. It is biblical! It is doctrinally sound and it is experientially real! Anyone who exposes himself to soaking in the Word through books and tapes is exposing himself to more of the anointing! When you do that, only good things will happen to you.[13]

On different occasions I have heard people describe how they have received an anointing as they sat in the congregation and received the ministry of the Word. One pastor described how he felt warm drops of anointing falling on his head as I spoke the Word at a camp meeting. I believe the Lord was anointing this man.

T. L. Osborne, the great evangelist, describes how God changed his ministry as he sat under the ministry of William Branham. It all happened in a moment and he was anointed to go out and be a great witness to the world. It is interesting that outsiders sometimes are better receivers than insiders.

13. THE CENTURION IN THE BIBLE BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS POWER IN JESUS' WORDS TO HEAL HIS SERVANT.

Do you remember the story of the centurion whose servant was sick? He sent for Jesus because he knew that Jesus had the anointing and power to heal.

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed

(Luke 7:2-7)

This man realized that there was anointing in the words of Jesus. So he sent another message to Jesus. He said, "Don't bother to come all the way here. Just stand there and say something." In other words, there is no need for you to even lay hands or pour oil on my child, just speak some words and the healing anointing will flow.

He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions

(Psalm 107:20)

The Angel Appears through the spoken Word

One night when I was ministering at a Miracle Wave Convention something astonishing happened. There were thousands of people present that night and the power of God was flowing. That night I remember that when I finished preaching the Word, I felt that God had already moved. It wasn't even necessary to do anything further. There was a lady sitting up in the balcony with her baby and husband.

This lady suddenly experienced an open vision. Her eyes opened supernaturally and she could see me and everybody else on the stage. But she saw a huge angel standing on my left hand side suspended in midair. She said, As you were preaching, you would say things like, 'I see you blessed!!', 'I see God answering your prayer!', 'I see you healed in the name of Jesus!', 'I see you owning a car!

The angel would hand out blessings as I spoke and smaller angels would carry them to the people. She said that some people had outstretched hands and were very receptive. The angels would go straight to them with the blessings. Whilst others were receiving others were dozing off and missing out on the spiritual impartation that was taking place. I believe that that angel goes around with me whenever I minister. I know that that big guy has been assigned to me. He's my ministering angel. Spiritual things are as real as physical things. The Bible teaches us that angels are ministering spirits that minister for us. They work for us and help us. That is why the angel was distributing spiritual parcels to those who were receiving the Word.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

(Hebrews 1:14)

14. ANYONE WHO LISTENS TO TAPES AND READS BOOKS WILL RECEIVE THE ANOINTING TO A GREATER OR LESSER EXTENT.

Some people are not impressed or touched by the message. Some others are even offended by it. As Jesus said, “Blessed is he that is not offended in me.” Some people are excited by the message. Some cannot remember anything. They just know that it was a good message. As you listen to a tape you learn the message. You learn the Word. You acquire the knowledge content. Some people stop at this point. But others go even further.

I went further without even knowing what I was doing. Somehow it wasn't the knowledge content that I was after. If it was knowledge, I had virtually assimilated all the facts that were being shared after a few times of listening to the tape. My love for the Word made me expose myself to the anointing without even knowing it. I remember being blessed by messages of a pastor of a huge church in Los Angeles, California. I had a few videos of his that I thoroughly enjoyed. I would watch these videos

over and over. As I watched this pastor preaching in his church I desired to have a church like that and to preach as well as he did.

One day, I was preaching in my church, walking up and down the aisles when the Spirit of God told me, This is it! It suddenly dawned on me that I was walking in the steps of that pastor that I had watched and listened to for years. I was teaching and preaching like he did. I was pastoring a church which was as large as I had seen on the television. You see, when the anointing is on you, you will do certain specific things in your ministry.

Do you want to have a big church? Catch the anointing that is on someone who has a big church. Do you want to be an evangelist? Look around and see who God is using and follow that person. Listen to his tapes and read his books. The anointing will fall on you one day.

THE SPECIFICITY OF THE ANOINTING

1. THE ANOINTING IS LIKE YOUR GUN. IT DOES CERTAIN SPECIFIC THINGS.

You just have to use it and direct it where you want to. Every anointing has a way of working out itself to achieve specific results. The anointing that was on Elijah made him do certain things. Do you want to be a teacher of the Word? Then follow someone who has a teaching anointing. The anointing is very specific. The healing anointing is different from the teaching anointing which is different from the pastoral anointing.

Elijah miraculously caused three years of drought. He multiplied the meal and oil of a widow, caused the resurrection of a young boy and called fire from heaven. Elisha did similar things. He also caused years of drought, performed healings, and multiplied a widow's oil. It is interesting to note that Elisha did exactly twice as many miracles as Elijah did.

Elijah did sixteen miracles and Elisha did thirty-two miracles! Elisha had a double portion of Elijah's anointing. The anointing is a very specific substance that makes you achieve certain things. You can desire a specific minister's anointing. God may have put it in your heart to achieve certain things in the ministry. Elisha went for Elijah's anointing without any apologies to anyone.

2. IF YOU RECEIVE THE ANOINTING WHICH IS ON CERTAIN PEOPLE, YOU WILL DO SIMILAR THINGS BECAUSE IT IS THE SAME ANOINTING.

John the Baptist also carried Elijah's anointing. There were many similarities between John the Baptist and Elijah's ministry. Both of them had dramatic ministries and both of them confronted kings. Both of these men were familiar with deserts and solitude. They wore the same type of garments and lived simply. Both of them had their ministries terminated by queens.

LEARNING HOW TO PREACH AND TEACH THROUGH TAPES

1. IN ORDER TO GAIN THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM A TAPE, YOU MUST LISTEN TO IT WITH A VISION OF EVENTUALLY RECEIVING AN IMPARTATION OF THE ANOINTING.

Listen to the same tape several times. In my experience, this is different from listening to many different tapes of the same minister. When you want to get to Level F below, stay with the tapes you enjoy. Listen to tapes unconsciously and listen to them whilst praying and fasting. Allow yourself to receive the gift of God that is ministering to you. You must be open to the man of God who is ministering. You must receive him with admiration and with love, otherwise, you can get nothing from him or through him.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power

(John 1:12)

2. YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO PREACH AND TEACH BY LISTENING TO TAPES.

I have not been to Bible school and did not have the privilege of being taught how to deliver a sermon. But there are many ways of learning the same thing. When I was practicing medicine, I learnt a little phrase from the surgical department. They said, "Watch one, assist one and do one."What does this mean? It means that if you want to learn how to operate you watch one, you assist one and then you actually do an operation yourself. Everyone can learn how to preach by listening to preaching.

3. THE BEST THING IS TO LISTEN TO OTHER PREACHERS ALL THE TIME.

The Prophet Daniel studied what the Prophet Jeremiah had taught. The Prophet Jeremiah ministered from 685-616 B.C. and the Prophet Daniel took over from 616-536 B.C. Daniel said very clearly that he knew what he knew by studying the books written by Jeremiah. Why are you afraid to learn from somebody if great men like Daniel were blessed by prophets like Jeremiah?

In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem

(Daniel 9:2)

4. OPEN UP YOUR HEART AND BECOME A LEARNER AND RECEIVER.

After all, we all learn from somewhere. It is the insecure people who are afraid to show that they learnt what they know from somewhere! Become so receptive that you receive the knowledge of the Word! Open your spirit so that you learn how to preach yourself! Open your heart so that you receive

the anointing! I want you to notice these levels of receptivity that I have listed below and ask yourself where you fit in!

LEVELS OF RECEPTIVITY

LEVEL A: THE WORD HAS NO IMPACT.

You do not understand the message. You probably did not even like the message.

LEVEL B: THEWORD HAS AN IMPACT ON YOU.

You are excited and think that it is a good message. However, you only retain 11% of what was preached. This is usually what happens when a person listens to a tape just once.

LEVEL C: YOU ABSORB THE WORD EVEN FURTHER.

But you cannot reproduce the message.

LEVEL D: YOU ABSORB THE WORD SO MUCH.

So that you can reproduce the message.

LEVEL E: YOU BEGIN TO LEARN HOW TO PREACH AND TEACH.

You preach and teach in the same anointed manner.

LEVEL F: YOU ABSORB THE WORD AND AT THE SAME TIME BEGIN TO ABSORB THE ANOINTING AND SPIRIT OF THE MESSAGE.

LEVEL G: AT THIS LEVEL, THE TRANSFER OF AN ENTIRE MINISTRY GIFT TAKES PLACE.

Often an anointing which is on the speaker is transferred to you. Like John the Baptist and Elijah, similarities emerge between your ministries because the same anointing has been transferred.

FOUR SIGNS TO NOTICE ON THE ROAD TO CATCHING THE ANOINTING

These are signs that you are on the road to catching the anointing.

1. You are able to follow the trend of the message; even when it is confusing and disorderly.

2. You receive additional lessons that are not the main message. This is an important sign of you catching the anointing on the minister. You begin to know the mind and the heart of the person you are listening to. Most of these lessons are unrelated to the topic that is being taught. You begin to learn so many little things such as principled character, how to speak, how to analyze Scripture and how to overcome problems.

3. You unconsciously begin to use certain phrases and points in these messages. Unknown to you, you begin to walk and think like the person you are listening to.

4. You are able to minister the message with the same results. For example: Church growth, miracles, people commenting on the word that they were blessed, people buying your tapes and people wanting to hear part two and part three. This is different from dry imitation, when you become an exact replicate of what you hear, but do not get the same results.

SEVEN MISTAKES TO AVOID

I am not teaching you not to study the Bible for yourself. I am not teaching you to neglect personal Bible study. That is a great mistake. I am an avid listener of tapes but I study the Word of God everyday. I have personal quiet times everyday. Many of my messages are what I have learnt from my daily Bible study.

i) Avoid the mistake of not reading the Bible and doing Bible study for yourself.

ii) Avoid the mistake of thinking that it is a man that is going to anoint you. God anoints you through a man.

iii) Avoid the mistake of only listening to tapes when you are going to preach. Listen to tapes all the time. I listen to tapes all the time.

iv) Avoid the mistake of not doing further study on subjects or tapes you listen to.

v) Avoid the mistake of preaching about things you do not practice. Do not preach about things that you do not understand or believe in.

vi) Avoid the mistake of simply imitating and copying someone without understanding the whole mystery of catching the anointing through soaking in the Word.

vii) Avoid the mistake of leaving out the video dimension. The video dimension helps you to catch things that you cannot catch on a tape like posture, attire and gestures. Soaking in videos helps you to learn how to minister the Spirit and to minister with signs and wonders. Listening to tapes over and over does not mean that you are engaging in mindless memorization. Some people call this, “Chew and pour.” I just laugh to myself when I hear such comments.

The most difficult time for me in the medical school was the second year. During the second year, we had to study physiology, anatomy and biochemistry. Of these three subjects I found biochemistry the most difficult because it involved a lot of tedious memorization. I am not teaching you to become a copycat. I am teaching you how to catch the anointing. I am teaching you to walk in the steps of anointed people.

When a young girl is learning how to cook, she is taught to follow a simple routine. As she does this over and over, she is able to cook the food as well as her mother. With time she will develop her own variations and style. Would you call that daughter a mindless copycat? Would you say that she is engaging in senseless memorization? Certainly not! She is a humble learner.

Dear friend, the devil wants to keep you from the anointing. I have heard people speaking sarcastically about this method of catching the anointing. Someone said that I was producing clones. What is a clone? Why do some people try to confuse God's sheep with clever sounding phrases?

Quite frankly, I would rather hear my dog bark in the morning than listen to such rubbish!

When a doctor is learning to be a surgeon, he has to closely observe what his professor does. Then he assists his professor several times. Soon he gets an opportunity to do the procedure himself. He gingerly follows the procedure that he has seen his professor do. He makes a few mistakes but soon he can perform the operation perfectly. If you watch this new surgeon closely, you will realize that he is doing exactly what his professor does.

With time, he develops his own additions or improvements to what he has learnt. Has the professor produced a clone? Certainly not! He has trained another competent surgeon. When Paul was training Timothy for the ministry, he wrote to him and said, "My son preach the same things that I have preached to you. Spend time sharing the same things with the faithful brethren that you have."

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also

(2 Timothy 2:1,2

Paul told Timothy to preach the same thing that he had preached. Was Paul producing mindless clones? Watch out for people who try to redescribe godly things and make them appear stupid. When you soak in tapes, many good things happen to you. You learn how to preach and you catch the anointing. It is funny how some people see things. Someone once said that he did not want to listen to tapes because he did not want to lose his personality.

How would you lose your personality by exposing yourself to the anointing and the influence that comes from special men of God? When the choir in my church sings a song by Andrae Crouch or someone else, are you telling me that they have lost their personality? Do you know that they would have to rehearse the song for several hours in order to get it just right? As they soak in this music over and over and as they try to do exactly what they are hearing, they are not losing their personalities? As I said earlier, I prefer listening to my dogs bark in the morning, to listening to such foolishness.

Aman and Tsalach 24

BELIEVING IN THE MAN OF GOD

And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

2 Chronicles 20:20.

In this famous Scripture, you find Jehoshaphat, a church member, exhorting the rest of the congregation to believe in God as well as in the man of God. This famous speech teaches us a very great lesson for the ministry. In the first part of the Scripture, there is a prediction that believing in God will lead to establishment. In the second part of the Scripture, the promise is that believing in the prophet will lead to prosperity.

You see, Jehoshaphat was faced with a very difficult situation. Several kings were about to attack him and his nation was in crisis. He had called for a prayer meeting; much prayer had been offered to the Lord. At the end of the prayer meeting, one of the pastors (Reverend Jahaziel!) gave a prophecy. He prophesied that they were going to win the war. He predicted that God was going to fight for them and that everything was going to be okay. Because of this, Jehosophat made the choir march in front of the army. That was a very dangerous move! But he believed in both God and the prophet - and it paid off! At the end of it all, Jehoshaphat and his followers had more blessings than they could carry away. God blessed them with more than they could carry!

And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance, both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

2 Chronicles 20:25.

The Hebrew word translated ‘established’ in 2 Chronicles 20:20 is the word Aman. It means ‘to nurture’, ‘to foster as a parent’, ‘to build up and to nurse’. This teaches us that as you believe in God, you will be nurtured and nursed by God. He will build you up in the faith and you will receive a strong foundation that only a parent can give. But this Scripture goes on and says to believe in the prophets and you will prosper.

The Hebrew word translated ‘prosper’, is the word Tsalach. It means to ‘push forward’, ‘to go over’, ‘to come mightily’ and to break out! Aman and Tsalach are two very different experiences in the ministry. We need to learn the principles for breaking out in ministry

1. GOD WILL NURTURE YOU AND BUILD YOU UP FOR HIS WORK.

God will nurse you like a baby in a cradle. He will foster you like a parent and encourage you until you are well developed. But then, you need a push forward in the ministry. You need to come mightily in ministry. You need to break out into the fullness of your calling. God wants you to go over every wall and obstacle in your life and ministry. The question is, How will you receive this push forward into ministry?

After you have been nurtured and fostered by Almighty God, what is the key to coming mightily to the front of the ministry lines?

2. THE KEY TO RECEIVING A PUSH IN MINISTRY IS TO BELIEVE IN THE MAN OF GOD.

Some people have difficulty in believing in the man of God. They say, I can believe in God, but I can't trust these men. They say, I cannot put my trust in the arm of flesh. What you must realize is that you are not putting your trust in a human being, per se. The safety catch in this Scripture is that you are supposed to believe both in God and in the man of God. One without the other will not get you where you need to go.

Believing in God without believing in His prophets will help you to be nicely built up in Christ. But you will not have the push forward that you need. Believing in the man of God without believing in God is also very dangerous! You could easily make a mistake and follow the errors of a human being. That is why the two go together! As you read this textbook, my prayer is that you would open yourself up to the blessings of Tsalach.

This is the blessing of being pushed forward mightily in the ministry. My early Christian life was one of being nurtured by God through great fellowships like the Scripture Union. I was raised on the Word of God. I was nourished through both Bible studies and prayer. I can assure you that I grew steadily in the Lord. As the years went by, I encountered men of God who had an impact on my life. Without realizing what I was doing, I began to follow ministers like Kenneth Hagin, Fred Price and David Yonggi Cho.

I have closely followed and believed in the ministries and instructions of such men of God and it has pushed me forward in ministry. That is the reason why you are reading this textbook now! I always have a book or a tape that I am soaking in. It is alright to follow people closely as long as they are following Christ.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ

1 Corinthians 11:1.

It is alright to believe in a man of God as long as you simultaneously believe in God. God gives everybody a man of God.

3. THROUGH THE MAN OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE, YOU WILL RECEIVE A PUSH INTO MINISTRY.

You will catch the anointing and you will break out mightily. Do not make the mistake of rejecting the man of God that God gives to you. The ministries of many people end up nowhere because they refuse to get connected to God through a man of God. In Ghana, we have the Akosombo Dam, built on the Volta lake the world's largest man-made lake, as our major source of electricity. I can assure you that it generates a lot of power.

If I want to get connected to that power, I do not have to travel to Akosombo. All I have to do is to plug into a nearby socket. The socket nearby, is the man of God on this earth who you can relate with. By connecting to him you will be connecting to God who is 'far away' in Heaven. Plug into the socket and you will be connected to amazing power! Plug into the man of God and you will be startled to find that you are actually connected to incredible power itself. He that is plugged into the socket, is plugged into the Akosombo Dam itself.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me

John 13:20

Look around and see all those unimpressive sockets around you. Look around you and see all the unimpressive men of God. Make a connection to God through His chosen vessels. You can do that by listening to their tapes, watching their video tapes and reading their books.

4. DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF REJECTING THIS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO BE PUSHED FORWARD IN THE MINISTRY.

Jesus was rejected by the people of his hometown. They could not believe that this unimpressive carpenter was the man of God for their lives. When Jesus told them that He was anointed to heal and preach, they were offended and angry. They thrust him out of the city.

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,

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they

might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Luke 4:18,28-30

Others who believed in Jesus received Him and were greatly blessed by His ministry. They received mighty breakthroughs for their lives and ministries. When Peter, James and John began ministering in the Book of Acts, many people noticed that they were heavily anointed. They began to ask themselves, Who are these young men who have come mightily in ministry? Who are these guys who have pushed to the forefront of ministry in Jerusalem? Where did they get an anointing to preach and to heal the sick?

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

I see you being pushed forward in ministry! I see you coming mightily into the forefront of ministry in your city! I see you going over every obstacle and difficulty in your ministry! Tap into your man of God! Soak in the tapes and soak in the books! The anointing is yours for the taking! You are breaking out into fruitfulness and success in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Heavenly Father, I pray for every young man and woman who desires the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I pray for every pastor in the ministry. I pray that you would open their eyes of understanding that they may see the truth that is in Your Holy Word. Pour out your power and your Spirit on the ministers of this end-time harvest. O Lord, we need your anointing more than ever before. As your people tap into the men of God that You have given to us, may a spirit of humility and receptivity engulf them. May precious mantles fall on those servants who desire to walk in a greater level of anointing. May every minister of the Lord Jesus who reads this book never be the same again! And may they be endowed with real power and real gifts from on high. Amen!

SIX GIANTS CATCH THE ANOINTING

It is interesting to note how great men caught the anointing. Many people think that the anointing just comes to lucky people! In this chapter, I have presented the testimonies of six great men that many people know about. These people are not strangers to the Body of Christ. Most of us know the great things that the Lord has used these men to do. The following testimonies are excerpts from books that have been written about them. These are not my words, I am trying to show you what they said about themselves.

1. REINHARD BONNKE AND GEORGE JEFFREYS

The following is an excerpt from a biography written on Reinhard Bonnke called 'A Passion for the Gospel' by Colin Whittaker.

“The train from Swansea took Reinhard Bonnke to London where he had a few hours to spare before the next stage of his journey to the overnight ferry. He was told the time-honoured way of seeing London was by the world famous, red London buses. Having enough money for a run-about ticket, he travelled the streets of the capital, changing buses at random. He was free, he was going home, and life and London looked wonderful from the top deck of a double-decker bus.

After an hour or two he needed exercise, so he alighted at the next stop and strolled down the road, with little idea where he was except that he was still within the bus routes of London. As he enjoyed the walk, a sign informed him that this area was called Clapham. The name meant nothing to him and he walked on until he found himself outside a house with a wooden fence around it and on it a board bearing the name, Principal George Jeffreys. He stopped in his tracks and looked at the name again. It was there clear enough, but no; he dismissed it, it could not be.

Only a few weeks earlier, he had been browsing through the books in the college library when he chanced upon 'Healing Rays' by George Jeffreys. His interest was quickly aroused as he scanned through the contents. It was a balanced scriptural exposition on the subject of divine healing. The final chapter was full of testimonies of miracles in the ministry of George Jeffreys which were witnessed by huge congregations in the largest halls throughout the British Isles. The founder and leader of the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, he had clearly been a greatly anointed evangelist.

The Nameplate

Reinhard had been absorbed, but he noted that the miracles mostly occurred in the 1920s. He presumed that this great evangelist must be dead, and when he had left college, George Jeffreys had been far from his thoughts. But now he wondered. Was it possible that this great evangelist was still alive and lived here? He had almost decided that it was nonsense even to think so, when the Holy Spirit seemed to whisper in his heart, 'Why don't you find out?'

Contrary to what people may think when they see him in action on a platform, Reinhard is not one to rush into things; he likes to think before he acts. But at once he knew he must know the truth. He went up to the front door and rang the bell. Just when he was beginning to think that there was no one in, a woman opened the door. ‘Excuse me,’ he asked, ‘but I saw the nameplate and wondered is this the home of George Jeffreys the mighty evangelist who reached a whole nation?' 'Yes it is the same man,' she replied. 'Please, do you think that I may see him? I have just finished at Bible college and I am on my way home to Germany.' Her reply was an unpromising 'No' and with that she started to close the door, when a voice echoed from within, 'Let him come in.'

In went the wondering Reinhard and there, coming down the stairs, was the frail figure of an elderly man. In a deep husky voice, he greeted Reinhard and asked him what he wanted. Reinhard explained how he had just finished Bible College and the call of God was on his life to be a missionary in Africa. He was led into one of the rooms, and invited to sit down. George Jeffreys sat down opposite him on a couch and began to ask Reinhard lots of questions about himself. The fact that Reinhard had been at college in Wales helped to open the conversation with this Welsh preacher whose roots were in the Great revival there in 1904, and the conversation ignited with the fire of a spiritual rapport which obliterated the generation gap.

It was a meeting of two kindred souls with a mutual passion for evangelism. One who was reckoned by many to be the greatest British evangelist of this century, who knew he was coming to the end of his life. The other an eager young man who knew that God had given him the ministry of an evangelist, taking up the mantle of his ministry.

A Prayer For The Anointing

Suddenly the old man slid onto his knees, pulling Reinhard down with him. The glory of God came on Reinhard as George Jeffreys laid his hands upon his head and prayed for him. The tired but still eloquent voice gained in strength as the old Welsh revivalist poured out his soul in prayer for the raw and eager young man whom God had brought to his house for him to bless. He who had spent his life beseeching sinners to receive Christ was again seeking the face of God for the lost, but through the ministry of this young German kneeling with him.

Did God give George Jeffreys a glimpse into the future ministry of Reinhard Bonnke? Was he allowed a foresight of the tremendous expansion of the revival which was just at hand? We cannot know, but when Reinhard finally rose from his knees, he knew that he had received something powerful from God. He left the house 'dazed' at what had happened as the house-keeper closed the door behind him. He could not take it all in. He had not even had George Jeffreys on his mind, yet in a city of around ten million people God had brought him to the man's door.

The more he thought about it the more he thanked God for so leading him. He caught the night train for the Channel ferry and travelled back via Belgium to his home in Germany. Hermann and Meta were so glad to have their son home again and they all had much to talk about, but Reinhard did not mention his meeting with the great evangelist.

A Great Prophet Passes On

A few weeks later, Herman said, 'Reinhard, I have just received news that George Jeffreys, the famous evangelist, has died.' Reinhard was stunned. 'That cannot be, surely? I saw him a few weeks ago on my way home.' Then he shared with his father the story of that wonderful meeting. In the light of the great man's death the encounter was seen to be even more remarkable.

Twenty-five years later, in August 1986, Reinhard Bonnke conducted a campaign in Blantyre, Malawi, named after the birthplace in Scotland of David Livingstone, the great Africa missionary explorer. God so owned the ministry of his servant that by the closing service, the crowds attending had grown to over 150,000. Later on in the year another campaign followed in Lilongwe, and again many thousands came to hear the gospel message. It was during this time that Reinhard was deeply moved by certain stirring words written by David Livingstone over a century before in 1853 when in that same region:

Future missionaries will be rewarded by conversions for every sermon. We are their pioneers and helpers. Let them not forget the watchmen of the night, we who worked when all was gloom and no evidence of success in the way of conversion cheered our path. They will doubtless have more light than we, but we served our Master earnestly and proclaimed the same gospel as they will do.

Indebtedness To The Watchmen Of The Night

More than once as Reinhard blazed across Africa, the Holy Spirit reminded him of the immeasurable debt he owed to the many 'watchmen of the night' in whose steps he was treading. Most of them like Livingstone were long dead, but as Scripture says of Abel, they 'by faith still speak'. However, in the providence of God he had been allowed to meet one or two special watchmen of the twentieth century. It was not until he was praying about the momentous decision to move the centre of his operations from Africa to Frankfurt in Germany that the Holy Spirit brought it very specially to his attention.

Suddenly everything connected. God gave him a new realisation about how we build on the people who have gone on before us, those watchmen who faithfully carried the torch of truth in their generation, defied the darkness, and handed on the baton to those coming after who were ready to respond to the call of God; people such as David Livingstone, Rees Howells and George Jeffreys, and he knew that in some way God had helped him to grasp a baton.

The greatness of the responsibility weighed heavily upon him. He must not fail. The more he thought back over that meeting with George Jeffreys the more he realised how God had planned it; not only the amazing timing of it, so close to the end of the evangelist's life; not only as a German whose nation had been at war with Britain only a few years before; not only on the day he had finished at college; but also with one of the greatest evangelists of this century. God had confirmed his calling and this special experience seemed to cover him with an added mantling of his power.

Considering the incident under the direction of the Holy Sprit strengthened him and caused him to thank God for his guidance, but he was also enabled to keep it all in perspective. He knew that even the great George Jeffreys had made mistakes which had almost certainly limited his effectiveness in his later years. Nothing could ever detract from what the evangelist had achieved, but sadly he had become involved in a dispute over church government which had ultimately caused division in the Elim movement, and had also been taken up with another unprofitable diversion which led nowhere except to more controversy.

It was a sombre lesson. If so great a man could make mistakes which marred his ministry, then what hopes for him? He prayed that God would continue to direct his paths and deliver him from ever being diverted from evangelism. None of God's servants is superhuman, and Reinhard is aware that one day people may gloat over his mistakes also. We are what we are by the grace of God. An incident which could easily have puffed him up has served to keep him humbly aware of his need to watch and pray. The path of a successful evangelist is full of pitfalls."[1]

2. KENNETH HAGIN AND SMITH WIGGLESWORTH

The following is an excerpt from Kenneth E. Hagin's book 'Understanding the Anointing.'

"Frequently, when some great man or woman of God passes off the scene like Elijah did, you will hear preachers say, I wonder upon whom his mantle will fall? We've all heard that said.
But just because we've heard something said and have repeated it often doesn't make it so! Something isn't so just because we thought it so. I want you to see something here that can hinder you from entering into the blessings God wants you to have.

In 1947, I picked up a religious periodical and read that Smith Wigglesworth had gone to be with the Lord at age 87. I felt a great loss. I remember I went into my church and fell across the altar. I didn't know the man personally but I had read about him constantly, actually wearing his books out, until something from him rubbed off on me. You feel an emptiness - a vacuum - when a man of God of that caliber leaves - a man who had had 23 people raised from the dead in his ministry. People asked, I wonder on whom his mantle will fall?

In my ignorance, I, too thought that the mantle is the anointing, and it would fall at random on somebody. But that's not correct. The mantle symbolizes the anointing. As we saw earlier, you get the same anointing by association, environment, and influence. No doubt you'll be led of the Lord to follow certain ministries, but there are certain things that ministers need to be warned about in this regard.

I'm in my 49th year of ministry. You stumble upon a few things in 49 years. If a pastor is going to follow somebody, he must be sure that they are following the Lord. If they get off a little - just a little - don't follow that. Learn faith from them, but don't follow them too closely. Remember these three things: First, have the call of God on your life. Second, follow the Lord Jesus - He's the Head of the Church - very, very closely. Third, if you want the same type of ministry someone else has, follow that ministry closely. If the desire for it is in your heart, it's usually because God put it there. But that mantle will not fall on you automatically, like ripe cherries off a tree.[2]

3. BENNY HINN AND KATHRYN KUHLMAN

Benny Hinn is another example of someone who has an anointing. In his book Good Morning, Holy Spirit, he shares about how he received an impartation into his life through the ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman. He describes how he attended a Kathryn Kuhlman miracle service and how the Holy Spirit touched him at that meeting.

Observing the ministry of Benny Hinn leaves one with no doubt that he has indeed received something through the ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman. It is obvious that Benny Hinn caught the anointing that was on Kathryn Kuhlman. There are many similarities between the ministries of Benny Hinn and Kathryn

Kuhlman. These similarities are proof that the same kind of mantle which was on Kathryn Kuhlman is now on Benny Hinn.

The large crowds which gather at Benny Hinn's miracle services, are reminiscent of the kinds of audiences that Kathryn Kuhlman once drew. The peculiar healing anointing that gives rise to all kinds of amazing miracles is also characteristic of both Benny Hinn and Kathryn Kuhlman. The unusual and tangible presence of the Holy Spirit that is experienced in Benny Hinn's services, is also a mark of the Kathryn Kuhlman anointing. The phenomenon of several people falling under the power during services is also a distinctive feature of both the Kuhlman and Hinn ministries. These similarities are proof that the same kind of mantle that was on Kathryn Kuhlman is now on Benny Hinn.

4. T. L. OSBORNE AND WILLIAM BRANHAM

The following is an interesting testimony about how T.L. Osborne received the anointing.

“The man who came closest to carving out a unique ministry during the early years of the revival was a young Oklahoma evangelist, Tommy L. Osborne. In the process, Osborne pioneered many new techniques for independent foreign evangelism and won the respect of most of his contemporary evangelists. When the revival declined in the late 1950s, many others, in efforts to survive, followed the trails Osborne blazed.

One of thirteen children, Osborne was raised in the poverty of a depression farm in Oklahoma where he learned a deep trust in God. In 1937, when he was fourteen, he believed that God spoke to him and told him that he would preach. Although he finished only the eighth grade, he became a minister in the small Pentecostal Church of God. In 1946, he spent a discouraging year in India as a missionary. He returned sick and disappointed and settled into a small local church in McMinnville, Oregon.

At best Osborne's early years as a minister were a limited success. In Oregon, a disillusioned Tommy L. Osborne awaited the fateful arrival of the William Branham party in the summer of 1947. On the first night of the Branham campaign in Portland, Osborne's wife was in the audience. Daisy Osborne, a bright and forceful person in her own right, persuaded her husband to attend the next evening. Osborne later wrote:

As I watched Brother Branham minister to the sick, I was especially captivated by the deliverance of a little deaf-mute girl over whom he prayed thus: ‘Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I adjure thee in Jesus' name, leave the child’ and when he snapped his fingers, the girl heard and spoke perfectly. When I witnessed this, there seemed to be a thousand voices speaking to me at once, all in one accord saying over and over, ‘You can do that.’”

Out of this experience was born a unique missionary ministry that has reached tens of thousands for God.[3]

5. BISHOP DAVID OYEDEPO AND ARCHBISHOP IDAHOSA

Bishop David Oyedepo is a great man of God who is bearing much fruit in the Kingdom. This is his testimony in his own words.

“In 1987, I was watching a video programme dwelling on a message from Isaiah 53:1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? My heart and eyes were glued to the programme. As I watched and listened to that crusade message, the power of God was hitting me so hard that I was in tears, there alone in my house! I went to bed in that state, and there was such a quickening in me. I rose up early, went to the living room, and cried out, God, show me the secret!

And in the midst of this experience, I heard a man walk in and put his hand on my back, and some waves went through my spine. I exploded in tears. The following Sunday, as I stood up to preach in church and I said, ‘Let's welcome ourselves with this scripture...,’ and we opened to Psalm 110, before I could finish reading it, the power of God came down! There was no further preaching. There were all manner of healings! All manner! And that gave rise to Pentecost Flames which was the stirring, devil destroying invasion of Kaduna State North of Nigeria.

Friends, the earlier you get exposed to this power, the better. There is power in Word encounters! Until you are a Word-lover you don't experience power. The genuine source of power is the Word. Acts 10:44 records that, While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. If you are into prayers for power and you also embrace the Word for the power, you'll never run dry. As words are spoken, there is an impartation that takes place. As prophetic utterances are made, there is an impartation that takes place. In Ezekiel 2:2, prophet Ezekiel said, And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me...

As you hear anointed words, don't only expect to get insight, expect to encounter impartation also. In 1986, I was in a meeting in Tulsa, where Rev. Kenneth E. Hagin was ministering under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I sat down somewhere afar off, and while he was speaking, I saw his face transfigured I don't know how many people saw that, and there and then, I had an encounter. My heart exploded, and I began to sob openly.

The Spirit entered into me and changed the entire course of my ministry! Before then, I used to preach jumping all over the place and sweating. But that day, the Spirit entered into me, and the serenity of Kenneth Hagin's style of ministration was imparted to me instantly! When a pastor presents his heart

as a tablet, he does not only receive insight, but he also receives an impartation that will enable the insight to produce.

No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation... but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So when the Word is being spoken, the pastor is not just encountering insights, but he is also encountering the impartation of the Spirit that gathered it."[4]

6. JOHN OSTEEN LAKEWOOD CHURCH AND THE OSBORNES

John Osteen was the pastor of the Lakewood Church, one of the largest churches in the world.

"When you talk about Daisy, you talk about T.L. When you talk about T.L. you talk about Daisy. They are inseparable - always have been. Only heaven will record how many ministers are preaching the gospel today because of them. I feel so blessed to have known them both. When I first heard about the Osbornes, I read their book, Healing the Sick and Casting Out Devils. I said, I must find this couple.

I wept when I saw the pictures of the multitudes and of the miracles. As a Baptist minister who had just received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, I had not believed that these things could happen in our day. I pondered: are these miracles real? Have I been left out? I refused to quit until I got in touch with the Obsornes. They let me into their lives. I was determined to do something for my generation but I didn't know how to go about it. But this woman and this man took me under their wings and taught me how not to preach about Jesus but to preach JESUS.

Daisy and T.L. will have a part in all that we ever do at Lakewood Church to reach the nations of the world for Christ. They invited me to attend one of their crusades. They brought me to the platform to sit with them. They put their arms around me and let me look right into the faces of the people who had received miracles. I mean, they made me stand right there and see those miracles, one after another. T.L. and Daisy saw the hunger in my heart and they were determined that I should behold the glory of the Lord in action - right there before my eyes. As I listened to their teaching, witnessed those miracles, and observed the simplicity of their ministry, I concluded, This is scriptural. I can do this.

For the next eight years, I went all over the world, and God confirmed his word wherever I preached. Then he spoke to me to come back to Houston and build Lakewood Church as a great world outreach center - a base for reaching the nations with the message and love of Jesus. Not long ago, Daisy did something very special for me. You may smile when I tell you what it was, but it was a kindness that I'll not forget. I had been involved in Lakewood Church and responsibilities of pastoring. I had not been overseas to conduct a crusade for a long time. I had done it during those eight years, but then when God led me to build Lakewood Church as an Oasis of Love in a Troubled World, I stayed in the USA and gave myself to pastoral ministry, with the exception of occasional missionary trips abroad.

We had decided to conduct a great gospel campaign and leaders' seminar at New Delhi, India, the capital of that enormous and historic nation. I was getting ready to go. I had talked to Brother T.L. about it. I hadn't preached a crusade overseas in years and I had actually become frightened, wondering if I was up to the task. That may sound foolish, but it is true. I told T.L., 'I think I have forgotten how to do it.'

We had registered 3,200 pastors and preachers from all over India plus thousands of other leaders, workers and students. Although it may be hard to believe, I felt panic. So I called Daisy. I said, 'Daisy, I'm getting on the plane tomorrow and I'm afraid I've forgotten how to preach. I said, Would you FedEx me T.L.'s messages that he preached in your Hyderabad, India, crusade?' I said to her with a smile inside, because she and T.L. know me so well. 'I'm telling you, if you don't send me those tapes, I'm going to fail in that big crusade and seminar at New Delhi. I don't know what to do. You've got to help me.' Of course, Sister Daisy laughed and said, 'Pastor John, you know how to preach.' I said, 'Sister Daisy, send me those tapes or I'm a goner!' She assured me, 'You'll have them in the morning, Pastor.'

And she Federal Expressed to me the full set of T.L.'s preaching tapes from their Hyderabad Crusade, sending them overnight to Houston. I received them before leaving and I listened to them all the way to India. And what works for T.L. and Daisy works for John Osteen because it's the Word of God! Daisy and T.L. have marked me and my precious wife, Dodie. But not just us. Thousands upon thousands of preachers have been blessed and uplifted by their godly influence."

THE PRINCIPLE

What worked for these great and mighty men of God will work for you. The principle of catching the anointing through books and tapes is a time-tested and proven principle. It is time for you to catch the anointing for yourself. You cannot continue to minister with just a natural zeal. O what a difference will come into your life when you are anointed!

Reinhard Bonnke is one of the greatest evangelists of all time. His crusades typically draw crowds of anywhere up to half a million people. How did it all begin? What is the secret of this great ministry? It is the anointing that makes the difference! Although Reinhard Bonnke's testimony is not about books or tapes, the principle is the same he caught an anointing! It is the anointing that makes the difference! You must catch the anointing. The anointing comes to people who desire it and who go for it. Be it through laying on of hands or through soaking in tapes, the principle is the same.

Soaking in the materials books and tapes of Smith Wigglesworth worked for Kenneth Hagin. T.L. Osborne became a great and world-wide evangelist after being blessed through the ministry of the Prophet Branham. The anointing has worked for John Osteen. John Osteen was not ashamed to soak in the tapes of T.L. Osborne. Bishop Oyedepo stated clearly how he was blessed by soaking in the videos and tapes of great men. This is how great ministries are born! This is how giants are made!

Dear Friend, God is making you into another giant for His kingdom. Respect the anointing! Aim to get the anointing! The anointing makes the difference! Once you've known it, you will never be the same. Your ministry will never be the same!

Barriers to the Anointing

There are reasons why certain people never become anointed. When Jesus was on Earth with us, he ministered under the power of the Holy Spirit. Somehow, there were some people who could never receive from him. They were cut off from the anointing by some 'human barriers' to the anointing.

And he went out from thence, and came into his own country... And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? ...And they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country... And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

Mark 6:1-5.

In this Scripture, we notice that Jesus was not well received. He was actually made incapable of performing miracles! The anointing could not flow from him into others. He could not heal people, and people could not receive from him. There are people who cannot receive from some men of God. It is a universal problem which exists in even greater dimensions today. There are several barriers that prevent people from receiving the anointing. These barriers are often the natural features and characteristics of the man of God. Any of these features could present a barrier that could keep one away from the anointing!

The name, sex, tribe and nationality of a person often present themselves as barriers to the anointing. Some people cannot receive from a man of God because of his family background. Just the mention of his family name puts them off. There are people who cannot receive from a woman. There are people who cannot receive from people of a certain tribe. There are Christians who cannot receive from people of other nationalities.

1. THE RACE BARRIER

There are many Americans who would look down on a book written by an African. They wouldn't even look twice at the material! Some Western Christians see Africans as beggars. No matter the gift of God in them, African pastors are often seen as 'hewers of wood, drawers of water, pushers of carts, and carriers of bags'! This is unfortunate because God has anointed many Africans with gifts for the world. If a minister is the type of person who cannot receive from an African, he may be excluded from some great blessings!

One of the commonest barriers to receiving the anointing is the colour of a man's skin. Although God made all men equal, white people often cannot receive from black people. Sunday morning is the most segregated time of the week in places like America! Black people flock to black churches pastored by black ministers. White people rarely go to churches pastored by black men and vice versa. Once again we see the human barriers at work. The man of God may have what they need, but because it is packaged in the wrong colour, they will have nothing to do with it! The categorization of ministers by their skin colour and backgrounds is what becomes a barrier to receiving from a man of God.

2. THE BACKGROUND BARRIER

The educational or family background of a person, his qualifications, his personal history are some of the commonest barriers to receiving the anointing. God has decided to use human beings as vessels of his anointing. The human vessel will definitely have a background which one may not be used to. But God will still use that human vessel. The fact is that God has many vessels and he uses whichever he wants.

But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour

2 Timothy 2:20

3. THE AGE BARRIER

The age of an anointed man of God can be a barrier to some people. While some may find one too young others may find an anointed person too old. In the secular world, people need to be a certain age to do certain jobs. Usually, a person has to be over the age of forty to become the President/Prime Minister of a country. Because of such laws, people tend to think that anyone below the age of forty is not qualified to be a leader.

This is unfortunate, because Jesus was only thirty when he began to minister. When the Levites in the Old Testament were thirty years old, they were considered old enough to minister.

From thirty years old and upward... shalt thou number them, everyone that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Numbers 4:30

We should never forget that men's standards are not God's standards.

And he [Jesus] said unto them... God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Peter's Example

Peter received from Jesus.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

He received the anointing by associating with Christ. Peter received Jesus in the right way even though he was very close to Christ.

Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Matthew 16:13

Jesus asked Peter what he thought about him. The way Peter perceived Christ was very important for Peter's future ministry. That is why the Lord asked Peter what he thought. Peter gave one of the most important answers of his entire life.

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matthew 16:16

It is interesting that after interacting with a man of God for so long, Peter could still receive him as an anointed vessel of God. He could have become so familiar that he would no longer be able to receive. He could have taken the anointing for granted and perceived Christ as a mere man with human frailties because Jesus as a human being would have had frailties. The Bible says that Christ took upon himself our infirmities frailties.

Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Matthew 8:17

Judas would never have betrayed Christ if he hadn't seen him as a mere man. Sometimes ministers ask about the educational background, the family, the language, the age and the nationality of an anointed man of God. Sometimes they are concerned that the vessel is a woman. They cannot believe that a woman can be as anointed as a man. The most anointed healing minister the world has ever known was Kathryn Kuhlman, a woman. You may cut off yourself from the anointing when the sex of the vessel of God means so much to you.

A minister should never allow any of these human elements to become pronounced in his perception of God's servants. Ministers of God must drop all barriers and open themselves to the Spirit of God!

A pastor's life will never be the same when he allows the barriers of the anointing to go away! These barriers are in the mind! They are psychological obstructions to the flow of God's gift. Pastors must humble themselves and receive impartation of the anointing through a human vessel! Because that is the way the anointing flows!

Catching the Spirit of the Ministry 25

LEARNING TO CATCH THE SPIRIT OF THE MINISTRY

Your aspiration for church growth will naturally lead you to work with many different people. It is only understandable that in a larger ministry you will need more hands on deck. The act of recruiting new people often leads to the destruction of the ministry. Be careful that you do not end up destroying what you are trying to build. It is important to recruit people who have what I call the spirit of the ministry.

And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone

Numbers 11:17

Please notice the revelation that God gave Moses. He said, I'm going to take of the spirit or anointing that is upon you and that same anointing will be transferred to other people. It is only then that they will be able to work with you. It is only then that they will be able to help you. God could have simply given these seventy people an anointing for leadership, but he didn't. God did not give them a general anointing for leadership!

Neither did He give them a special anointing of management and wise judgement! He simply gave them Moses' anointing. What was the spirit upon Moses? It was the special gift of ministry given to Moses to lead the people. This is what those seventy pastors received. There are principles about catching the spirit of the ministry.

1. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT THERE IS AN ANOINTING ON EVERY MINISTRY.

That is why people can start out in a ministry of their own and have only twenty people after ten years. Were these people to operate under a certain ministry, they would not have only twenty people after ten years. They may have a thousand. This is because different ministries have different anointings over them.

I am not saying that you do not have to start something new, not at all! I am saying that God gives certain gifts to certain men. Those who find themselves planted under such men find that they are catching the same spirit of ministry. They will find themselves doing great things or even greater things than he is doing.

2. CATCHING THE SPIRIT OF THE MINISTRY IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM CATCHING THE ANOINTING.

When you join a new church, you will notice that it is different from any other church. Understand that every church is different and has its own culture. Every minister has a peculiar anointing on his life. This leads to a unique ministry. When you join up with this unique ministry, you must adapt and flow with it. Understand that every church is different. When you join a church, you have to acclimatize and re-learn certain things. It is the senior pastor's duty to prevent anyone from becoming a minister without adapting fully to the culture of the church. It is the trainee's duty to learn, imbibe, observe and adapt to the spoken and unspoken philosophies of the church.

Study the culture. Flow with it. Do all you can to fit in. When you fit in, that peculiar anointing will also fit into you and operate through you. It is possible and it is necessary if you want to be fruitful in the context of a particular church.

3. IF YOU DO NOT ADAPT, THE ANOINTING WILL NOT BE ABLE TO FIT INTO YOU BECAUSE IT WAS MEANT FOR A PARTICULAR TYPE OF VESSEL.

You will run into problems if you choose to ignore the standards accepted and used by the general leadership. When people do not operate under the same Spirit anointing, they create conflict. The leaders become disunited and each one thinks he is right. The church begins to disintegrate behind the scenes and soon this comes into the open.

4. TO CATCH THE SPIRIT OF THE MINISTRY, YOU HAVE TO COMPANY WITH THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERSHIP.

There is simply no other way. You have to know what they do, and watch them do it! You have to accept it in your mind and believe in it in your heart. The standards and principles in the church must become yours. They must no longer be their principles. When you think like the leadership, you have caught the spirit of the ministry. The anointing makes you think in a particular way. The anointing makes you act in a particular way.

I learnt long ago that I should not accept people who do not really fit in as sons, into my ministry. Someone may be a well-qualified minister with great credentials, but if he does not have the spirit of the ministry, it is no use taking him on. The few conflicts that I have experienced in the Lighthouse denomination have been through and from people who did not fully catch the spirit of this ministry. It looked as though they fitted in, but in reality, they were not a part of us.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, a replacement was sought for Judas. They chose someone who had the spirit of Jesus' ministry. Someone who knew them through and through. They needed someone who had accepted the standards and philosophies of Christ. They did not want to introduce somebody who would create confusion within their ranks.

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us.

Acts 1:21,22

You will observe in the above Scripture that they chose somebody who had been with them long enough to catch the spirit of the ministry. They didn't care whether the person had the gift of prophecy or the gift of leadership. It is better to be safe than sorry. Go for those you know and avoid unknown elements! There are three groups of people I do not often consider for employment. These are not bad people! They are good people but they need to catch the spirit of the ministry.

THREE GROUPS OF PEOPLE I WILL NOT EMPLOY

a. A Bible school graduate seeking employment in the church.

Graduating from a Bible school means very little to me. All it means is that you have a piece of paper showing that you have studied some courses. Those courses may be different from the courses I teach in my church. Even if they are the same, they may have a completely different orientation. I ask such people to simply join the church and become a part of the church family. They must then go through the ranks like every other church member. If and only if he is able to catch the spirit of the ministry, can he be part of its leadership.

b. An experienced and seasoned minister

There is a saying, 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks'. This saying is not in the Bible but it is often true. When a tree is young, you can bend it. But when a tree is old, you must break it in order to get it to bend! Usually, people who have been in the ministry for years feel that they know all about the ministry. Such people have problems fitting in. After being a part of your system for a while, they will say, 'I was a pastor before I joined you, I was a minister in my own right before I came here.' They will add, 'I had a ministry before I came here and I just decided to place it under your ministry.'

Such people do not fit in because they are not prepared to be trained or retrained. I have learnt from painful experience to train up my own sons and daughters in ministry. They are to me, like the disciples were to Jesus. I can trust them and I can leave my ministry in their hands wherever they are in the world. Jesus left his ministry to twelve men and they handled it perfectly. When you have people who have caught the spirit of the leadership you can leave things with them and not worry. They will not rebel.

c. A pastor of a small church who wants to join a larger network.

This is even more dangerous! When the church begins to grow under a new name and new anointing, the pastor will begin to have thoughts of breaking away. He will say, 'I had a church with members before I joined up with you. I want to change the name back to what it was before.' This often leads to painful splits and breakaways. At this point, no one will know who is really right or wrong.

My policy is to encourage such individuals to continue independently in ministry. If he insists, the way forward is for him to close down his church and join the bigger network as an ordinary member. With the process of time, such a person may become a minister within the network and start a church again. However, it takes a lot of humility to do something like that. It is important for senior pastors to know when people have caught the spirit of the ministry. It is important for up-and-coming ministers to understand how to catch the spirit of the ministry.

EIGHT THINGS YOU MUST CATCH

In every church, you must endeavour to catch the vision, principles, philosophy, standards, doctrines, procedures, emphasis and the anointing of the house. To illustrate this better I will just use Lighthouse Chapel International as a model.

1. THE VISION OF THE HOUSE

Generally speaking, the vision of Lighthouse Chapel International is soul winning and church planting. Many pastors do not have a vision for soul winning. We have a strong vision for soul winning. If you are not oriented towards the harvest, you will be a misfit in such a church. Everyone is taught and motivated to save the lost and to be involved in practical ministry. No one is left out, including professionals and businessmen.

We believe that every member can be a minister. It may sound strange, but that is our vision. Some churches have a vision for prosperity. Others have a vision for dominion over the works of darkness. Others have a vision for deliverance. Whichever church you decide to be a part of, you must learn to catch the vision of that house.

No one vision is right or wrong. The vision depends on the call that God has given to the man. Leave the judgement of that to the Lord.

2. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE HOUSE

The principles of LCI are the principles in the Word of God. One of our principles is that everything must be founded on the solid foundation of the Bible. It is our principle to reject things that are not firmly based on the Word of God. We have principles of loyalty. People who break these principles cannot fit into our ministry. I am loyal to my pastors and I expect them to be loyal to me. We believe in principled leadership where everyone can climb to the highest position in ministry.

3. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HOUSE

The philosophy of the house refers to the general trend of thinking. Our church believes that lay people must do the work of ministry. We believe that the educated can also be in ministry. We believe that church buildings are very important for the establishment of the church. We believe that church buildings bring stability and permanence. Church building projects allow church members to know that their money is being put to good use.

We also believe in frugality. There are many ways by which we save money. Ironically, this makes people think that we are rich. Another important philosophy of LCI is that we are pro-marriage. We encourage people to marry, and to do so at a young age. We feel that it is the biblical pattern for young

people to marry and stay pure, rather than to live in sin and hypocrisy. Any leader within our system must have these ideas as his own ideas.

4. THE STANDARDS OF THE HOUSE

In our church, we expect people to be faithful to their marriage partners. We expect ministers to lead honest lives and to have financial and moral integrity. We do not compromise on these standards! We do not expect people to be perfect, but we do expect them to be honest. A lowering of the standards of any church will lead to a gradual and complete deviation from the original vision of the church.

It is because of the lowering of standards that gay and lesbian priests and even bishops are now a part of church life. Some priests are officiating the marriages between two men. They are thereby claiming God's approval on homosexuality. This is Sodom and Gomorrah coming into the church. How did it get there? It got there by gradually changing the standards of the Church of God.

5. THE DOCTRINES OF THE HOUSE

Within every church there are certain beliefs based on the Bible. A doctrine is a trend of teaching. One of our doctrines is the doctrine of loyalty. We teach extensively on this. (For further study see my book Loyalty and Disloyalty.).[1]

Another doctrine we have is what we call, Anagkazo. This Greek word means something to every leader in our church. It teaches about compelling souls to come to Christ. You cannot be a minister in our church if you do not understand and believe in Anagkazo.

6. THE PROCEDURES OF THE HOUSE

The way things are done in every church is different. In our church, a person becomes a pastor by rising through the ranks. One must first be a shepherd before being promoted to a lay pastor. That is just the way things are done here. We have very few full-time ministers. We believe that you must first be successful as a lay pastor before becoming a full-time minister. This may be different from the way you do things in your church, but if you want to be in a particular ministry, you must accept the procedures of that house.

You cannot be a leader in the church if you do not pay tithes, or what we call First and Best Fruits. That is just the way we do things. Every Lighthouse church takes two offerings on Sundays. In our church, you must have extensive counselling before getting married. These are just some of the procedures we do not intend to alter. Anyone who is going to be a leader of the church has to accept these procedures and flow with them.

The church has a system of small groups involving fellowships, ministries and chapels. This system has worked for us throughout the world, wherever Lighthouse churches have been established. That is

the way we do things. That is our procedure. Welcome to the house.

7. THE EMPHASIS OF THE HOUSE

Every ministry has a peculiar emphasis. We emphasize the preaching and the teaching of the Word of God. Some emphasize prosperity and healing. Some emphasize the anointing. We emphasize the winning of souls and the establishing of the church. Mind you, we believe in miracles, and we experience great moves of the Spirit, but our emphasis is the Word. If you accept this emphasis then you can be with us.

8. THE ANOINTING OF THE HOUSE

This is the anointing that we have discussed earlier. Apart from getting the natural and physical aspects like the procedures and standards, you need to get this spiritual component. There is nothing like the anointing. Without it, you can do nothing in ministry. Once you have tasted the anointing and the difference it makes to ministry, you will not like to do anything without it.

If you are within a particular church, the principal anointing that you should desire is the anointing on your leader. This is because you are working under his ministry.

TYPES OF COMMITMENT

If you want your church to grow you must fight to have more committed members. Committed members are the building blocks of a large church. The key to increasing in size is to have more and more very committed people. Let's consider for example if you are in a situation where you are building a house. Supposing you laid a hundred blocks on your building foundation everyday. At the end of the day you might look at the work done and say to yourself, “Things are getting better. The building is coming up nicely!”

How would you feel if you noticed that seventy of those blocks were missing every morning? You would feel very frustrated because your building project would progress at a much slower rate. The building would still develop, however at a much slower rate. This is because of the regular loss of the building blocks. In the case of a church, the building blocks are the members. The missing blocks are the uncommitted members who disappear ever so often. In order to develop committed members, every pastor must know about the different levels of commitment each member may have.[1]

Do not be deceived by a large crowd. A large crowd consists of people with different levels of commitment. You must press for the highest level of commitment possible from every one of your members.[2] Over the years, I have observed four main types of commitment.

FOUR MAIN TYPES OF COMMITMENT

1. FAIR WEATHER COMMITMENT

The lowest type of commitment is Fair Weather Commitment. This consists of those who are committed when things are going well. The Bible says a rich man has many friends, but a poor man does not have many friends.

Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.

Proverbs 19:4

When I started out in ministry, I had few friends. When the ministry became large and successful, many people claimed to be my friends. Many spoke of imaginary assistance they gave me in my early days. Senior ministers have sworn that they never said negative things about me although I know they did. When things are not going well, people don't want to know you. But when the sky is clear, they all claim to be your friends.

Fair weather church members are people who are committed only when things are going well. They form the crowds that come when the church is flourishing and successful. Such people fall away when a crisis or problem arises. You cannot rely on such people when building a Mega church. People with fair weather commitment are usually not aware of their low level of commitment. Therefore, the pastor must preach and teach against being committed only when things are going well.

2. SITUATIONAL FRIENDSHIP COMMITMENT

The next type of commitment is what I call situational friendship commitment. Friends are committed to each other to some extent. There are also two levels of commitment between friends, situational friendship commitment and non-situational friendship commitment. There are two types of friends in the world. There are friends, who are friends because the situation permits. In school, for instance, different situations bring people together and make them friends.

Everyone has friends like that. You had to sit in the same classroom for some years and you became friends because of the circumstances. However, when you left school or didn't see these friends anymore, you stopped relating with them. I have many friends like that. Some people are only committed to their church when the situation permits. They may live near the church or there may be no other church nearby. However, if another church were to start in the vicinity they would go there.

You may have many people in your church, but they are only members because of their circumstances. Such people cannot be relied upon. You must press for a higher commitment. Aim to get all of your members to be committed irrespective of their circumstances. That is non-situational commitment. They are committed to you irrespective of the situation. Some children come to the church because

their parents do so, however, if their parents were not to come anymore they would stop coming to church.

Our church was once attacked by traditional practitioners. On that Sunday morning an armed mob of people invaded the church, threw rocks at the church and physically assaulted several of our church members and pastors. I believe they were hunting for me on that fateful morning. The attack so startled us that it has been ingrained in our memories. After the attack, we had to wash away streams of blood from the church grounds. Many of our church members were hurt and the entire incident was broadcast on national television.

As you would expect, this caused the fair weather and situational friendship members to vanish for several weeks. Someone whose commitment is deep, will not be moved by such attacks. On that Sunday, many cars were vandalized, with their windscreens smashed. However, the next Sunday, the committed members were back in church with their cars. They were members, whether they were attacked or not. In fact, some have expressed their commitment to die for the church if there is any further attack.

Members whose commitment is at the level of fair weather and situational friendship are not of much use to the church in times of crisis. The pastor must preach to raise the level of commitment of all members.

3. NON-SITUATIONAL FRIENDSHIP COMMITMENT

When your church members have graduated to this level of commitment, they are not moved by hurts, separation, conflicts or distance. You can rely more on such people. The commitment is one of deep friendship. It is not affected much by circumstances. Pastors should aim at moving their members to at least this level.

I have friends I don't see often. For instance, one of my university roommates, Dr. Nosh, is a non-situational friend. That means he's my friend whether I see him or not. We live in different parts of the world, yet our friendship is not affected by distance or separation. I know he's my friend and he knows I am his friend. He can depend on me and I can depend on him. Like Jonathan and David, their friendship became a bond between them.

And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul

1 Samuel 20:17

4. MARITAL COMMITMENT

There is an even higher level of commitment - marital commitment. In marital commitment, the individuals are committed as though they are married. In marriage, there should be no thought of divorce, but rather a spirit of permanence. There are no more options left. You cannot decide to stay or leave. You must stay; it is as simple as that! You are in it for good. There may be conflicts, challenges and even disappointments, but this will have no ability to shake the commitment of a married couple.

Like everyone else, I have had challenges in my marriage. I have had happy times and not so happy times. Nevertheless, I never consider the option of divorce. That option has been ruled out by the Word of God and by my level of commitment. Nothing can and nothing should be able to separate a married couple. Our commitment to Christ is at the marital level of commitment. The Bible teaches that we are supposed to be married to Christ.

Wherefore my brethren… that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Romans 7:4

When the commitment to the church rises to the level of marital commitment, the Bible teaches that we will begin to bring forth fruit unto God. The higher the commitment, the more the fruit. It is only when a man and woman have marital commitment that they can successfully bring forth fruit children.

This is the type of commitment I expect from all pastors, leaders and mature members in the church. I am committed to them for life and I expect them to be committed to me for life. When a church has a pastor who is unstable, the congregation can feel the instability. The church members are not ready to give their best if they feel that the pastor is there for just a season.

The Temporary Associate

One day I was visited in my office by a senior pastor and his associate. I asked him, “How is the ministry?” “We're not doing badly”, he said. We are having a few struggles though. They continued, “As you know, our church has been going through one crisis after another.” The senior pastor continued, “It has not been easy. One person after the other keeps leaving the church.” Out of curiosity, I asked the associate, “Do you have any plans of starting your own ministry one day?” “Certainly!” he said. “I am just working with this man for a while, then I will launch out on my own.” “Oh, I see.”

I told him in front of his associate, “If I were you, I would not like to work with someone who is using me as a springboard to start his own ministry.” I warned him, “When this pastor eventually leaves you, it will cause a lot of pain and conflict in the church.” “Really!” he exclaimed. I advised him, “I personally do not believe that your closest associate should have such a low level of commitment. I think a pastor in the church should have the highest level of commitment. I believe he should have what I call marital commitment. I only want to work with people who are committed. This is because I can then pour out my life into them.”

I explained further, “Take a young man and a young lady who are courting each other. A decent young woman would not be prepared to undress and perform acts of great commitment with her fiancé. However, if this young man takes his fiancée to the marriage altar and signs a legal contract, then he can expect the highest level of commitment till death us do part from her. That same decent young lady would then be prepared to give her utmost commitment and flow into the deepest level of involvement.

Do you understand what I am saying,” I said to this pastor. He seemed to understand what I was saying. “I would not like to get deeply involved with people unless they guarantee me the highest level of commitment,” I added. Not long after, this senior pastor called me saying, “Just as you predicted, my associate has left me suddenly and it has caused me a lot of pain.” At the time I had the conversation with him, he had about seventy members in his church. However, after the associate left the church, he was left with only twenty people.

The lack of a high level of commitment from associates and pastors is very damaging to a church. The congregation follows what they see the pastors do. If they see shallow commitment, they in turn will have a low level of commitment. Let's be committed to one another. I am the type of person who gives my utmost to help people. I do not want to pour out my life and soul into people only for them to despise and destroy me.

Preach marital commitment. Teach marital commitment. The commitment of your members will rise. They will become solid building blocks of your mega church. Anytime you speak to a church member, assess his or her level of commitment. Try to place him in one of these four levels. Then you must work on him or her for a higher level of commitment.

If your members are very committed, no one can invite them away or steal them from you.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Romans 8:38,39

HOW TO DEVELOP DEVOTED MEMBERS

A person goes through three stages when he is becoming established as a member of your church. As a shepherd, you must be able to distinguish between the different types of members that you have.

He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats

Matthew 25:32

THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEMBERS

1. DEER STAGE MEMBERS

When a person is initially converted, he behaves like a deer: untamed, swift-footed and difficult to keep in one place. You have to track them down through the mountains and the forest. They are difficult to handle. It is important to move your members out of this stage. When you visit them, they play hide-and-seek with you.

Deer are nimble creatures. Seventeen years ago I visited a deer stage member called Adelaide. Somehow, she did not want to see her shepherd at all. This was one of the deer in my fellowship. I was trying to convert her from the deer stage to the sheep stage.

I remember one evening when I knocked on her door in Volta Hall of the University of Ghana. A voice from within answered, “Who is there?” “It's me Brother Dag. I'm looking for Sister Adelaide.” After a few moments her roommate said, “Come in.” This roommate happened to be her sister Irene.

“Hello. I am looking for Adelaide. Is she in? The roommate smiled sweetly, “Sorry, she's not in.” “Oh, I see. Where did she go?” “I'm not sure, she just went out.” “Alright, please tell her I came by to check on her.” “Okay,” she smiled again sweetly. “When she comes back I'll tell her you were here.”

Each room had its own balcony, and unknown to me Adelaide was hiding there. I was a shepherd who was dealing with a deer and an assistant deer. Only deer dodge and hide. However, I worked on them until they became sheep. Today, they are stable sheep members.

2. GOAT STAGE MEMBERS

Goats are a little better than deer. They are far more domestic and easily accessible. However, a goat is much more independent than a sheep. They do what they want to do and are less likely to follow. When a church member graduates from the deer stage, they move on to the goat stage. As soon as a deer sees a human being, it takes off, whereas a goat remains. Goats are friendlier than deer, though they can often have traces of stubbornness.

3. SHEEP STAGE MEMBERS

Sheep are the best of the three groups. Your goal as a pastor should be to have your church full of devoted sheep. These people follow the shepherd. They stay together and move with the group. Such members are much easier to pastor. Sheep are often devoted, committed, faithful, dependable and loving members. If your church is full of devoted sheep, you will be a happy pastor. They will stay near you always, and receive your ministration.

KEYS FOR DEVELOPING DEVOTED MEMBERS

They devoted themselves to the instruction given by the apostles and to fellowship. (Acts 2:42 Moffatt Translation). And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:42).They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship (Acts 2:42 (New International Version).

The number one task of a shepherd is to transform the members from deer to devoted sheep. How is this possible?

But we all are changed into the same image from glory to glory

2 Corinthians 3:18

Now the word "change" comes from a Greek word "metamorphoo," which means metamorphosis. The word metamorphosis always reminds us of a dramatic transformation that occurs inside a cocoon when a larvae changes into a butterfly. When you see a butterfly elegantly fluttering around, you have no idea what it used to be like. There has been a drastic and major change - metamorphosis. It is this same kind of metamorphosis that can take place in the members of a church.

People change because of the ministry of the Word. They are transformed by the renewing of their minds. Loose and dodgy Christians can become devoted and committed zealots. In this next section, I want to share with you a few keys on how to develop devoted membership. The first important thing is that you the pastor, be devoted.

Devotion is a spiritual thing, it can be perceived. There are three main areas in which you can develop devoted membership: who you are, what you say and what you do.

1. BE A DEVOTED PASTOR!

The pastor must be devoted to his church and his church members.[3] Devotion is a spiritual thing. It is transmitted sometimes by osmosis - from person to person. The unspoken commitment and sacrifice of the leadership is contagious; it passes from one member to another without speaking. Why do I say this? Because not all pastors are committed to their churches.

I began my ministry as a medical student. In 1987, I was already struggling as a pastor/medical student. The tradition for newly qualified doctors in Ghana is for them to travel to America to seek greener pastures. Medical doctors earn thousands of dollars in America, England and South Africa. My fledgling church was full of people watching to see whether I would remain in Ghana or move out of the country.

When the time came for the decision to be made, I declared boldly to my members that I was staying with them. I wasn't going to leave them. From that time onwards, I noticed a dramatic change in the commitment of the members to the church. The sheep can sense the pastor's commitment. No one wants to follow someone who will abandon him midstream.

In addition to the senior pastor being devoted, associates and assistants must be equally committed and devoted. The assistant pastors must be devoted to the senior pastor as well as to the church members. The seed of devotion leads to a harvest of multiplied commitment from the church members.

2. SAY POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT THE CHURCH.

Everybody wants to be part of a good thing. That is human nature. People are more likely to be devoted to something that is successful than to something that is failing. I have learnt that you can make your church flourish by using your mouth. If you want your church to grow, tell the members that they are part of a good church. Speak positively about the other pastors in the church. Do not criticize the pastors of the church.

That is why we call the Lighthouse Chapel International, The Mega church. I am aware that this worries some people. It is just our faith confession! We know we have a long way to go. We know that we are still learning. But we believe that we have a mega ministry with a mega impact in a lost and dying world!

3. SAY POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT THE PASTORS.

The associate pastor must say positive things about the senior pastor. He must say things like, “This is some of the best teaching you can get anywhere in the world.” You must tell the church, “We are blessed to have such a man of God as our pastor.” The Book of Acts, chapter two says that they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching). One version puts it this way,

And they steadfastly persevered devoting themselves constantly

Acts 2:42 (Amplified Version)

You can make your church members become devoted to your teaching. Let them hear that it is the best they can get anywhere. The assistant pastor must constantly make the church aware of the precious gift that God has graciously given to them in their senior pastor. I believe I am the best preacher for my church. This is not vanity, it is biblical commonsense. I am their shepherd and I know what is best for my people.

When God gives a woman a baby, He fills her breasts with milk for her baby. God does not fill another woman's breast with milk for that baby. Similarly, God has filled my spirit with the Word of God for my sheep. My spiritual breasts are full of spiritual milk for my spiritual children. That is why I preach all the time to my church members. I have other pastors, but I do ninety percent of the preaching and teaching. This is because I am the shepherd and God gave me the duty of feeding the sheep.

Pastors ought to take charge of the pulpit and discharge their duties honourably. Thank God for visiting ministers. Many have ministered at my church and have been a blessing, but I am the best shepherd for my sheep. In various ways, I make my church members become devoted to my teaching and preaching. I let them know that it's the best thing for them. If your members are not devoted to your preaching and teaching they will be devoted to someone else's ministry, and your church will not grow.

I have watched how visiting preachers are appreciated more than a resident pastor. This is unfortunate! Visiting pastors are often hailed as superheroes, whilst their resident pastors are ignored. The church members should not be deceived into thinking that the visiting minister has more to offer than their own pastor. He does not! He may have something different but he does not have anything better! It is only because the pastor from the church has fed the sheep so well, that there is a congregation groomed enough to receive a visiting minister.

One translation of Acts 2:42 says that they were devoted "to the teaching of the apostles and to fellowship with one another." In Bible times, the Christians were devoted to two principal things:

i) Their pastors' teachings.

ii) Fellowshipping with one another.

Read Acts 2:42 for yourself! Read it from different versions of the Bible. It is crystal clear! Any simpleton should be able to understand these two strategic keys of church growth. Get your church to be like the New Testament Church and you will have the thousands that are spoken of in the Book of Acts. If you don't have an associate pastor who says good things about your teaching, then get one who does!

4. SAY GOOD THINGS ABOUT YOUR CHURCH MEMBERS.

In order to encourage inter-sheep relationships you must speak good things about your church members. Some people say things like, "I don't trust these church members. I don't want any church member in my house." Although some church members may disappoint you, do not maintain a negative attitude towards all other members. That would be a big mistake! I have heard Christians

say, “I'd rather employ a Muslim than a Christian.” That is unscriptural! The Bible teaches us to do good to Christians, especially your church members.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith

Galatians 6:10

The fact that you have had unpleasant experiences with Christian men does not mean that you should marry an unbeliever. You are reacting in the wrong way. You are moving into foolishness! Speak positively about Christians, especially your own church members. This will cause your church members to interact with each other. If you say evil things about them, new members will not form vital bonding relationships.

There is a principle at work here. People are often attracted to the church by the pastor, but they often remain in the church because of the internal relationships they establish. Never forget this! People stay in a church because of relationships they have in the church. It is the duty of the pastor to create interaction between members of the church. This is a very important key to implement, if you really desire to have a large church.

The Bible says that they were devoted to the fellowship. Members must be devoted to the fellowship of Christians in the same church. If you have members who hardly know each other, then introduce and influence them to develop relationships. Encourage them to be committed to the church. Teach them that it is important to attend church all the time. Teach them not to make a habit of hopping from church to church, just to see what is happening elsewhere. Explain to them that it is only the devil who goes to and fro (Job 1:7)

5. ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO HIRE CHURCH MEMBERS.

Practically speaking, you can also encourage the members to be devoted to one another's fellowship in many different ways. When I have a church member who is an employer in a strategic position, I encourage him to consciously help other members to get jobs. Do not think that this will happen naturally, the pastor's involvement is important. When one Lighthouse member secures a job in a company, you will often find several other members finding their way there.

Nowadays, this often happens naturally without my involvement. However, in the beginning I had to encourage this interaction. Many people were put off by the bad behaviour of some church members. Do not overreact to the disgraceful behaviour that some church members display when they are employed. Church members are human beings. Keep on recommending in the Spirit of love and forgiveness.

One employer said that he would not employ a member of the church because the church member would arrive at work late, claiming he went witnessing early in the morning. That is nonsense! Witnessing is not supposed to make you arrive late for work. I would encourage you to sack such a person. Church members are supposed to be disciplined!

6. ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO APPLY FOR WORK FROM WITHIN THE CHURCH FAMILY.

When you have a member who needs a job, direct him to other church members who can help him to get a job. This increases the members commitment because the sheep will see that you really care for them. The church then becomes an important family to belong to.

7. ENCOURAGE CHURCH MEMBERS TO MARRY EACH OTHER.

Have you ever noticed how a young lady seems so committed to a church? Many of them have relationships within that church. Often it is their fiancés that act like glue which fixes them to the church. They are cemented to the church by their relationships. This is what I call shepherdorial cement. As I said earlier, they may be attracted initially to the church by the charismatic man of God, but they remain because of the relationships they acquire within the church!

I repeatedly tell my church members that the person they want to marry can be found within our congregation. If they want a tall, short, fat, skinny, fair or dark person; they can find their choice within the congregation! Of course, it is not a sin to marry from outside your own church. Many people in my church do that! All I am saying is that I encourage my church members to intermarry. Anytime one of our “daughters”, in whom we have invested, is married and taken to another church, we lose a church member.

However, if this member stays on in the church, she will contribute to church growth. The couple will also have children who will become members of our children's church, and eventually our adult assembly. You may want to argue with my theory, but it's working very well for me!

8. ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO SOCIALIZE AND FRATERNIZE.

The New Testament church was devoted to fellowshipping with one another! Sometimes people will accuse us of sticking to ourselves and not interacting with outsiders. However, that is not our intention at all! Our intention is also to interact with outsiders in order to win souls. But make sure you encourage your church members to have their friends from within the church.

If your church members' friends are within the church, they will have two reasons for coming to church. Firstly, they will come for spiritual nourishment. Secondly, they will come to meet with their friends. You can easily lose members whose friends are mainly people outside the church.[4]

9. DEVELOP SMALLER CHURCH FAMILIES WITHIN THE BIG CHURCH.

My church is made out of many small groups. Some groups have ten members, five, and even others have fifty. It is these small groups, called ministries and fellowships, which form the nucleus of family relationships in our church. You may be surprised to discover that people are more committed to these smaller groups than to the big church. When there is a wedding or funeral, it is usually the concern of these smaller groups. Even when there is a social event, most of the friends are drawn out of these same groups.[5]

10. BECOME A FATHER OR MOTHER TO YOUR CHURCH.

Some pastors never develop beyond being a teacher of doctrines and truths. Chicks gather around the mother hen because of her motherly security.

I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings

Matthew 23:37

If you want your church to grow, develop fatherly or motherly attributes. Be everything to your sheep. Be a friend. Be a brother. Be a father. Show concern for your flock. Show interest in things that concern them. Be interested in their school. Ask for details concerning their businesses. Help them in their marriages. Correct them when they are wrong. Rebuke them and discipline them when they need it. Don't just give them good teachings. Become a mother or a father to your flock. The anointing to be a father or mother is the anointing to gather.

To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some

1 Corinthians 9:22

[Retention Evangelism 27]

HOW TO RETAIN CHURCH MEMBERS

One of the secrets of church growth is the secret of "retention evangelism". Retention evangelism is the art of winning souls and retaining them. Every pastor must learn to keep what he already has - at all costs.

Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost

(John 6:12)

Jesus did not waste any of His blessings. He wanted to save as much as He could. The same applies to church growth. Our problem is not one of bringing new people to the church, but one of getting them to stay! If we can retain all the visitors and souls who come in through the front door, we will build a mega church for Jesus.

A mega church pastor is interested in what others despise. Be interested in every single member. Jesus collected the fragments. If the fragments were important to the Lord, then the fragments must be important to you. Every member, big or small, rich or poor, must be important to you!

Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none

(John 18:9)

Let me share with you three vital strategies for retaining church members.

STRATEGY 1: FOLLOW-UP BRINGS RETENTION

Many years ago, I learnt a simple truth which has stayed with me ever since. This truth has helped me greatly in the ministry. It is the secret of retention through follow-up.[1] My physics teacher once showed me a graph of the population of a poultry farm. The graph showed that the population of fowls remained constant at a low level for a long period. At a point, the fowls began to multiply and the farm population increased greatly. Something had happened to make the fowls multiply.

I then looked at the population of the world which had remained constant up until the beginning of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, the population of the world began to expand greatly. The question was: “What caused the sudden increase of the fowl population on the farm?” The other question was: “What made the population of the world increase so radically?” The answer was simple. When the fowls in the poultry farm received the right medication and stopped dying from epidemics, the number of fowls suddenly increased.

With the world's population, the pattern was the same. The reason for growth in the world's population was not the result of people having more babies. In fact, the number of births had been relatively the same. The reason for the growth was that the mortality rate had reduced. People's lifespan had been expanded due to medical science. Medical science has improved remarkably from the beginning of the twentieth century. Diseases that have killed human beings for many years are now treated with one injection. Children no longer die from tuberculosis and malaria as they used to.

There is a great revelation to be derived from these two graphs! If we can prevent a large number of converts from dropping out, then the church will experience the growth of the poultry farm. If we can prevent many Christians from falling away, perhaps we will experience sudden accelerated growth like the world population did.

Every successful pastor must have the picture of this Follow-up Graph firmly imprinted in his spirit. The follow-up ministry is important because without it, our fasting and praying for church growth is in vain. Without follow-up, all of our efforts are useless! Without follow-up, all evangelism is worthless! Let's not make fools of ourselves. If we evangelize and invite people to church, why don't we follow them up? I believe that every new convert must be followed-up.

The Principles of Follow-Up

You must bear in mind that the follow-up ministry is both a physical and spiritual exercise. It consists of three main components: prayer, visitation and teaching. Always remember that the church is not a social club. It is a spiritual organism, which operates through prayer and the Word of God.

1. PRAY FOR VISITORS AND CONVERTS.

Pray that all visitors and converts will come back to the church. Declare that they will return the following week. Prophesy that when they go back home, they will return the next week with more people. Pray that when they return, they will come back with their families. Pray that they will become established in Christ! You travailed for them to be born again, now travail for Christ to be formed in them!

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you

(Galatians 4:19)

Without prayer, you are wasting your time. I really want to emphasize that prayer is important in order to achieve anything for the Kingdom of God. Pastors must emit spiritual energy whenever they speak or minister. Lead your entire church in prayer for the establishment of visitors and converts in the church.

2. VISIT NEW CONVERTS AND VISITORS.

It is important to visit all new converts and visitors. This is an area where many of the church members can get involved. Churches are full of sleeping and lazy Christians who contribute nothing to the work of God. One person cannot effectively visit many people. However, one hundred trained workers can do a great deal more. I involve many people in following-up new converts.

There are three types of visits that church members must be trained to participate in.

Three Types of Visit

i. IDL Visit

This is done to IDentify and Locate the homes of converts. I encourage church members to accompany new converts to their homes after the service. This first visit is to locate their homes. Sometimes the official address does not correspond to the reality on the street. Physically going to homes for identification is a powerful first step in the visitation process.

ii. WELP Visit

This visit is done to minister the Word. You must Encourage the new converts. This second visit will demonstrate that you really Love them. Finally, you must Pray with them for the establishment of their soul and for their general welfare.

iii. ABA Visit

This involves Anagkazo, Biazo and Anaideia (for further study, read 'Anagkazo' by Bishop Heward-Mills)

Sometimes you must visit your members and physically bring them with you to church. Demonstrate that you care by patiently waiting for them as they get ready for church, and take them to church. Many inactive Christians will become active if they find something to do in the church. Teach these three types of visitation for following-up new converts and you will discover how many more of your members will become active Christians.

3. DO NOT WASTE YOUR TME.

You will have to be careful not to waste your time on non-serious converts. The Bible teaches us that we should commit things to faithful people. In other words, do not waste too much time on unfaithful people.

'And the things that thou hast heard of me.. commit thou to faithful men'

(2 Timothy 2:2)

The word 'faithful' means constant and reliable. When a new convert says that he will be there and does not show up, this may be a sign of unfaithfulness. Learn to distinguish between faithful and unfaithful converts. Then direct your time and investment to the faithful ones. On several occasions, I have wasted my time on non-serious converts (they probably weren't even born again).

With time, I have learnt to distinguish between people who are serious with God and those who are just playing games. When you have many converts, you really have to learn to distinguish between

who is serious and who is not. This is more crucial when your converts outnumber your lay workers. In that case, you should only follow-up those who are serious.

STRATEGY 2: CONCENTRATE TO RETAIN

1. RETENTION EVANGELISM REQUIRES CONCENTRATION.

In every city, there are many different churches and pastors. Though many of these pastors and churches interact, they often end up having all sorts of conflicts. Unfortunately, in the real world, you will see competition between churches and pastors. There will always be one or two pastors fighting for supremacy over the Body of Christ in their city. Who is the father and leader of us all? Some will claim, "I am the father and leader of all Christians in this city."

Others will take sides and join one faction or the other. I want to tell you right here, that your church will not grow if you involve yourself in these things. Politics consumes both time and energy. Church growth requires concentration. The rays of the sun shine on us everyday, yet none of us catches fire. If you were to take a magnifying glass and concentrate the rays of the sun on one spot, you could set a piece of paper on fire.

The principle at work here is the principle of concentration. When the rays of the sun are not concentrated, they have no power to light a fire. Direct your spiritual energy towards your calling.

2. OUR PRINCIPAL GOAL MUST BE TO FULFIL THE CALL OF GOD ON OUR LIVES.

A prophet related a vision he had had to a friend of mine. He saw a world famous man of God standing on a platform. Behind the platform were two electric generators. One of the generators was on and the other was off. The voice of God came loud and clear in this vision, "This man of God has neglected one half of his ministry."

He had set aside the power and evangelistic dimension of his call and was only doing half of what he was called to do. Two weeks after this revelation, this world famous man of God died suddenly. That was a real shock to everyone, including me. Failing to concentrate can cost you your church. It can cost you your ministry. It can even cost you your life!

STRATEGY 3: DEVOTION BRINGS RETENTION

Another essential method for retaining your membership is to teach devotion in the church.[2]

1. CHURCH MEMBERS MUST BE TAUGHT TO BE DEVOTED TO THE PASTOR'S TEACHINGS.

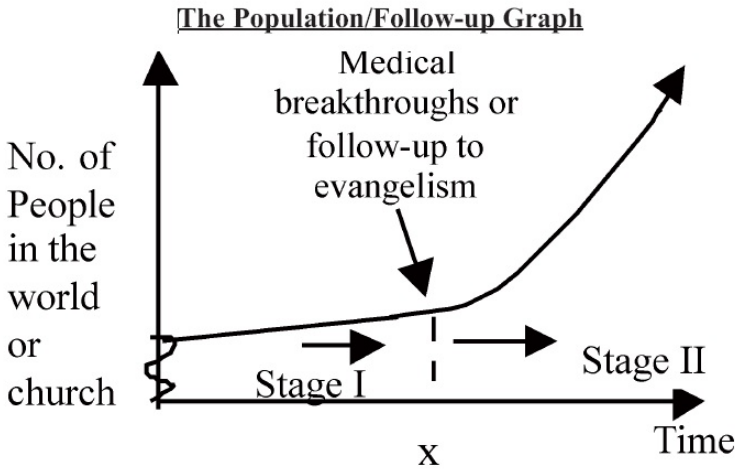
You must teach them to be devoted to one another's fellowship as we have discussed in an earlier chapter.

2. IT IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE PASTOR TO BE DEVOTED TO HIS MEMBERS.

When a pastor is devoted to his members it leads to retention. Anytime there is a wedding, funeral, baby dedication or some crisis in your church member's life, you have a chance to practise devotion. That is your golden opportunity to devote yourself to your sheep. Stand by them at the graveside. Be there in their deepest sorrow. Attend their important events.

This demonstrates your devotion to them. You are fulfilling a principle: whatsoever a man sows he shall reap. You will reap the devoted membership of your church members. Many years ago I heard a seasoned pastor say, “If you stand by your members in their time of need, they will stand by you in yours.”

The Population/Follow-Up Graph



Stage I

Mortality rate is high.

No medicines, no medical answers.

The growth of the population was very slow.

Stage II

At time “x” there was a medical revolution.

Mortality rate was greatly reduced: fewer people were dying.

Suddenly, the population began to shoot up very rapidly.

If a church is at Stage I, there is little or no growth. When a church begins follow-up, it is able to retain the people it gets from evangelism from a certain point “x” onwards. Notice how growth of the church occurs at Stage II.

This can be the graph of your church's membership. The turning point, as you can see, is the point at which retention begins. I see your church multiplying greatly in Jesus' name!

DEVELOPING PERMANENT MEMBERS 28

REASONS WHY THE FLOCK SHOULD BE PERMANENT MEMBERS

The Lord emphasized to me the need to have permanent church members. I realized that many of the young church members were vacillators.

1. THE BEST TYPE OF CHURCH MEMBER IS A PERMANENT CHURCH MEMBER.

A permanent member is unmovable, stable and dependable throughout the years. A very important characteristic of that member is that his mind and heart are saying, "I am here, and I am here forever."

2. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE THE MIND OF STAYING AROUND FOREVER.

I am not a fool! Of course I know that not everybody is going to stay around forever. Yet, I will like to encourage my church members to have a mind to be around forever. I am not God. If God, by His Spirit, would lead someone away from our church, there is nothing I can do about it. It is the same thing with marriage. No good person enters a marriage with the mind that "I am in this marriage for just a few years." Who would like to marry such a person?

One day I told my church, I have decided to go to America to study cardiothoracic surgery. I announced, "I am going to be a heart surgeon." I went on to explain, "The course will last for about five years after which I will need to gain some experience on the job. That will last for another five years, making the trip a total of ten years." The whole congregation was shocked. "Oooooh," they said, "It can't be possible." They all looked very sad. "Why are you sad?" I asked, "Don't you want me to go away?" I asked them, "How many of you would like me to be here in three years' time?" Everybody raised their hands.

I asked again, "How many of you here would like me to be here in seven years' time?" Again, they all raised their hands. "So you don't want me to go," I said. They all shouted, "No!" I began to laugh. Then I told them, "I was just joking. I'm glad you want me to stay! I realize that you want me to stay permanently!" I went on, "If you would like me to be here in seven years' time, I would also like you to be here seven years from now. Just as you want me to be your permanent pastor, preaching to you and praying for you, I also want you to be permanent members for me!" I believe in permanent members and permanent commitment.

3. I WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND ALL PASTORS TO TEACH THEIR CONGREGATIONS ABOUT BEING PERMANENTLY JOINED TO THE CHURCH.[1]

Listen to me, "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). What you teach your people is what they will believe. If you want them to be a permanent part of the ministry, teach them and they will be!

The church members want a permanent pastor and we the pastors want permanent members. I am going to give you several reasons that you can share with any congregation as to why they should become permanent members of the church. If you teach these things, your members will stop jumping around from church to church.

ELEVEN LESSONS ON WHY CHURCH MEMBERS MUST BE PERMANENT MEMBERS

1. THEY ARE PART OF A FAMILY.

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named

(Ephesians 3:15)

The first reason why people must be permanent is because they are part of a family.[2] When every church member is taught that the church is a family, they will be less willing to leave. Every family has its problems! In every family, you have conflicts and misunderstandings. But there is simply no way you can leave your family. You are simply a part of that family whether you like it or not.

A misunderstanding with your uncle does not lead you to change your name. Teach the church members that misunderstandings and hurts should not make them change their churches. Family members belong together in a lifetime commitment. Church members must belong to the same family in a lifetime commitment.

2. THEY ARE PART OF A BUILDING.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building

(1 Corinthians 3:9)

The second reason why people need to be permanent is because they are part of God's building. The Bible clearly teaches that we are God's building. Every Christian must know that he is part of God's building, which is the church. You cannot easily remove the blocks of a building. Blocks are a permanent part of the structure.

How would you feel if you came home and your bedroom had moved to the next house? Sections of buildings do not move around! I teach my church to see themselves as permanent building blocks in the building called Lighthouse Chapel International. I tell them that I have never seen a building block walk out of a building before. Such an occurrence would be magical. I trust that there is no magician amongst the members.

3. THEY ARE PART OF A GARDEN.

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: [garden] I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.

(Isaiah 5:5)

Throughout Scripture, we see believers being referred to as a garden. If we are like a garden, then each of us is like a plant in the garden. If you uproot a plant and replant it in another spot, you

endanger the life of that shrub. In fact, if you do this repeatedly, you will kill the plant. It is a common fact that planting and replanting kills plants.

God has no plan for planting and replanting His people in different churches every few years. If every time your roots go a little deeper you move around, you will kill yourself spiritually. I have noticed that Christians who are planted and replanted in different churches often do not survive spiritually. When the Lord asked the devil where he had been, the devil replied that he had been roaming in the earth. The devil does not sit still, he moves "to and fro" and "up and down." in the earth. If you move to and fro, from church to church, your lifestyle resembles the devil.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it

(Job 1:7)

4. THEY ARE PART OF A TREE.

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 15:5)

Another important revelation is that you are a part of a tree. Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches. Everyone knows that a branch cut off from the tree is dead. Branches are intended to be permanently fastened to bigger branches or tree trunks. If you are indeed a branch, have no plans of moving anywhere. People who move from church to church often do not flourish in the Kingdom of God. They experience stunted growth and some even backslide and go to Hell.

Recently I was speaking with a prophet of God. He told me how the Lord had shown him a dream, about how a pastor who had been moving from church to church, had backslidden and had become a Rastafarian. This prophetic dream was predicting that the vacillating pastor was going to fall. This was a warning to the unstable pastor. Cutting yourself off and attempting to reattach yourself is risky business. I believe in permanent membership. I teach permanent membership. I campaign for permanent members. My people want a permanent pastor, and I want permanent members.

5. THEY WILL FLOURISH IF THEY ARE PLANTED.

Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God

(Psalm 92:13)

The next reason for permanent membership is so that you will flourish. You will notice that I have a scriptural basis for each of these points. What I am sharing with you is sound biblical doctrine. I am not saying that there are no grounds for a person to leave a church. Not at all! What I'm saying is that you must teach people to be permanently attached and permanently planted for their own benefit. Sheep will follow and obey what their shepherd tells them.

The Bible tells us plainly that those who are planted will flourish. I have watched Christians and pastors who move around from place to place. You cannot compare a planted member to a roving member. Stay in one place. Develop roots and flourish! As you remain in one place, you will develop businesses and business contacts.

Members of the church will begin to rely on you for their business. You will develop lasting friendships that may help you during your lifetime. Staying in one place for only a couple of years does not allow you to develop the sort of relationships that you need for a blessed life.

6. THEY CAN INVEST FREELY WHEN THEY ARE PERMANENT.

It is very convenient to live in one's own house. It is very different from renting a house. When you live in your own house, you can invest freely. You can pour in your money, your time and your life. Why is this? Because it is yours and you are going to be there permanently. No one wants to spend any money on a house that doesn't belong to him. After all, he is only going to use the place for a few months.

When we acquired our own church building, we invested freely into the structure. One day the contractor told me, “I want to construct this building as perfectly as possible because I am going to be here for life.” “I want the floor to be smooth and perfect because I intend to die as a member of Lighthouse,” he added. He continued, “One day when I am dead and my coffin is being carried into the church for the funeral service, I will not want anyone to trip and fall over an uneven floor.”

I laughed. Though this was a joke, he was also making a serious point. He had planned to be there for life. In other words, he had opted for permanent membership. Permanent members will be encouraged to give their money freely. They know that they are building a church for their children's weddings and will see the fruit of their investments.

7. THEY WILL HAVE A FAMILY TO CELEBRATE THEIR VICTORIES.

I preach faith and hope for the future. I tell my members that things are going to get better. Many poor people come to the church. As they hear the Word, their faith rises and they begin to see better things ahead. If they are permanent members, they will live to celebrate their victories in the church. If they

are not permanent, in the day of their victory, they will have no one to rejoice with. Remember that joy shared is double joy and sorrow shared is half sorrow.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice

(Romans 12:15)

They will have a family to rejoice with as their new houses, new cars and new babies are dedicated. You will stand together and remember how the Lord took them from the beginning and brought them so far! I have often reminisced with my friends about the ministry. We ponder over how the Lord has been kind to us. We laugh about things that threatened us some years ago. We say like the psalmist,

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them.

(Psalm 126:1,2)

Who will you sit down with to quote this Scripture to one day? Will you have abandoned all the friends with whom you struggled in the early days? A permanent relationship will give you people to rejoice with in the day of rejoicing. Better days are ahead. I teach my church that our better days are yet to come. I want them to stay around to see the better days of this ministry.

I remember when I used to speak about miracles. It was more like a dream. Today we have real miracles abounding in our midst. The Lord has been good to us. We are seeing better days. When you are permanent, you will have a family to go through your mourning with you. Joy shared is double joy, and sorrow shared is half sorrow.

8. THEY WILL SEE THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABOR.

It is important for Christians to know that harvest time is coming in the future. What is the use of labouring in a church for years, only to leave just before harvest time? Some of the people who were with me in the days of real struggles are no longer around to enjoy the blessings. That is a pity! That is the price you pay for not being permanent.

Anyone who is double-minded about his commitment becomes unstable in other areas of his life. The Bible states that such a person is unstable in all his ways. Be stable. Be permanent. Be blessed.

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways

(James 1:8)

9. THEY WILL AVOID THE DECEPTION OF SHORT RELATIONSHIPS.

Short relationships are sweet while they last. There are no quarrels, no emotional disturbances, no worrying comments or misunderstandings. Long relationships have often been through much testing. Long relationships that have survived the tests of time are better. Greater trust develops. You also know what to expect in the relationship. I prefer to work with someone I have known for a long time rather than with someone I have just met.

Joshua made the mistake of forming an alliance with someone he didn't really know. He thought the Gibeonites were ambassadors from a far country. Little did he know that they had lied to him in order to secure a peace treaty. He later discovered their true identity. But it was too late! He was already bound to the peace accord, although it was done under a cover of deception.

And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? And they [Gibeonites] said unto him, From a very far country… And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

(Joshua 9:8,9, 16)

What I am saying is that longer relationships are safer relationships. Permanent members will be able to develop genuine relationships with genuine people. As the years go by, the members will know whether they have a genuine pastor or not and they will be more committed.

10. THEY WILL HAVE CONSISTENT PASTORAL CARE.

The church, like a hospital, cares for you. Your permanent pastor can cater for you better because he has been with you for a long time and knows your history better. He is better equipped to minister to you. Church members often leave churches when they think the pastor has discovered their secret sins. You must want your pastor to have access to your life so that he can minister in the area where you really need help.

11. THEY WILL BE REWARDED FOR FAITHFULNESS.

The next important reason for being a permanent member is that God will reward His children for faithfulness.[3] Faithfulness means loyalty, constancy and permanence.

Well done, good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord

(Matthew 25:23)

Please note in this Scripture that, the servant is recommended for his faithfulness. He is not recommended for his charisma or his gifting. Being a permanent member is part of the life of faithfulness. Be faithful. Be permanent. One day, Jesus will tell you, “Enter thou into the joy of thy

Lord." That is the day I am waiting for. I just want to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful (permanent and loyal) servant."

PRINCIPLES FOR CHURCH GROWTH 29

THE POWERFUL SECRET OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

I like to think of the future and how things will be like in some years to come. I have often wondered what our church will be like in a few years. As I pondered over the future of the church, the Lord told me that one way I could secure the future was to develop a culture of industrialization. God instructed me to industrialize my church. He showed me how our nation, at that time, was only importing goods from western countries and reselling them at a profit. “There is no future in this,” the Lord said.

“Have you noticed that the richest nations of the world are all involved in producing important products?” “Yes,” I replied.

God showed me that the richest nations of the world produce cars. The best cars come from the richest countries of the world. These countries are rich because they produce something. The church will be rich in souls if we begin to be spiritually industrialized! Just as the success of the nations of the world depend on their producing something, the success of the church depends on her producing souls. An industry is an organized system of producing goods and services regularly.

1. An industry is a deliberately (intentionally) organized system.

2. It comes out with a well-defined product on a regular basis.

It does not only produce its products when it is convenient nor does it produce goods accidentally.

3. An industry is also very profit-oriented.

Any nation that does not establish industries is doomed to buy second-hand things forever. It is doomed to be at the mercy of those who produce goods and services. When I speak of industrialization, I am not speaking of making money. I am talking about churning out souls deliberately and regularly. I am a “businessman” for God, and my currency is human souls.

Your church will have reached an industrialized stage when it begins to churn out souls regularly and systematically. The important word here is regular. I know of some car factories that produce one car every three minutes. Jesus said in Luke 19:13, “Occupy (do business) till I come.” That is, industrialize and commercialize with diligence until I come. In other words, Jesus expects us to take the business of soul winning as a very serious enterprise.

Soul winning should be intentional and not incidental. Many pastors are afraid of starting churches because they do not know how to win souls. Others don't know how to follow-up and establish converts in the Lord. They only know how to break churches and take away half of somebody's church members. No industry turns out a car accidentally. It is a deliberate planned exercise.

It is time for us to deliberately win souls with the regularity of a factory. God showed me how to set up the church and ministry to deliberately and regularly win souls every month. My church is divided into chapels, ministries and fellowships. Each ministry is supposed to have a regular monthly outreach. The Lord showed me that it is important for the ministries to develop the habit of having a monthly outreach without needing a special exhortation to do so.

Car factories do not need a charismatic manager to preach about the importance of producing their product for the month! In contrast, churches and ministries seem to need a special emotional seminar on soul winning. Without this, everybody forgets about the harvest. Surely this is not an industrialized church. That is why I initiated ministries and fellowships, so that we would win some souls every month.

I am not directly involved in the winning of those souls. It is done at the ministry and fellowship level. I do not have to go and whip up enthusiasm for the winning of souls before it happens. It just happens automatically. An industry is profit-conscious.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls [souls]:

(Matthew 13:45)

An industrialized church is concerned with the number of people converted every month. It is biblical to be interested in the number of souls that are being added to the church daily, weekly or monthly.

And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved

(Acts 2:47)

It is interesting to note how many pastors rarely do altar calls. Many ministers do not care about the lost souls. Instead, they care about how impressive they were and how powerfully they ministered! After ministering at a convention, the host pastor said something to me that struck my heart. He said, “You are the only minister who made an altar call during this convention.” I asked myself, “Have altar calls for salvation become obsolete?” How sad! The primary job of the church is being relegated to the background. Altar calls for salvation are compulsory in every service we have. I make altar calls at all weddings and funerals.

Industrialize your church - regularly and deliberately conduct outreaches. I see you increasing as you industrialize your church! When a church is industrialized, even when the charismatic leader is no more, the church will continue to grow on its own accord. Why industrialize? So that we may increase and not diminish.

Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished

(Jeremiah 29:5,6)

FOURTEEN PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHURCH GROWTH

The following are ideologies that I have discovered for building successful and large churches. I advise you to carefully consider them and allow the Lord to give you a deeper understanding of what I am teaching in this section.

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MULTIPLIED SENIOR PASTOR

I have discovered that if you could multiply the senior pastor by twelve, it would mean that you had twelve pastors at work. Logically, you could do twelve times as much work. I taught my assistant pastors to do whatever I do. If I meet people after church, they should also meet people after church. If I am able to counsel ten people and twelve other pastors are able to counsel ten people, that makes it one hundred and thirty people who are being attended to.

There are some churches in which the senior pastor is a "superman". He is the only one who does anything important - and that is a sure recipe to keep your church small. One person can only attend to a certain number of people. If you try to visit, counsel and help everybody, you will go crazy! There is a limit to what you can do. That is why I have many branches and many pastors. I believe that many of the people I preach to can also preach.

I believe that many of the people who are receiving the Word now, are capable of rising up into the ministry. Do not be an insecure senior pastor. Don't be afraid to trust people. It is true that many people will betray your trust, but if you live in fear, Satan will have access to your life and ministry. I have been hurt by some people, but I have decided to still trust others to help me. If they betray me one day, I will take it in my stride and keep on trusting some others.

One of the reasons why some people cannot trust is because they do not believe that people can do a good enough job. In the medical field, young doctors are being trained all the time. Some people are always attended to by inexperienced student doctors under supervision. As the young doctors are allowed to have a go, they learn and soon they are just as good. It is the same thing in the ministry. People must be trusted with responsibilities under supervision. They must be allowed to do important things. This will multiply the number of capable pastors in the ministry.[1]

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF MAXIMIZED SUNDAY USAGE

This principle has been stretched to its fullest at the Lighthouse Cathedral in Accra. The principle of using Sunday to its fullest is effective because traditionally, people have dedicated Sunday to both resting and going to church. Since so many of the church members are available on Sunday, it is only wise to use Sunday to its fullest. Sunday is a full working day for me. Jesus worked on Sundays and I would like to follow His example.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My father worketh hitherto, and I work

(John 5:16,17)

Sunday is a full working day for all lay pastors in our church. We work hard from Sunday morning until late Sunday evening. We are able to accomplish a lot of counselling because people are free on Sundays. Visitation is also very effective on Sundays because many people are at home on Sunday afternoons. We conduct Bible schools for lay people on Sunday afternoons. Many people are able to attend because they don't have much to do on Sundays.

Decide to utilize your Sundays. I don't know what pastors are doing in their homes at two o'clock on Sunday afternoon when most of the church members are available to be ministered to. Take advantage of this opportunity. Lay pastors and shepherds will be able to do more work for the Lord. Although some people find it difficult to accept, I emphasize to all the people I work with, that Sunday is a full working day for me and my church.

I am not an accountant or a computer programmer. My working hours are not Monday to Friday from nine to five. I work on Sundays and I rest on Mondays. We do not start work at eight o'clock in the morning. I see no reason to go to work at eight o'clock in the morning. We stay late in the evenings because that is when many lay people are available for us to minister to them. Our office is usually closed on Mondays, and all of our staff, except the security officers, have a day off.

Pastors and churches must not allow the world to impose its schedule on us. When airplane pilots go to work at odd hours no one complains. Everyone accepts that their work demands a different type of work schedule. Pastors and non-pastoral people must realize that the work of the ministry is peculiar and goes with its own special working hours. Begin to consider what you can do with your Sundays. Think of how many more people you can attend to if your Sundays are used for ministry instead of being used for sleeping and having lunches in the afternoon.

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF SMALLER SUB-DIVISIONS

Smaller sub-divisions within the church allow for better pastoral care, which eventually leads to church growth. Questions that cannot be asked in a large Sunday service can be addressed in the small groups. The small groups become the family units to which church members belong. I have several smaller groups within the church. I have always believed that every Christian can and should actively serve the Lord. These smaller groups allow for all Christians to get involved.

As your church becomes mega, it will remain small enough to meet the needs of all the people. As it is said, “Large enough to include you, and small enough to know you.” Some people's churches are

like large convention centres. People come in, hear the Word, and go away. No human being likes to feel that he is not known. People are not numbers they are human beings. Nobody wants to be reduced to a numbered article or a countable commodity. People want to feel important. People want to feel necessary. People want to feel loved.

You may preach a powerful sermon but, they still need to belong to a little family. Your church can be broken into cells, divisions or departments.[2] Our church has chapels, ministries and fellowships. I am always encouraging my members to get involved in one ministry or the other. How can I know all the people who come to church? How can I know what they think or feel? How can I know their problems and how can I help them? If you think that God is going to give you a word of knowledge about these people everyday, you are making a mistake. God expects you to break up your church into smaller divisions so that the people can receive adequate pastoral care.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE PERSON X ORIENTED CHURCH

What on earth is a "person" oriented church? I define "person x" as a new convert or a new member. Most churches are oriented towards established members. A "person x" oriented church is very concerned about new people and visitors.[3] Treat your visitors well. We make song sheets so that the new people can get involved during the praise and worship. After the service, we host a reception to allow our new members to feel at home. We also give gifts to new converts.

Recently, the Lord directed me to direct my most senior associates to handle all new converts. God told me that if new converts were important to me, then I should allow senior ministers to take care of them rather than junior leaders. This has helped tremendously to establish many new people in the church. When a church is "person x" oriented, it is on the road towards increase because, growth will come through new members and converts.

And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour.

1 Corinthians 12:23

Most people think that growth comes because more people visit the church. This is not necessarily the case. Some people also think that growth takes place because more converts are won. History has shown that the population of this world has increased because people are being kept alive and not because more people are being born. If we want our churches to grow, we have to sustain and maintain our new members and converts.

5. THE PRINCIPLE OF CATERING FOR GROUP A AND GROUP B MEMBERS

Every church can be divided into group A and group B members. Group A members are the more reliable people; they attend church twice or more a week. They are often involved in other small group activities in the church life. Thank God for Group A members. We really appreciate their input. Group B members on the other hand, are the once-a-weekers, non-small group members, early service lovers, short sermon lovers, mind drifters, day dreamers, Bible forgetters, non note-takers, non tithe payers, clock-watchers and the church-near-me attendees.

These group B members will form an important segment of your church, as it becomes a larger entity. You will have to accept them as part of the family. You can choose your friends, but you cannot choose your brothers. Not everybody is going to be a prayer warrior. In fact, in a large church many of the people fall into group B. Love them anyway. Preach sermons that they can also appreciate. Pray for them. The Spirit of the Lord will work on them.

Sometimes when you organize a social event like a beach party, the group B members will flood the place. Use such opportunities to minister to them. If you try to filter out your group B members, you may be left with nothing at the end of the day. Jesus said that the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few. Jesus didn't say that there were few members, He said that there were few labourers Group A members[4]

6. THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLE SERVICES

Nobody ever told me that multiple services lead to church growth. I discovered it almost by accident. Well, now I am telling you that multiple services lead to church growth.[5] We have seven different services every Sunday morning. It is very tiring and draining, but our church attendance is better because of these multiple services. As the church grows, people with all sorts of needs come into the church.

Some pastors give the impression that they conduct multiple services because they have such a large crowd. This is true to some extent. But I do not have multiple services because the building can be filled four times over. Not all the services are full. Each service has a different level of attendance. I have never seen multiple services where all the services have the same attendance. I conduct multiple services primarily to make a variety of convenient services available to my members.

I am always amazed at why people will want to come to church at 6 o'clock in the morning. I always ask myself, “Can't they come to church a little later?” Human beings are so varied. Once you are dealing with a large number of people you are dealing with variety. If you don't make variety available, you will lose those for whom you have nothing to offer. Accept the reality of variety and flow with it.

You will notice that different types of people come to each service. Some of the services are more formal whilst others are more relaxed.

The type of people who attend each service determines the type of atmosphere you get. We have services for the youth and for the children. We have services for different languages. We have several services for English speaking members. Each of these services is different and there are people to fit into all of these services. God will bless your church as you provide variety for more people.

7. THE PRINCIPLE OF DYNAMIC CHURCH SERVICES

a. Every pastor must have a goal for each service.

You must have a goal for each service you conduct.[6] When determining the goal of the service, you must ask yourself, "What am I trying to achieve with this service?" Are you planning to raise the dead, to heal the sick, or to preach and teach? In the Lighthouse Cathedral, our Sunday morning services are teaching and worship services. We do not usually pray for the sick on Sunday mornings. We pray for the sick on other days.

How much time have you allotted for each service? How long should the service be? Our services are one and a half hours and two hours each. Within two hours, you can do everything that you need to do for a church service. Many years ago, I attended a church whose services began around eight o'clock in the morning and ended at about three o'clock in the afternoon. After attending twice, I decided that the service was too long. Today, that church is non-existent. When your Sunday services are too long, you will drive away all of your members.

b. Every pastor knows that he cannot achieve everything on a Sunday morning.

We conduct miracle services which can last for several hours. We have camp meetings at which I can preach for more than twelve hours in a day. At the last Shepherd's Camp Meeting of my church, I preached from 6:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. on one of the days with only two short breaks. I know how to have long meetings, but I'd advise you not to use your Sunday services for such things.

c. Examine carefully the kind of meeting place you have.

What type of meeting place do you have? Man looks on the outward appearance, so it is important to decorate your church nicely. Even if you do not own a church building, let your place of meeting attain a certain standard. Remember that you have only one chance to give a first impression. Make use of flowers, baskets, curtains or anything that would improve the physical appearance.

Sometimes the pastor does not have very good taste. How can you know if you do not have good taste? He would have to rely on others in the church to help in enhancing and brightening his corner. It

is important that every church tries to acquire its own place of meeting. Owning your own facility introduces more stability to the church.

d. The pastor's outward appearance is very important.

How do you present yourself? God looks on the heart, but man looks on the outward appearance. Man cannot see your heart. Man can only see your outward appearance. That is why your outward appearance is also important. We must seek to put up a good outward appearance in addition to preparing the right heart for the Lord.

e. Everyone who plays a part in the service must be well dressed.

Male pastors must be formally dressed and neatly shaved. Female pastors must be properly dressed and must not wear suggestive or indecent clothing. In some churches the musicians look like agents from the world who have been temporarily contracted to help God. These instrumentalists often come in with the attitude and culture of secular pop groups. That is why I insist on all my musicians dressing like pastors. If they cannot afford it, we buy clothes for them!

Altar calls should be made at every service. This important and good habit must be maintained at all costs. New converts and visitors must receive a warm welcome. Remember these are the "person x" members. The assisting pastor should take over and briefly emphasize the message of the senior pastor. He should also encourage the congregation to buy tapes.

f. Pastors must not run off after church. They must stay and mingle with the congregation for some time after the service.[7]

I question the call of someone who says he's a pastor but does not want to mingle with his congregation after the service. The shepherd's place is in the field amongst the sheep. A true shepherd smells of sheep. I remember meeting a frustrated congregant in a church. This man had travelled many miles to attend a conference. He wanted to have a chance to say hello to the great man of God. He was so frustrated that he became bitter.

I met him in a lift and he said to me bitterly, "Is this man a prime minister or a pastor?" But I have been to other conferences where the men of God made the effort to stay around and mingle with the sheep. Some people just want to shake your hand. Give them the opportunity to get near if you can. A pastor's wife must help with the interaction and must be seen to be a warm and friendly person. All these things contribute to building the mega-church we all desire.

8. THE PRINCIPLE OF USING TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

As the number of passengers on different airlines has increased, their efficiency has improved. This is because air line industries have used technology to help them in their work. Whilst the membership of

most churches has increased over the past few years, the pastor's ability for handling larger crowds has not been developed.

In our church, we try to keep an accurate data and statistics department. We maintain accurate counts and figures of everything. We have developed our own pastoral care monitoring system which we call the “Pastoshep”. In spite of the limitations due to limited addresses and telephone numbers in Ghana, our Pastoshep has become a reliable and technological method of assessing the work of all pastors and shepherds alike.

Without being there to physically see what people are doing, my computer tells me what everybody is doing. I decided long ago to allow technology to help me to do the work of God. Too many pastors say things like, “The whole of the outside was full.” They say things like, “Thousands of people were here today.” Whereas in reality, just a few hundred were present. Let's have real numbers! We sometimes do surveys in the church to find out different interesting things. For instance, we did a survey to find out how many members of the church had ever been visited by a pastor. The results of that study were certainly revealing![8]

9. THE 80-20 PRINCIPLE

This rule teaches us that eighty percent of your increase comes from twenty percent of the people. This means that eighty percent of church growth is as a direct result of the work of twenty percent of your members. Therefore, it is important for every pastor to spend more time with the twenty percent who will bring church growth. Often the leaders, teachers and pastors make up this twenty-percent. They are the most important people in the church.

More time, personal interaction and prayer with this twenty percent will give you amazing results that you never expected. Some pastors spend most of their time with the rich and influential. They do not know that they are spending time with the wrong group. Spending time with rich people does not make your church grow. It rather makes the rich people more important than they really are. It can make the rich people stubborn and difficult to pastor!

A church with a future will identify potential leaders and put them to work. When you do this, you are looking out for the twenty percent who can bring about sustained church development. When I visit our churches outside the headquarters, I spend more time with the leaders and pastors than with the rest of the church. Often I just minister in one service. Afterwards, I have various meetings, spending several hours with the pastors and shepherds. This style of activity does not come naturally. It is born out of the knowledge of the 80-20 Principle.

When you implement the 80-20 Principle, you may initially think that you are doing the wrong thing, but that is not the case. You will soon discover that this simple principle is a secret of church growth.

10. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SCHOLARLY PASTOR

By this, I simply mean that pastors should develop themselves academically. I have never been to Bible school; I only attended medical school. Yet, I have learnt so much about the ministry by reading. I always have several books that I am reading at the same time. I believe in reading, studying and acquiring knowledge. How could I rise above the handicap of having no formal pastoral training? Only by reading!

a. There is a difference between ministers who read books and those who do not.

Those who do not read are no better than those who cannot read! Those who do not read are doomed to be ruled by those who do read. Paul the apostle was a reader of books and parchments. He deemed his books so important that he asked Timothy to bring them to him.

When thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments

(2 Timothy 4:13).

Prophet Daniel read the books that Jeremiah wrote.

In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem

(Daniel 9:2).

People like Daniel and Paul read books. It is no surprise that they went far in ministry.

b. Many ministers need some secular education.

They would do well to educate themselves in important subjects like administration, law, medicine and history. Administration is important in a church because many aspects of the church have to be run in a secular way. Things have to be managed properly. Accounts have to be prepared. Salaries have to be determined and paid. People have to be employed and dismissed. Things simply have to be done properly. A good study of administration and management will do the church of God a lot of good.

The study of law is also important for pastors and churches. Churches enter into contracts and the law of contract becomes important. There are laws that affect property acquisition. The law of property then becomes important to the pastor. There are laws that concern marriage. Pastors have to be well

versed in the laws that exist. God does not want His ministers to be ignoramuses. I am not a lawyer, but I know quite a bit about law because I have taken an interest in it for my own sake.

A good understanding of medicine is also important. A pastor, like a doctor, often deals with terminally ill people. There is no use in a pastor not appreciating the conditions of their members. It is important to have a basic understanding of what is going on around you. I have seen pastors declaring healing based on ridiculous and presumptuous premises. How absurd we sometimes look to the professionals of this world! They know we are completely unlearned in certain areas.

Another area that pastors need a bit of education in is history and politics. History shows the rise and the fall of tyrants. It shows trends which keep repeating themselves. The Bible says that there is nothing new under the sun. In fact, the Bible predicts that the past will repeat itself over and over again. For those of you who want to know the future - it is basically the past repeated.[9]

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us

Ecclesiastes 1:9,10

11.THE PRINCIPLE OF HAVING A POWER MINISTRY

If you cut out all the Scriptures on healing and miracles from your Bible, you will discover that your Bible is totally destroyed! You will be destroying the Word of God. When you take out the Scriptures concerning the power of God, you are left with a book on philosophy. It is not only the teaching and preaching which helps God's people. God's children also want to receive a touch of His power. It is important to add on the power dimension of miracles, healings and deliverance.[10]

The Holy Spirit wants to manifest Himself and bless the people of God. You will discover that your people love to be prayed for. It is important for you to pray for your sheep and minister God's power to them.

12. THE PRINCIPLE OF PASTORAL INDIVIDUALITY: FULFIL YOUR CALL.

It is very important for every pastor to fulfil his individual call. Don't look to the crowd. Don't think about what others are doing. Many years ago when I started out in ministry, many people laughed at me. One pastor ridiculed me as I encouraged my members to go out and witness door-to-door. He sneered at me and said, “What is witnessing? What is door-to-door witnessing? We have moved on into higher realms of ministry!” I answered, “It is an important Christian activity” I stressed, “No matter how big you become in the ministry, it is important to preach the gospel from house-to-house.”

Today, that pastor who scoffed at me is struggling at the bottom of the ministerial ladder. Please do not allow anyone to drown your convictions. Be a man of conviction. Follow the plan that God has given to you. Comparison is one of the dangerous practices of certain ministers. Please do not compare yourself with anyone else, it is too dangerous.

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise

2 Corinthians 10:12

God told me not to compare myself with anybody. He showed me how certain ministers were uneducated and that His expectations of different people varied. He also showed me that my background of prolonged education made Him give me a different standard. He told me that I would be wrong to compare myself with anyone else. The Lord also showed me that if I used other ministers as a standard, I may do far less for Him than I am supposed to. The Lord showed me that I would mistakenly think that I had "arrived" because I had used certain low standards that had been set by others. It is indeed a dangerous thing to compare yourselves with others. Paul said that he dared not compare himself with others.[11]

13. THE PRINCIPLE OF MASSIVE ORGANIZED PRAYER

Massive organized prayer involves gathering all of your leaders and/or members for intensive prayer. I do massive organized prayer on three levels. At the highest level, I frequently organize the senior ministers away from the city to pray for a few days. At the level of cell leaders, we often decree what we call prayer sentences. Sometimes we "sentence" the shepherds to twenty hours of prayer within a three-week period. This means that they have to meet as a group and pray for twenty hours spread over three weeks. This is massive organized prayer - organizing prayer on a massive scale.

Finally, we involve the whole church in prayer. There are times we have all-night prayer and fasting meetings everyday for an entire week. I am always surprised when on a weekday the church is full at 2 a.m. Working people gather to pray intensively for church growth and breakthroughs. There is no other way to make any progress in the ministry than to work in the realm of the spirit. The Bible says, Epaphras was always labouring in prayer. The principle of massive organized prayer is what you need to bring about a breakthrough in your ministry.

Epaphras…always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God

Colossians 4:12

There are some people who see me as an administrator and a strategist. Anyone who knows me closely knows that as I write this textbook, I do not even have a desk or an office. But I do have a study where I pray and I do have places where I spend time praying. There is no shortcut in the ministry. There is no other way than that which has been set by the Lord. There is no other example than that which has been set by Jesus. Peter said that he wanted to give himself to prayer and the Word. Prayer and the Word are more important than administration and strategies![12]

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word

Acts 6:4

14. THE PRINCIPLE OF USING LAY PEOPLE TO DO THE WORK

One of the great secrets of a large church is in the use of lay people or voluntary church workers.[13] These volunteer workers can do most of the church work. I have several pastors who are not paid a dime for all of their hard work. The Lord pays them Himself. They work very hard on Sundays and other evenings. They make huge sacrifices in their private lives in order to be pastors and shepherds.

Many very big churches use this principle and are succeeding. May the Lord give you understanding and revelation concerning this vital principle. I am always saddened when I see a small church of one hundred people employing seven full-time pastors. I often ask myself, “How much will one pastor be paid? Do the wives of these pastors work? Do they make enough money to survive?” Such environments are the breeding grounds for discontent and rebellious elements!

Many church rebellions are related to money. When money is left out of the ministry, people are able to concentrate on the work of the Lord because they love God. Many pastors in my church are doing well as lay pastors. If some of them were to come into full-time ministry, things may change. The church may be able to pay them enough money, but they may not be at the stage where they are ready for full-time ministry. New problems relating to salaries and income levels may arise. These problems have the potential to disrupt the work of ministry.

I suggest this to every senior pastor: analyze the church conflicts you have ever had. Aren't most of them related to money? Make use of unpaid people. They are the key to a peaceful and stable church environment! I see a ministry growing! I see your ministry growing! I see you rising up in the Kingdom of God! I see you taking your place! I know the Lord is going to use you! He has determined to use you! The mega church is for you! The anointing is yours! Rise up with wisdom and possess what the Lord has placed before you!

SECTION IV The Pastor and the Voice of God

Hearing from God 30

AREAS OF YOUR LIFE WHICH MUST BE OPEN TO THE VOICE OF GOD

The voice of God is important for every area of your life. If there is anything that is important to you, I would suggest that you open that area to the direction of God's Spirit. You may think that God is not interested in certain areas of your life. I want you to know today that God has something to say about every area of your life. The Lord is depicted as a shepherd to His sheep. Sheep are animals that are very dependent on human beings for everything. If the Lord is depicted as a Shepherd, it shows how dependent we are on Him for everything.

1. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD FOR YOUR NEEDS.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want"

(Psalm 23:1).

"I shall not want" is what you will say after you have followed the Shepherd for some time! You will be able to say with David, "I have no needs, I am blessed in every way." In order to experience this, you must follow the leading of the Spirit.

2. Depend On The Holy Spirit For Your Marriage And Home.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters"

(Psalm 23:2).

Green pasture speaks of peace and happiness. It speaks of the marriages we all desire. You will never have true happiness unless you marry the person God wants you to marry. If you allow Him, the Holy Spirit will lead you to a peaceful marriage.

3. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD FOR THE RIGHT CHURCH.

"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake"

(Psalm 23:3).

This Scripture shows how dependent you are on God's guidance for righteous living. Many people end up as fruitless nonentities in the kingdom of God because they are under the wrong leadership. It is so important to be led by the Spirit when you are choosing a church. It makes all the difference in the world! Most definitely, this is one of the important areas where you need the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD FOR DIVINE PROTECTION.

"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"

(Psalm 23:4).

The psalmist made it clear that he was dependent on the Shepherd for protection. He explained how the Lord's protection was so powerful that he was able to eat lunch when his enemy was nearby. Listening to the news, it is almost as though travellers are playing Russian roulette. Russian roulette is a game involving the firing of a revolver, with one chamber loaded, at one's head, after spinning the chamber.

If you are the unlucky one, the bullet will be fired when you pull the trigger. It is almost as though it is a game of chance for you to travel and return safely. Definitely, you need the voice of God to choose the right car, bus, plane or train!.

5. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD FOR THE ANOINTING.

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over"

(Psalm 23:5).

Without being directed by the Lord you will never be anointed. The anointing will not come from Heaven per se. God will have to direct you to relate with anointed men of God. Jesus told His disciples, "Follow me and I will make you…" Without following the right person you will not amount to much in the ministry. Surely, you depend on the voice of God to lead you.

6. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD FOR THE GOOD THINGS OF THIS LIFE.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"

(Psalm 23:6).

Every businessman must know this reality. Without the grace of God you will never make it to the top. The silver and the gold belong to the Lord. If you seek His face, He will show you where it is hidden!

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts"

(Haggai 2:8).

7. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD TO MAKE IT TO HEAVEN.

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever"

(Psalm 23:6).

Do you want to dwell in the house of the Lord forever? As you follow the Spirit of God, He will lead you on the path of righteousness. This will eventually lead to Heaven. You need the Shepherd to take you from the green pastures all the way to those eternal gates.

8. DEPEND ON THE VOICE OF GOD TO FULFIL YOUR MINISTRY.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake"

(Psalm 23:3)

You are alive on this earth to fulfil your ministry! This is the reason why God created and saved you. If you do not fulfil your ministry, you have missed your whole purpose for this life!

THE VOICE OF GOD AND YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

Studying the voice of God can be a little frightening, especially when you think of the consequences that can befall you when you do not obey His voice. In this section, I want to share with you why every Christian or minister should obey the voice of God. Years ago I noticed this Scripture.

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, WOE IS UNTO ME, IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL!"

(1 Corinthians 9:16).

Paul was someone who felt he would get into all sorts of trouble if he did not preach the Gospel. He was not wrong! Indeed, I think I can say with Paul, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."

1. A MINISTER WHO DOES NOT TAKE THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT SERIOUSLY WILL OPEN HIMSELF TO ALL SORTS OF DANGEROUS ATTACKS.

He will be in danger of losing the anointing!

2. A MINISTER MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD TO AVOID HAVING THE GIFT TAKEN AWAY.

"And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds"

Luke 19:24

Dear man of God, do not think that you are indispensable. If you do not do what God wants you to do, your ministry will be taken away from you and given to another. read it for yourself! Take from him the pound! If God gave you a pound, He can take it back when He wants to. Pastors seem to enjoy hiding behind Romans 11:29. “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Because of this verse, they think that God will never take away His anointing. But that cannot be the case.

What this Scripture means is that God does not change His mind about you. He never changes His decision to call you or use you. He never changes His decision to anoint you. If God has called you to be a vessel, you will always be a vessel. The story of the Prophet Jonah is a good example of how God does not change His mind about the people He wants to use. Jonah did not want to go where the Lord had sent him. He wanted to be a nice guy everybody liked.

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the

presence of the LORD. But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken

(Jonah 1:1-4).

However, when the season of grace is over, God will have no choice but to recall His pound. He may have to give this pound to another minister, hoping that one would be faithful. I remember a man of God whom the Lord spoke to about writing a book. The Lord asked him, "Will you write this book?" He said, "Yes Lord, of course I will!" And the Lord said, "I hope so, because you are the fifth person I have asked. If you do not write it, I will move on to the sixth person."

Dear friend, in this story you see two principles working together. On one hand, God does not change His mind about writing the book. On the other, God is forced to select someone else and give him the job.

3. GOD CAN RECALL HIS POUND AND GIVE IT TO ANOTHER.

Yes, I believe that God does not change His mind about us. But I also know that He can recall his gift. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds

(Luke 19:24).

Keep the gift of God by obeying His call! Be sensitive to His voice! Do what He tells you to do and you will succeed in ministry! Do what is hard and difficult rather than what is nice and easy!

THE VOICE OF GOD AND PREMATURE DEATH

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth

(Matthew 25:30).

The expression "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is a little misunderstood by most of us. We often think it refers to Hell and Hades. However, the Bible does not explicitly say that the people it refers to will go to Hell. It says that they will weep and gnash their teeth in darkness. Weeping speaks of sorrow and of pain associated with funerals. This Scripture could be warning all who claim to be servants of God that failure to obey could cost them their very lives.

1. A MINISTER MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD TO AVOID WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.

Kenneth Hagin, a great prophet I deeply respect, often spoke of how ministers die before their time because they do not obey the Lord concerning their ministry. He spoke of how he broke his arm and was admitted to the hospital. When the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the hospital, he discovered that his accident had occurred because he did not take an aspect of his ministry seriously. Dear friend, doing the work of God is not a joke. It is not a game! People were made to experience weeping and gnashing of teeth because they were unprofitable.

"Unprofitable" simply means "unbeneficial, running at a loss, unsuccessful and losing money" (souls) When you are losing souls for the Lord, do not expect Him to be pleased with you. He may have to recall or replace you. I remember a testimony given by the pastor of one of the world's largest churches. He described how he was rummaging through some old pictures. He noticed a picture that was taken during his Bible school days.

There were about fifty people in his class. As he mused over the picture, he realized that about forty-five of his classmates were dead. He then remembered that the five who were still alive, were the only ones who were serious about prayer during their Bible school days. He also realized that they were the only ones who took the ministry seriously after Bible school. Many of the others had taken to other professions.

Dear friend, ministry is serious business. God does not take lightly the investment that He places in you. To whom much is given, much is required!

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much require

Luke 12:48

2. IF YOU DESERT THE ARMY DURING WARTIME, YOUR PUNISHMENT IS OFTEN EXECUTION.

Everyone who withholds his gifts and abilities in a time of war is cursed.

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood

Jeremiah 48:10

The Young Prophet Meets His Untimely Death

And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, if thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel. Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon; And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread or drink water with thee in this place:

For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread

in his house, and drank water.
And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.
And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.
And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him

(1 Kings 13:1-26)

3. A MINISTER MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD TO AVOID PREMATURE DEATH.

In this story, the Lord specifically told the prophet what to do. By obeying the voice of God this man of God became a worker of signs and wonders. He suddenly had a thriving ministry. Then here comes an old and backslidden man of God. Did you know that men of God can also backslide? Unfortunately, this younger prophet listened to another “voice”.

At a certain level of ministry, you may become confused by the different voices that are trying to guide you. Make sure that you stick with the Word of God. In the New Testament, Paul explicitly stated that people were sick and dead because they did not discern the Lord's Body. Paul gave the reason for disease and death in the church.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [dead]

(1 Corinthians 11:29,30).

To discern the Lord's Body means to realize or discern that you are dealing with the Lord's Body. All the sheep and little lambs are the Lord's Body. They are the ones He died for on the cross. If for instance, you knew that somebody's finger was on the table, you would not strike it with a big hammer. You would not hit that finger because you know it is part of his body.

When you fail to realize that the church is Christ's Body, you will get into trouble. Those sheep, those people, are the ones the Lord shed His blood for! They are His body! When you abandon them, it is like abandoning your mouth (a part of your body) by not brushing your teeth for months. You can imagine why the Lord gets mad at ministers who neglect His Body.

OBEYING THE VOICE OF GOD TO AVOID BEING REPLACED

Jesus died for the little lambs. He told us to "go!" He told us to feed His little lambs. One day, the Lord became very angry with His shepherds. Look at what He said to them. He said He would take over and shepherd the people Himself.

Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the LORD GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;
Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. FOR THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD; BEHOLD, I, EVEN I, WILL BOTH SEARCH MY SHEEP, AND SEEK THEM OUT
Ezekiel 34:7,8,10,11

One night, while in a hotel in South America, the Lord spoke to me about His work. I had never heard the Lord speak so mournfully as He did that night. He spoke of how nobody cared about His work. He told me that everyone was running about his or her own business. He said to me, "No one cares about my work."I found this very sad but real.

1. WHEN WE DO NOT OBEY THE LORD, WE ARE IN EFFECT NEGLECTING HIS SHEEP.

Jesus asked Peter whether he would feed the sheep. Peter was taken aback, wondering why the Lord was asking. "After three years of training what do you expect me to do?" he must have thought. But the Lord knew how many ministers would abandon His work!

2. A MINISTER MUST OBEY THE VOICE OFGOD TO AVOID BEING DISPLACED AND REPLACED

When a minister neglects or abandons God's work, the Lord gets angry. This is the reason why He often displaces and replaces men of God with new ones. One day I had a strange vision. In this vision, I saw a man being lifted from his chair by the collar of his neck. I did not see who the man was. Suddenly, I found myself being lifted by the collar of my neck and being placed in his chair. After that the Lord told me that I was replacing someone in the ministry.

Dear friend, I tell you, I was frightened! I was not frightened about replacing someone but rather because the reality that I could also be replaced one day, became very real to me! This vision was

very biblical because it happened many times in the Scriptures. Samuel replaced Eli! David replaced Saul! Elisha replaced Elijah!

And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room

1 Kings 19:16

You have a room (place) in the ministry. However, it is not a permanent room. It can be given to anyone who deserves it. Always remember that there are people ready to replace you if you do not obey the voice of God. Obey the voice of God to avoid replacement!

DIFFERENT KINDS OF VOICES

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification

(1 Corinthians 14:10)

One of the greatest desires of all serious Christians is to know the will of God.

1. WITH A LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN LIFE, ANYONE CAN TELL THAT THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT WAYS YOUR LIFE CAN GO.

We often come to the crossroads and ask, "Which way is best?" If you take the wrong road, the implications may be devastating. If you marry the wrong person, the consequences may be terrible. If you join the wrong church, the consequences may be eternal. Many times when we take decisions, we are unable to retrace our steps. In other words, many decisions are irreversible.

2. WE NEED TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD SO THAT WE CAN BE GUIDED ALONG EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

Even unbelievers want to know the future Unbelievers have ways of getting to know what is best for them. Many of them consult soothsayers, astrologers and fortune tellers. They put their trust in false prophets and occult power. They also see the need to know what to do next. African politicians are often said to consult these powers on a regular basis. They often ask for direction and protection from them. African soccer teams consult these mediums as well.

You will notice however, that none of these things have taken them very far. As Christians, we do not need to consult satanic powers to know the future. God has graciously given us the Holy Spirit to guide us. Being led by the Spirit of God is a sign that you are a true Christian.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God

(Romans 8:14).

In the Old Testament, only the prophet seemed to know the will of God. You see, the Holy Spirit was not given to everyone at that time. We are living in a blessed dispensation. We all have the Holy Spirit in us and can be led by the Spirit of God. It is possible for us to know the will of God. That is what this section is all about: "How to know the will of God" and "How to be led by the Spirit of God."

3. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF VOICES TRYING TO INFLUENCE US.

The first step to knowing the will of God is to recognize that there are many types of voices in this world and all of them are trying to influence you.

4. THE ART OF SELECTING THE RIGHT VOICE AND LISTENING TO THAT VOICE IS THE ART OF BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

God wants to deliver you from evil and He has sent His Spirit to lead you through this life so that you will not make tragic mistakes. Satan, who is God's opponent and an opposition party, is trying to lead you in the wrong way or at least confuse you.

TWELVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF VOICES EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST KNOW

What are the voices that are trying to influence you? There are several possibilities that you must be aware of:

1. The voice of God
2. The voice of the flesh
3. The voice of the mind
4. The voice of the devil
5. The voice of a prophet
6. The voice of your pastor
7. The voice of your friends
8. The voice of your parents
9. The voice of your spirit
10. The voice of your spouse
11. The voice of circumstances
12. The voice of your own will

All these voices, as well as some others, are probably in operation in your life. Depending on who you are, you may be influenced more or less by these voices. A young man may claim that the voice of God spoke to him, directing him to marry a beautiful young lady in the church. He may approach the young woman and tell her, "God spoke to me last night." Is this young man telling the truth? Did he really hear the voice of God?

Let me make an important point here. There are at least twelve different voices that this young man could have heard. He could have heard the voice of circumstances leading him to marry this young lady or he could have heard the voice of his flesh, desirous of the opposite sex. He could also have genuinely heard the voice of God. None of these voices is without significance. What is important is to know which voice is leading you.

I always remember the story of a thirsty donkey that went on a long journey through the desert. At the end of his tedious journey, the donkey was tired, hungry and thirsty. As it trudged along, it noticed two stacks of hay at different ends of the field. The donkey thought to himself, "There is food for me!" Then he realized that the two different haystacks were at opposite ends of an extremely large field. The donkey, being a "Christian", decided to seek the will of God concerning which of the haystacks he should approach.

The donkey decided to pray. As the donkey was bowing his head to pray, he noticed a bucket of water positioned by the haystack on the right. The donkey then prayed a simple but powerful prayer and said, "O God, I want to know your will concerning which direction to go. Should I go to the haystack

on the right or to the one on the left?" After praying, the donkey gathered himself together and began to walk towards one of the haystacks.

Which of the stacks of hay do you think the donkey went to? The stack on the right or that on the left? Well, when the donkey was asked he said, "God has directed me to the one on the right."

Everyone can predict that the donkey would say that God had directed him to the haystack on the right. However, you and I both know that it was probably the bucket of water that attracted the donkey to the haystack on the right. It is time to be honest! It is time to tell the truth! Is it really the Spirit of God who is leading us or is it the voice of our flesh and of circumstances?

Anytime someone claims to have been directed by the "Spirit of God", you should remember that there are over twelve different possibilities that exist. The voice he claims to be hearing is one out of twelve or more different voices. Is it the voice of his friends? Is it the voice of his wife? Is it the voice of circumstances? What is actually leading this person?

I learnt of a man who became close to three Christian sisters at the same time. This man happened to be in Bible school at the same time with these three ladies who were his age. They attended classes together, they prayed together and they even went to church together. As time passed, they became a very closely knit family. There was a real flow of Christian love and friendship among them. This Christian brother was a very caring young man. He was also handsome and was obviously a promising minister. He was good at the ministry of counselling and seemed to be a patient listener to people's problems.

At the end of the course, something interesting happened! It was graduation time and each of the three Christian sisters approached this compassionate brother with a "message" from the Lord. Each one of them said (unknown to the others), "God has spoken to me about you that we should spend the rest of our lives and ministries together." In other words, God had supposedly spoken to each of these women to marry the brother. The brother was so surprised. He told them, "I appreciate your sharing this with me, but God hasn't spoken to me about this."

He did not marry any of these three girls. He ended up marrying somebody else. I find this true story very interesting. It illustrates the point I am trying to make. Each of these three ladies claimed to have heard the voice of God. But as I said, there are several possibilities to each claim. How could God tell three different people, at the same time, to marry one man?

Does His Word not tell us that God wants one man to marry only one woman? They were obviously hearing the voice of their own flesh. It could be the voice of their minds. They claimed that the voice of their flesh was the voice of God. These three ladies embarrassed themselves. You can save yourself from embarrassment when you learn to distinguish between the voice of the Spirit and other

voices. I will share some things about these different voices and how you can distinguish between them.

The Voice of the Mind and the Voice of the Flesh 31

FOUR THINGS ABOUT THE VOICE OF THE MIND

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole SPIRIT and SOUL and BODY be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

(1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Man consists of a spirit, a soul and a body. That is quite clear from the verse above. Each of these components of the human being has a voice. Your thought processes and your reasoning are the voice of your mind. God never intended for us to do away with our minds. Many people stop reasoning and thinking when they become Christians. There is a funny notion that it is wrong to reason or understand things once you are in the kingdom of God. There is a feeling that if you are a spiritual person it is not right to reason things out. This has led to many disasters in this life.

1. THE MIND IS A GREAT ASSET FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN AND EVERY MINISTER.

I believe that the mind is one of the most wonderful gifts that God has given to every man. The mind is one of the most complex computers in the world today. It is a gift that you are expected to use. Even when you are born again, you are expected to use your mind. When you are a spiritual leader, you are expected to use your mind!

When you want to decide whether to marry someone or not, you must first use your mind. You must ask yourself, "What is the background of this person? How old is he or she? What is the educational background of the person? What is the family background of the person? What language does he or she speak?"

i. The difference between men and animals

When I have to take decisions in the ministry, I do not just pray about them. I think about them! I analyse things! God gave me a mind and I intend to use it on a daily basis. What is the difference between a human being and an animal? The human being has a more developed brain. This gives him a mind with a great thinking capability. It is the use of the mind, which has made human beings rule and dominate all animals.

We human beings have control over animals that are wild and dangerous. We control poisonous and deadly reptiles by the use of a superior mind. We capture animals like elephants and whales that are a hundred times the size of a man. We keep them in cages and observe them at our pleasure. What gives us this power? It is the use of a superior mind.

ii. The difference between men and men

Even amongst human beings, those that have encouraged the use of the mind have ended up ruling those that have not used their minds much. The educated (developed minds) are ruling the uneducated.

Go into almost every institution and you will find that the educated are higher placed than the uneducated. They have higher salaries and are better looked after.

In a very sophisticated world, the inventors of cars and airplanes are dominating millions of people who have not used their minds to create such things. The inventors and manufacturers of televisions, videos and telephones have more money than those who just buy and use them. Through the world's complex financial system, many people who are officially free from slavery are still experiencing a sophisticated form of financial and mental slavery! Those who know how to convert cocoa beans into chocolate and other niceties have more "say so" than those who just know how to harvest cocoa on a farm.

It takes more use of the mind to develop machines and complicated equipment that are used to convert raw materials into final products. Simply speaking, the world is divided into two: those who have used their God-given gift of a super mind and those who have not!

2. DO NOT SEND YOUR MIND ON VACATION BECAUSE YOU HAVE BECOME A SPIRITUAL PERSON.

Do a survey of some churches. Those who have emphasized on spiritual and emotional things, to the absolute exclusion of rational thinking, have ended up on the rocks. God does not expect you to exclude your mind because you are a spiritual person. I consider myself to be a very spiritual person. I spend numerous hours a week in prayer. I believe that the Bible is my final authority on all matters of doctrine. This however, has not made me to stop reasoning and rationalizing things.

When you stop using your mind, even in the spiritual world, you lower yourself from the rank that God intends for you. Someone wanted to know the will of God about marriage. I said to him, "Do you know the Kaneshie-Mallam Highway (a very wide and dangerous highway in the city of Accra in my country, Ghana)?" He said, "Yes, I do." I asked him, "If you wanted to cross that road what would you do?" He began to answer but I stopped him.

I said to him, "I know what you would do! You would close your eyes and ask the Lord to speak to you and tell you the exact moment to cross." He smiled. I continued, "Wouldn't you do that?" "I don't think so," he responded. I went on, "If you were to do something like that you are likely to be killed immediately. The highest form of manifested stupidity is to shut off your mind when you are taking important decisions."

I said to him, "God is not the author of foolishness. He does not expect you to close your eyes and listen to the voice of the Spirit telling you when to cross. He gave you eyes to see and a mind with which to make sound judgements. It is like having money in your pocket that God has given you to solve your problems. Yet, you cry to Him and ask Him for money. Meanwhile, you have some money in your pocket."

What is God saying to you? God is saying that it is time to think again. It is time to be educated. It is time to reason. If you are a pastor, do not take all the decisions on your own. When it comes to finances, think and use the minds of trained accountants. When it comes to legal matters, believe and accept the minds of trained lawyers. When it comes to church growth, read and learn everything you can.

3. A COMBINATION OF THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT AND THE VOICE OF THE MIND WILL LEAD TO YOUR PROMOTION IN LIFE AND MINISTRY.

The Holy Spirit is not the author of foolishness and absurdities. Please stop claiming that the Spirit is telling you things when that is not the case! There are many things that I do not pray about; I simply think about them. The Bible says that Christ is to us not only power but also wisdom.

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God

(1 Corinthians 1:24)

Jesus Christ in our lives makes us wise and not foolish. If you want to be promoted in this life, get wisdom. Wisdom has to do with the mind. The Bible says that wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore, with all your getting, get wisdom.

Exalt her [wisdom], and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her

(Proverbs 4:8)

Your promotion and honour are on the way when you start applying yourself to God's wisdom. Never forget that it was wisdom that brought Joseph out of jail and into the king's palace. Wisdom brought Daniel into the rank of prime minister and vice-president in three successive governments. It was wisdom and the use of his mind that made Solomon the richest man on earth. Wisdom is the intelligent use of your thinking capabilities. Wisdom is the ability to take right decisions based on the information available to you. Wisdom is the ability not to ignore realities when they are before you.

4. TOO MUCH REASONING CAN TURN YOU INTO A FOOL.

There is, however, one danger with the voice of the mind-the danger of reasoning until you become foolish again. Knowledge and thinking without God will make you into a fool. The expositors of the evolution theory reasoned their way through a maze of obvious scientific realities involving the evolution of created beings.

They saw some things and propounded some theories. However, when they got to a point where they had to question themselves about the origin of all created beings, they began to guess and made fools

out of themselves. It is the mother of all absurdities for someone to say that this intricate, fantastic and perfect creation of God came about through an explosion (The Big Bang Theory).

In the medical school, I dissected the body of a dead human being for one and a half years. I discovered for myself how extraordinary and awesome God's creation is. This is why the Bible says it is only a fool who says that there is no God. No one can tell me that an explosion that occurred in Germany created a Mercedes- Benz car. That is foolishness!

Even though you must develop your mind, God's Word and His Spirit are superior to every reasoning of man. You must allow the wisdom of God to supersede the wisdom of man.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

(1 Corinthians 1:20)

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men

(1 Corinthians 1:25

There are times when God will direct you and it will not look wise in the natural. When I left my noble medical profession for the Ministry, many people thought I had gone mad. My parents were distressed and my relatives were worried. They could not see the sense in what I was doing. They asked "Why should someone leave such a promising career for an apparently fruitless and uncertain adventure?" But I knew that God had called me and at such times natural reasoning had to give way to the voice of God.

The problem with this is that many Christians are simply not using their minds at all. They continue claiming that every quixotic adventure they embark on is directed by the supernatural voice of God. It is time to let the voice of your mind have its proper place.

FIVE FACTS ABOUT THE VOICE OF THE FLESH

1. The voice of your flesh is your human desire.
2. The voice of your flesh is your physical feelings.
3. The voice of the flesh says, "Do what feels nice and easy."
4. Do not obey the voice of the flesh if you want to be blessed.
5. You can silence the voice of the flesh by doing what is hard and difficult.

The voice of your flesh is the expression of your desires and feelings. Whenever you have certain feelings and desires, the flesh is speaking. The flesh is a very dangerous thing to follow. If you follow your desires for food, rest and sex, you will end up as a spiritual disaster.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace

(Romans 8:6).

A spiritual person is someone who grows to the point where he is able to realize when his flesh is speaking or influencing him. Jesus said, “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41) The flesh always wants to do the wrong thing. It constantly influences you along the course of least resistance. I have realized that if I do the things that are hard and difficult, I get to be promoted. Whereas, if I do the things which are nice and easy, I do not progress. The flesh wants you to sleep. It is your flesh that will say to you, “Do not go to that all-night prayer meeting.” Many young men should know that it is actually the desire of the flesh that motivates them towards marriage and relationships. Often, young men are not led by the Spirit into marriage but by their flesh!

A SPECIAL MINISTRY TO LADIES

Some years ago, as a student in Achimota School (a secondary school in Ghana), I noticed a young man who called himself a minister. He would come to the school to visit us and to minister the Word. After a while, I observed that this man hardly ever visited the brothers in the boarding school. He could always be found chatting with the ladies and "ministering" to them. One day I asked him, "How come you hardly come to see the brothers anymore?" I added, "You spend all your time at the girls' dormitory." "Oh," he answered, "I have a special call from God. My ministry is to the sisters."

In other words, God had called him to spend all his time with the ladies. At that time, I accepted it as a valid ministry. However, if you study the Bible, you will not find such a ministry. The Bible says that the older women should teach the younger women, (Titus 2:4). This fellow was probably just following the natural dictates of his flesh.

As a man, he tended to flow more with the sisters. This is a natural phenomenon. It happens all the time. But instead of acknowledging the reality of his flesh and what was natural, he claimed that the Holy Spirit had given him a special ministry to girls.

The Financial Temptation

A young man was sent out by the General Superintendent of his denomination to pioneer a church in the metropolis. This young man was poorly educated and had no steady job. He was however operating as a lay pastor (an unpaid/voluntary minister). He began the church by witnessing and following-up the converts. To his surprise, the church began to grow. The church's growth was aided by the good name of that ministry. He also flowed in the general anointing that was over that denomination.

The church that had begun in the young man's sitting room, soon grew until there were over one hundred members in the church. The money began to roll in and for the first time, the church's bank account had over one million cedis (five hundred dollars at the 1999 exchange rate) After a while, the man who said that the church should meet in his house free of charge came up with an outrageous sum, as rent owed him. This pastor had obviously seen the financial capacity and capability of the church. The church had more money than he thought it would ever have.

The denomination's administrators however, refused to pay that huge sum of money. They offered to pay a smaller sum of money. The rent issue then died a natural death. However, a couple of months later the pastor suddenly requested an audience with the General Superintendent of the church. “What can we do for you?” the Superintendent asked.”The Lord has spoken to me. He has asked me to resign from this ministry and to begin my own church,” the pastor revealed. The surprised Superintendent queried, “What do you mean? It's nothing personal. God has called me. He said I should start my own ministry.”

“I see,” said the Superintendent, “Are you sure there is no other reason?” “No! The Spirit of God has spoken and I have to obey!” The administrators of the church questioned this pastor, “Is it not because you want control over the church's money? Are you not taking this decision for financial reasons?” The pastor was not pleased, “Are you doubting my call? Do you doubt that God has spoken to me?

This pastor eventually took over the church, changed its name and stole the entire congregation. The denomination decided to start another church nearby for those of its members who wanted to remain loyal to the denomination. A week after this pastor had stolen the congregation, it came to light that he had been siphoning money from the church offerings. Instead of following the clearly laid down rules of his denomination (to bank all monies immediately), he would take some money out and use it. In other words, he was making wrong declarations of the church's offerings.

This is an example of someone who claimed that he had heard the voice of God. Although no one can really judge, it is quite obvious that there were many financial considerations in this young pastor's

decision to break away from his denomination. The voice of the flesh crying out for more money was being heard loud and clear. Learn to distinguish the voice of the flesh from other voices.

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification

(1 Corinthians 14:10)

The Voice of the Holy Spirit 32

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The voice of the Holy Spirit is the most important voice that we need to hear in these times. Jesus said that He would send us the Holy Spirit to guide us. The Holy Spirit speaks the mind of God.

For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come

(John 16:13).

1. THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSMITS GOD'S CURRENT PLAN FOR YOU.

One of the cardinal duties of the Holy Spirit is to transmit God's mind to you. He will not speak of Himself. Whatever He hears God say, He will relay it to you. From today, there is no need to consult the astrologers or the stars. The Holy Spirit will show you things to come. God will tell you what to expect.

If He does not tell you anything, then there is nothing unusual to expect. The Holy Spirit is on duty twenty-four hours a day; He speaks all the time. It is our duty therefore to learn about His voice and how to distinguish it from other voices.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT MAY CHOOSE TO SPEAK TO YOUR SPIRIT, SOUL OR BODY.

The Holy Spirit has a voice. However, the Bible teaches that He speaks directly to your spirit, soul or body. When the Holy Spirit speaks to your mind, it will sound a little different from when He speaks to your physical body. I have experienced the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to me in all three ways.

He speaks to us in all three ways and it is important for us to receive from the Holy Spirit in whichever way He chooses to speak to us. When the Holy Spirit speaks to your spirit, you do not hear an audible voice. This is what people call “the inner witness”

3. THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO YOUR SPIRIT IS CALLED THE INNER WITNESS.

The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is in our hearts (spirit) crying "Abba Father", which is the cry of a child to his real father. By the voice of the Holy Spirit in your heart, you know that you are a real child of God.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth THE SPIRIT of his Son into your hearts, CRYING, Abba, Father

(Galatians 4:6).

This verse says that the Holy Spirit is crying or shouting in your heart. But have you ever heard an audible voice saying "Abba Father"? Have you ever had an audible voice flashing through your mind saying "Abba Father?" The answer is no! What is the effect of the Holy Spirit crying "Abba Father" in our heart? It creates a silent assurance of your salvation. You know that you are a Christian and you know that you are going to Heaven.

The voice of the Holy Spirit to your spirit creates what I call a quiet assurance. It creates a relaxed knowing about something. Apostle Paul described this as perceiving or a knowing. You may ask,

"Pastor, how do you know these things?" I know it from the Bible. Let us read it together.

Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, And said unto them, Sirs, I PERCEIVE that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul

(Acts 27:9- 11).

Apostle Paul declared to the Centurion and other experienced sailors that he perceived that there were going to be serious problems during the journey. Paul did not say that he had heard the Spirit of God telling him not to travel. He just had a knowing and a perception. How did he know this? How did he perceive this? Was it a natural perception or a spiritual perception? It was definitely not a natural perception because in the natural there was no sign of danger. The wind was blowing very softly, which was a good sign.

And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete

(Acts 27:13).

As you can see, the south wind was blowing softly. There was no indication of trouble. Paul had what many Christians have when the Holy Spirit speaks to their spirit - a perception and a knowing. As if to distinguish between the different ways in which the Holy Spirit speaks, the Lord spoke to Paul in a different way on this same journey. The bad things he had perceived had happened and the people on the ship had given up hope of surviving. However, God spoke to Paul in an unusual or spectacular way.

But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For THERE STOOD BY ME THIS NIGHT THE ANGEL OF GOD, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me

(Acts 27:21-25).

You can see from this passage that the Holy Spirit spoke in two different ways on two different occasions. The first time was by the inner witness and the second time was by an angel. Another Scripture which says the same thing is Romans 8:16.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God

(Romans 8:16).

When the Holy Spirit speaks to your spirit, you do not have thoughts flashing through your mind. The Spirit bearing witness is the same as the Spirit speaking or witnessing to your heart that you are a child of God. This is the commonest way that you will detect the voice of the Spirit. When you want to take a decision, watch out for that quiet assurance in your heart! If you want to marry somebody, watch out for that relaxed knowing that “this is it!”

If you need to change your job or enter a partnership, check up on whether you have that quiet assurance of peace in your heart.

SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INNER WITNESS

The Spirit itself BEARETH WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT, that we are the children of God

(Romans 8:16).

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth THE SPIRIT of his Son into your hearts, CRYING, Abba, Father

(Galatians 4:6).

The question is, “How can I distinguish the voice of this inner witness? Are there any features that I must look out for? What differentiates the inner witness from an ordinary thought?” I want to give you seven characteristics that you must look out for.

1. THE INNER WITNESS IS DIFFERENT FROM REASONING THOUGHTS.

It is not mental knowledge or logical reasoning. If what you are having is just an ingenious idea, then it's probably not the inner witness

2. THE INNER WITNESS IS NOT A PHYSICAL FEELING.

Because the inner witness is the voice of the Holy Spirit to your spirit, you will not have a physical feeling per se. If someone claims that he has a physical feeling in his big toe or his liver, that is probably not the inner witness!

3. THE INNER WITNESS IS BEST IDENTIFIED BY ELIMINATING OTHER VOICES.

A great secret to identifying the inner witness is to eliminate other voices. Ensure that it is not your flesh that wants to do something. Make sure that it is not just a reasonable proposition. There may be some good reason and some good feelings when the Spirit is leading you, but make sure it is not just that!

4. THE INNER WITNESS IS AN IMPRESSION OF PEACE.

The inner witness is an awareness of peace. It is the peace of God that is beyond (passes) understanding, reasoning, logic and physical things. As you develop spiritually you will become aware of the peace of God as a method of direction. You will say, “I don't have peace about this!” At other times you will say, “Even though it sounds odd, I have peace about this issue. I know it shall be well with me.”

5. THE INNER WITNESS IS A STRONG CONVICTION.

The inner witness makes you certain about what the Lord is saying. You begin to have a quiet assurance and confidence about the will of God. Once again, this is not easily explained. Do you think people who give up their lives for the Gospel can explain what they are doing? You cannot easily explain the faith you have! You cannot always explain the convictions you have!

6. THE INNER WITNESS IS REPETITIVE.

The inner witness is the repeated voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart.

….the Spirit…crying

(Galatians 4:6).

As the Spirit cries continually, it creates an impression in you. You begin to have a conviction about certain things. You begin to know that you know. One characteristic that I have noticed is that the voice of the Spirit is repeated over and over. This happens over several weeks, months and even years.

7. THE INNER WITNESS IS AN INEXPLICABLE KNOWING.

After you have heard the voice of the Spirit several times, you begin to know what to do. It creates in you "a knowing". Sometimes people ask me, "How did you know what to do?" Sometimes all I can say is, "I just knew."

HOW TO USE "PEACE THE UMPIRE" FOR DAILY GUIDANCE

Paul described the phenomenon of the inner witness in a peculiar way. He called the peace of God "an umpire". In other words, we have a special referee in our lives who guides us.

And let the PEACE of God RULE in your hearts

(Colossians 3:15).

The peace of God in our hearts is supposed to rule or guide us.

1. THE PEACE OF GOD IN OUR HEARTS IS GENERATED BY THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKING TO OUR HEARTS.

When you don't have that peace, please be careful of danger. The Greek word translated "rule" is the word brabeuo. It means "to be an umpire", "to arbitrate", "to direct" and "to govern". God is using peace to direct and govern you. I say to you, "If you don't have peace, don't go! If you don't have peace about him, don't marry him!"

Peace is the umpire you have! When the umpire blows the whistle, you are supposed to stop. It is the umpire who tells you to "play on". He signals to you when something is wrong.

2. IF YOU LEARN TO FOLLOW THIS PEACE IN YOUR HEART, YOU WILL EXPERIENCE SUCCESS IN ALL DECISIONS THAT YOU TAKE.

A friend of mine left church one evening and stopped a taxi on a motorway. He told me later of a terrible experience he had. He said, "I remember that as I was getting into the car I felt very uneasy. I had no peace." You see, peace the umpire was blowing the whistle and telling him, "No! Don't go!" He narrated, There was one person in addition to the driver. I was sitting on the back seat. In the middle of the journey the driver began to drive very slowly. He turned off his lights and began to sing a hymn, "Lead kindly light."(a song that is often sang at funerals).

The driver revealed himself to be a wizard who was operating from a town near the capital, Accra. As they drove along, the driver and the man in front said to my friend, "We are taking you somewhere." He was terrified. They turned off the motorway onto a dusty road and drove into a cemetery. When they arrived at the cemetery they told him, "Get out of the car. You are going to die." My friend said to me, "I knew that this was my last hour." They said that they were going to sacrifice me and use parts of my body for rituals.

He continued, "Just before they were about to sacrifice me, I prayed, knowing that these were my last minutes on earth." The driver of the car then said, "If you will join our witchcraft group, I will not kill you." My friend told me, "I agreed to join for the sake of my life." Thinking that they had got a

convert they went back to the car and drove to the next town. My friend told me, “They dropped me off at the nearest junction in the town centre. When I got out of the car I told the man, “If you think I would ever join such an evil group, you must be out of your mind. The power of Jesus is greater than any power.

And with that he ran off into the nearby crowd. The driver could not pursue him because there were too many people around. God had saved my friend from certain death at the hands of ritual murderers. But God had tried to direct him through the umpire called peace. The uneasiness my friend had felt when he was getting into the car was a warning from God not to proceed.

3. IN THE MINISTRY, YOU NEED TO HAVE PEACE ABOUT MANY THINGS THAT YOU ENGAGE IN.

Sometimes there is no reason for peace. Sometimes you don't know why you are at peace. The Bible calls it “the peace that passes all understanding”.

. DIFFERENTIATING THE WAYS THE SPIRIT SPEAKS

The Voice of the Holy Spirit to Your Soul (Mind)
The Holy Spirit also speaks to our minds and directs us. What is it like when the Holy Spirit speaks to your mind? Anything that enters your mind is a thought.

1. The Holy Spirit Speaks To Your Mind By Bringing Thoughts To It.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance [mind], whatsoever I have said unto you

(John 14:26).

This verse states clearly that the Holy Spirit will bring things to your mind. You must learn to distinguish between thoughts that come from your natural thought processes and thoughts that come from the Holy Spirit. There are also thoughts and suggestions that come from Satan. Someone asked, “How do you know the voice of the Holy Spirit?” That is like asking, “How do I know the voice of my wife? Or for that matter anyone else?” By experience!

The more I hear certain voices, the more easily I can identify them. Certain people call me on the telephone and do not need to introduce themselves. I know who they are when they begin to speak. When you become conversant with the voice of the Holy Spirit to your spirit, soul or body, you will know when He speaks. I have many thoughts passing through my mind all the time. Just like everyone else, I have to filter these and decide which ones are natural and which ones are supernatural.

HOW I HEARD THE VOICE IN MY MIND

Some years ago, I was dealing with a rebellious individual in my church. I felt strongly that this pastor was a rebel and that he was a liar. However, he had denied it on so many occasions that I doubted within myself whether this was the case. One day, while on a trip to Europe, the Holy Spirit spoke to my mind. I was lying down in bed when the Spirit of God spoke clearly into my mind. He said, "So-and-so is a liar and I will show you five different lies he has told you at different times."

Suddenly and in rapid succession, the Holy Spirit gave me five clear instances when this pastor had lied to me. They came so fast that I struggled to remember them afterwards. Then the Holy Spirit said, "Because of these, know that he is lying to you about this current problem." That was the turning point in my relationship with that particular minister. I suddenly knew that I was dealing with a prevaricator who by evasive and misleading answers had been able to live a lie.

God showed me that day that I had to deal with this rebellious and contumacious young man. And I did just that! If you are a pastor, you will need the Spirit of God to lead you especially in relation to those who work with you. The spirit of Judas is the spirit of the perfect pretender. Sometimes you will never know of the deadly poison around you unless God reveals it to you supernaturally. I have found that the Spirit of God does these unusual things when there is no way for me to know certain things naturally! It is not the principal way that God speaks to you, but it is certainly an important method. God speaks to your mind when He has to. The Bible makes it clear.

He will] bring all things to your remembrance [mind], whatsoever I have said unto you

(John 14:26).

Many times when men of God say that God has spoken to them, they mean that certain thoughts came to their mind which they believe are from the Holy Spirit. From today, have faith in the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to your mind. The Spirit of God says things to your mind.(remembrance). When He speaks to your mind, you have distinctive, special and unique thoughts. It comes in a way that is unusual. It is learnt through experience and operated by faith.

2. THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO YOUR BODY

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks

(Acts 9:3-5).

You must also learn the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to your physical being. In this case, you will hear an audible voice speaking to you. The Bible is full of such examples, however, do not make the mistake of thinking that it was an everyday occurrence with the Apostles. Paul probably heard the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to him in this way only once or twice in his lifetime. There is no need to seek these spectacular experiences. The devil knows when you have an appetite for sensational things. He is an expert at filling you with deception when he knows that you are vulnerable.

I have walked with the Lord for over twenty years. Once in my life, I believe I heard the audible voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to me. But that is not the principal way by which the Holy Spirit leads me. I believe I am called to the ministry. The proof of my call is in the fact that you are reading this book now! However, the Holy Spirit did not speak to me audibly to call me into the ministry. I have the quiet assurance of the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to my heart. I know that I must be in the ministry. I know that I must not do anything else with my life. I must preach until I die. Like Paul said, “Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.”

God does not need to give you a dramatic experience before you start obeying Him. At different stages of my ministry, the Spirit has spoken to me in different ways. As far back as 1980, in Achimota Secondary School, I can remember the Spirit of God speaking to my spirit and giving me that inner knowing and peace about doing His work. Because of this, I have the conviction to serve God in the ministry as a pastor. It is this relaxed assurance that has put me in the ministry.

In 1988, in a remote village hospital of Ghana, the Spirit of God spoke to me audibly and showed me the direction to take in the ministry. In June 1996, in a small French village, the Spirit spoke to my mind and told me to start operating in certain areas of the ministry. At each stage of my life the Holy Spirit has spoken to me in whatever way He found appropriate. He will also speak to you and you will get to know His voice as you walk with Him

REASONS FOR SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE

We now come to more spectacular forms of guidance by the Holy Spirit. These include things like dreams, visions, trances, the appearance of angels and even the appearance of Jesus. We must ask ourselves why God chooses different methods each time. God is sovereign; He can decide to do whatever He wants. I am not attempting to give a formula for how God speaks. I am just showing some patterns I have found in the Word of God. I would like to share with you four reasons why God may choose to speak to you in a spectacular way.

1. God may speak in a spectacular way because it involves something very important for your life and ministry.
2. God may speak in a spectacular way because all other methods to reach you have not worked.
3. God may speak in a spectacular way because He sometimes shows mercy to stubborn people.
4. God may speak in a spectacular way because it involves something very important for His church.

INSTANCES OF SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE

1. SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE FOR SALVATION

The Apostle Paul is an example of someone who experienced spectacular guidance. By the way, the fact that the guidance may not be spectacular does not mean it's not supernatural. Paul's salvation was not a typical case of conversion. I believe there are three reasons why God spoke to Paul in a spectacular way.

a. Paul was destroying the church.

“Who was before…injurious”

(1 Timothy 1:13).

b. God wanted to show mercy to a stubborn person.

“Who was before a blasphemer”

(1 Timothy 1:13).

c. God wanted to save Paul's life because no one can destroy the church and get away with it.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks

(Acts 9:5).

2. SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE FOR JOINING THE RIGHT CHURCH (COMPANY)

Shortly after Paul's dramatic conversion, the Lord used another spectacular method to lead Paul into the right church so that he could have the right training for the ministry. Paul was a proud lawyer who might have thought that a few humble Jews could not teach him much.

“For one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight”.

(Acts 9:11,12).

The visions surrounding Paul's direction to join the main church were so dramatic that Paul couldn't help but listen to the counsel of older and more experienced Christians. I believe that God did this because it involved the future ministry to the entire “Gentile” world.

3. SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE FOR WHERE TO START A CHURCH

One day Paul made plans to travel to Bithynia. He wanted to start a ministry there, but the Spirit of God had other plans. That night the Spirit of God spoke to Paul in a vision. He saw a man standing in

Macedonia and saying, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” Once again, this was very important for the building of the church.

4. SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE FOR SURVIVAL

Further on in Paul's ministry a situation arose which threatened his very life. He was about to die in a shipwreck (plane crash). An angel suddenly appeared and told him what to do.

But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me

(Acts 27:21-25).

Because of the angelic visitation, Paul directed everyone to eat some food. This saved their lives and enabled them to survive until they ran aground. As you can see, one or more of the four reasons given above is always present when God speaks in a spectacular way.

5. SPECTACULAR GUIDANCE TO HELP YOU ENDURE A DIFFICULT SEASON

Paul was going to go through a very difficult period as a prisoner. He was about to be arrested and kept in prison cells until he died. This was an important part of Paul's ministry because it was there that he wrote many of his letters. It is by these letters that Paul's ministry has lived on for two thousand years.

And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles

(Acts 21:10,11).

IDENTIFYING A DOOR FOR MINISTRY

Behold, I have set before thee an open door

(Revelation 3:8).

1. An open door is a God-given opportunity in the midst of impossibilities.
2. An open door is a chance to escape or to achieve something for the Lord.
3. An open door is an opening in the midst of impassable circumstances.
4. An open door is a time-related breakthrough that gives you a needed option.

THREE WAYS TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR FOR MINISTRY

1. THE FIRST WAY TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR IS TO RECOGNIZE AN OPPORTUNITY THAT COMES IN THE MIDST OF OTHER UNWORKABLE OPTIONS.

In the natural, a door is flanked on the left and right by impenetrable walls. This reveals impossible or impenetrable circumstances all around except in the position where the door is.

I will tarry at Ephesus… For A GREAT DOOR and effectual is opened

(1 Corinthians 16:8,9).

Paul decided to remain at Ephesus because of the opportunities to minister over there. All around him were hostile cities that were not open to the Gospel. When you are flanked by impossibilities and one niche opens up, it is often God opening a door for you.

2. THE SECOND WAY TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR IS TO DISCERN THAT IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT WILL NOT ALWAYS BE THERE.

In the natural, a door does not have a fixed position. It is either open or closed. Any opportunity that appears for a season and disappears again must be considered as a door.

I will tarry at Ephesus…For A GREAT DOOR and effectual is OPENED

(1 Corinthians 16:8,9).

Even though there was an opportunity for ministry at Ephesus, that opportunity would not be there forever. Today, there is very little opportunity for ministry in Ephesus. The door is shut in many parts of Europe. However, the door is now open in many parts of Africa and the developing world. These doors will not remain open forever. Instability and war may close them one day. It is our duty to go through the doors when they swing open. When the “Iron Curtain” came down, there was a sudden open door for the Gospel in Eastern Europe. This door is gradually closing again.

3. THE THIRD WAY TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR IS TO REALIZE THAT GOD ENGINEERED THE OPPORTUNITY AND THAT IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR EFFORTS.

In the natural, you do not often construct the doors you meet. Everyone just passes through the doors that are open. An open door is not of your own making, it is just something that you benefit from.

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how HE HAD OPENED THE DOOR of faith unto the Gentiles

(Acts 14:27).

When Paul and Barnabas gave the report of their first missionary journey, everyone was overjoyed at what the Lord had done. They came to one conclusion: God had opened a door to the Gentiles! They knew that only God could do it! That is how to recognize a door. recognize that it is only God who could have made that opportunity possible.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR OF SERVICE

There are some important doors that every Christian must recognize and pass through. God often uses doors to direct His children.

But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries

(1 Corinthians 16:8,9).

The door of service is the opportunity to be effective for the Lord. The door of service is the opportunity to serve the Lord. We cannot effectively win souls for Jesus all the time. A time comes when it is not possible anymore. Sometimes marriage, pregnancy and childbearing close the door of service. If you grasp the opportunity whilst it is there, you will experience many blessings. When you follow the door of service, you gain two important qualifications. These are:

1. YOU GRADUATE FROM BEING A NOVICE.

God does not put inexperienced people into the ministry. You need experience to be effective as a minister. What have you been through? What have you survived? What have you suffered?

Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil

(Timothy 3:6).

2. YOU PROVE YOURSELF SO THAT YOU CAN BE PUT INTO AN OFFICE.

There are four levels in the line of God's service.

Level one - doing the work ……do the work of an evangelist

(2 Timothy 4:5)

Level two - having a gift. ……Having then gifts differing

(Romans 12:6)

Level three - having a ministry. ……....make full proof of thy ministry

(2 Timothy 4:5)

Level four - occupying an office……...I magnify mine office

(Romans 11:13)

Take the evangelistic line of ministry. You could do the work of an evangelist, but that does not mean that you are in the office of an evangelist. Like Timothy, you may be temporarily getting involved in the work of evangelism. At the next level, you could have a gift of evangelism. That does not mean that you are in the ministry of an evangelist, but with an additional step, you could progress into the ministry of an evangelist.

At this point, it has become your permanent line of service. At the highest level, you could actually be in the office of an evangelist. When you occupy an office, you are at the highest level in that line of ministry. When you are at the office level, you need to employ people to assist you. When there are several people helping and serving under you in your line of ministry, it is often a sign that you are occupying a spiritual office.

And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless

(1 Timothy 3:10).

The door of service will show that you are faithful in little things. Then you can be trusted with greater things.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much

(Luke 16:10).

As you follow the doors of service, you will often find yourself doing menial jobs in the ministry. You may be in the background. You may not be seen or praised for what you do, but do not be worried, your reward is guaranteed. The reward for those who went and those who stayed behind is the same. This is a law that was established by King David.

But as his part is that GOETH down to the battle, so shall his part be that TARRIETH by the stuff: THEY SHALL PART ALIKE

(1 Samuel 30:24).

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR OF UTTERANCE

Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ

(Colossians 4:3).

The Door Of Utterance

1. A door of utterance is an opportunity to preach or teach.

2. Every opportunity to share the Word must be seized. It is a God-given chance to minister.

3. Any time you share the Word you become more mature Did you know that the preacher is the one who is most affected by the sermon? The more you preach, the better you become at ministry. A door of utterance is a door of excellence for you.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A DOOR OF FAITH

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles

(Acts 14:27).

The Door of Faith

1. A door of faith is the opportunity for salvation for someone.

2. As you relate with people you must discern whether a door of faith is being opened. In Europe for instance, the door of faith (salvation) is shut. This does not mean that people cannot be saved in Europe. But the opportunity for salvation is much greater in some other places.

3. Sometimes someone goes through a personal crisis and becomes more open to the message of Christ. A door of faith is being opened unto that person. Seize the opportunity and minister the Gospel to him.

USING DREAMS FOR DIRECTION 34

LEARNING TO INTERPRET DREAMS

The problem with dreams is that there are four different types of dreams and that can confuse us. Sometimes, because of multiple meaningless dreams, many mature Christians tend to totally ignore the importance of dreams. The four types of dreams are:

a. Dreams from the Holy Spirit

b. Dreams from your daily activities

c. Dreams from the flesh

d. Dreams from the devil

1. DREAMS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

All of us have had dreams from the time that we were very young. Dreams are so common that many Christians have grown up not respecting dreams as a valid method by which God leads us. We seem to think that after all, we had all kinds of dreams as children and also as unbelievers, and we wonder how God can lead us through dreams. Surprisingly, God's Word teaches us that the coming of the Holy Spirit will bring dreams into our lives.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams

(Acts 2:17).

You can see from this Scripture that dreams come as a direct result of the presence of the Holy Spirit. From today, do not take dreams lightly! This however, does not discount the fact that dreams can come from sources other than the Holy Spirit. We will examine this also, but what must be established in your heart is the reality that many dreams are the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit. In the book of Job, God reveals that He speaks in dreams when He cannot get our attention. An unusual dream is always something that gets our attention.

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not

(Job 33:14).

There are times when God may speak to us, but we don't seem to hear. The Bible goes on to say, IN A DREAM, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; THEN HE OPENETH THE EARS OF MEN, and sealeth their instruction

(Job 33:15,16).

Sometimes you wake up in the morning with an unusual dream. It may be that God is trying to get your attention. From today, do not despise dreams. If you consider the birth of Jesus, you will discover how dreams played an important role in the life of Joseph and Mary.

Dreams From The Holy Spirit Associated With The Birth Of Christ

a) It was a dream that led Joseph to marry Mary, in spite of the fact that she was found to be pregnant before they were married.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins

(Matthew 1:20,21).

b) It was through a dream that Joseph was directed to flee into Egypt for the safety of the baby Jesus.

Because Joseph obeyed this dream, Jesus escaped the slaughter of babies that was ordered by Herod.

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him

(Matthew 2:13).

c) When Herod died, God spoke yet again by a dream and asked Joseph to return to the land of Israel.

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life”

(Matthew 2:19,20)

d) Joseph was directed yet again to move away from Judea into Galilee and into a city called Nazareth.

Because of this, Jesus was called a Nazarene.

Being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth

(Matthew 2:22,23).

Joseph had four dreams in all. By following the direction that he received in each dream, the perfect will of God was done. Prophecies were fulfilled and the Scriptures were confirmed because a man obeyed a dream.

Two Important Dreams From The Holy Spirit

The Apostle Paul's Dream

The Apostle Paul was careful to take note of important dreams and visions. He stated that he did not disobey heavenly visions.

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was NOT DISOBEDIENT UNTO THE HEAVENLY VISION

(Acts 26:19).

a. Paul was someone who respected the voice of God that came to him.

b. It is important for you to accept the fact that God does speak to us through dreams.

c. A "vision in the night" is another biblical description for a dream.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them

(Acts 16:9,10).

From this Scripture, notice how Paul became assured of what to do. One of the ways by which the Holy Spirit leads us is through a dream.

Peter's Dream

a. Apostle Peter had an important dream that changed the course of his ministry. Peter was praying on the rooftop while the ladies prepared food downstairs. Whilst praying, he fell into a trance and had a quick dream. In this dream he saw many strange animals and heard a voice saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

"On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven

(Acts 10:9- 16).

b. This trance or short dream that Peter had, was an important instruction from God to the head of His church. God was telling Peter to go and minister to the Gentiles. There are times when, just like Peter, you may fall asleep while you are praying. Always take note of the dreams you have at such times. They may be Spirit-inspired messages from the Lord.

2. DREAMS FROM YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES

These are dreams that emanate from your everyday activities. The Bible teaches us that a dream comes as a result of our activities or businesses.

For a dream cometh through the multitude of business

(Ecclesiastes 5:3).

Maybe you were out the entire day with a certain Christian gentleman. A few days later or perhaps that very evening, you have a dream that you were getting married to him. Although this dream could have come from the Holy Spirit, it is more likely that it came as a result of your interaction with him. Whenever you have a dream, check to see if there is any relationship between your dream and what is going on in your life.

It does not have to be something that has happened in your life that very day. It sometimes takes a few weeks before your business activities give rise to a dream. You must be careful not to say a dream

comes from the Holy Spirit when it has come from your own activities. In addition to this, a dream from God must be taken in context with the other ways in which the Holy Spirit speaks. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you in a dream, ask yourself whether it lines up with the peace of God in your heart (peace the umpire).

3. DREAMS FROM THE FLESH

One of the common dreams that people experience is having sexual intercourse with another person. Many times those who have such dreams interpret it to mean that they are "spiritually married" to somebody else. However, these dreams are often a night-time continuation of fleshly lusts. Often the individual involved has experienced several sexual encounters with people. Such dreams sometimes reveal the state of our minds and hearts.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

(Jude 8).

There is something known as a filthy dream and there are people who are filthy dreamers. These people defile the flesh. In other words, they make it dirty. It is time to stop placing the blame on a "marine spirit" or a curse. It is time to face up to the reality that filthy dreams come from a carnal nature that has been allowed to have its way time and time again. Paul said that he controlled his flesh. Paul had a carnal nature that had a tendency to go out of control. If you allow your mind and your flesh to do anything, it will! The Bible teaches us that there is no good thing in the flesh.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing

(Romans 7:18).

There is no good thing in your fleshly nature. Do not give it an opportunity to go out of bounds.

Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof

(Romans 13:14).

4. DREAMS FROM THE DEVIL

As usual, the devil has a counterfeit for everything that God does. Satan's specialty is to deceive and to trick. God is not the author of confusion. A dream, which brings confusion, is not from God. The Spirit of God is not a spirit of fear. Something that comes to frighten you is not from the Spirit of the Lord. Many people have been snared by the devil through dreams.

Satan will give you a picture of some evil event and tell you that the dream is going to happen. The devil may show you a picture of your coffin and your funeral. Many Christians have been trapped into

disasters, untimely deaths and all manner of wickedness by demonic dreams.

How People Are Trapped By Demonic Dreams

People are trapped into childlessness and barrenness by means of dreams. This is how it happens: Satan shows them a picture of barrenness or a picture of them sleeping with someone else. These dreams have one aim; to frighten you and to instill fear into your heart.

Then thou SCAREST me with dreams, and TERRIFIEST me through visions

(Job 7:14).

You begin to fear that you will not have a child. You begin to fear that things will not work out normally for you. After all, your dreams show you unknown people sleeping with you! When fear has taken a foothold, the real thing can happen! Fear is not a mood or a feeling; it is a demonic spirit.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear

(2 Timothy 1:7).

Remember that Job eventually experienced what he was afraid of. God had blessed him. God had given him houses, lands, prosperity, children and great riches. Yet, he was afraid that something bad could happen to him. Eventually, his fears came to pass.

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me

(Job 3:25).

Be careful of the things that you fear because the things that you fear will happen! That is why Jesus often said, “FEAR NOT! Only believe!”

Many years ago, when I was living with my parents, thieves invaded our home. I happened to wake up in the night at about 3:00 a.m. and I heard some noise downstairs. A gang of thieves had broken into our house and were carrying away everything that they could. I shouted, waking up the entire neighborhood, but the thieves escaped in a get-away car!

Later on, I discovered how the thieves were able to get into the house. They had removed two Louvre blades from the window and helped one of their gang members to enter the house. It must have been a very small individual because the space created was very small. This person who entered the house then opened the main doors and let the rest of the robbers (demons) in.

This is how the devil works. He just needs to get one member of his team into your mind. That one spirit will open the door for many other demons to enter. When fear is allowed to take a foothold in your life, it opens the door to destruction, untimely death, sickness and barrenness. Job said that he was frightened by dreams. God will not send you a spirit of fear. Later on when these frightening

dreams occur people say, “You see, it has happened just as I dreamt.” No! It has happened just as you feared! 5

USING THE WORD OF GOD FOR DIRECTION 35

HOW TO RELATE WITH THE PROPHET

1. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO FEEL THAT THEY MUST BE LED BY A PERSONAL PROPHECY COMING FROM A PROPHET.

I personally know of many Christians who have made major changes in their lives because of something a prophet told them. Is this scriptural? In this section, I want to share with you about what I believe is the proper role of a prophet in the Church. You must know what a prophet is supposed to do, otherwise, you may find your life destroyed by someone claiming to be a prophet.

O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths

(Isaiah 3:12).

Are our lives supposed to be guided by prophets? The answer is NO! As New Testament believers we are supposed to be guided by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God

(Romans 8:14).

The role that the prophets of the Old Testament played was different from that of New Testament prophets. Am I saying that New Testament prophets did not have the power to see visions and receive “words” from the Lord? They certainly did have this power but it operated within a different context. Under the Old Covenant, only the prophet and perhaps the priest had the Holy Spirit working through them. Today, the Holy Spirit is in every believer and is giving us personal guidance on a day-to-day basis. We still need the input of prophets, but we do not need to seek them for daily guidance. We also need to check whatever they say, to see whether it agrees with what the Holy Spirit is telling us.

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge

(1 Corinthians 14:29).

Under the New Testament, the declarations of prophets are supposed to be judged or assessed. How can we judge what the prophet says if we don't have the Holy Spirit or the Word?

2. THE WORD OF GOD PROVIDES A STANDARD BY WHICH PROPHETS CAN BE JUDGED.

For instance, I have noticed how many prophets minister in churches, giving personal prophecies to individuals. I have watched prophets telling members of one particular church that the Lord wants them to move out of that church into the church that he, the prophet, is establishing. There are prophets who have destabilized entire churches with this type of message. I know a church that lost about five hundred members through the ministry of one such prophet. This same visiting prophet gave a prophecy to the associate pastor of the church, telling him that the Lord wanted him to move on.

The next thing we discovered was that this associate pastor had become a resident pastor in the prophet's new church. If I were to judge such an action by the Word of God, I would quote to you from the book of Ephesians. Paul shows us the role of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are to minister to the Body of Christ so that the saints become stable Christians. read it for yourself:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets,…That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about

(Ephesians 4:11,14).

3. IF A TRUE PROPHET COMES TO MINISTER IN YOUR CHURCH, YOU WILL KNOW HIM BY HIS FRUITS.

If the fruit the end result) of his ministry were destabilization and a moving of church members to and fro, I would wonder whether he's a New Testament prophet. Read it for yourself! Prophets are supposed to minister and prevent the to and fro movement of church members. They are supposed to prevent them from being carried about by every new idea.

I would not advise any pastor to welcome a so-called prophet to destabilize the church that he has taken years to build. As a pastor, my duty is to gather sheep. My call is to prevent them from being lost. I want to be able to say to Jesus, “Of all that you have given me, I have lost none.” I believe that I am a good pastor so I will fight for every single sheep that God has assigned to me.

The Reaping Prophet

I remember having a discussion with a certain prophet. This prophet had ministered privately to several prominent church members of mine, telling them that the Lord wanted them to move out of my church. The prophet did not know that I knew about these different destabilizing "prophecies" he had given to my people. In fact, as at the time we were speaking, some of my church members had become members of his church. I asked him, "How is the ministry?" He said, "It's doing well. I have had a few problems but I am surviving."

We got to discuss other things. Then he told me, "You know, I invited a prophet to minister in my church."(Although he was a prophet, he was pastoring a church.) He continued, "This prophet really did me in." "What do you mean?" I asked. "I invited him to minister in my church and he began to prophesy to all my members and directed them to see him privately," he explained.

He lamented, "By the time this prophet had finished the convention, I had lost a large section of my church to him. This prophet gave accurate prophecies, and after the faith of the people was lifted, he told them that God wanted them to leave their church. ' I listened quietly as the prophet/pastor spoke of his experience. "He has met his match," I thought to myself, "Perhaps he has forgotten similar prophecies which he gave to my church members!"

This prophet did not know that he was reaping the destabilization he had sown in other people's churches. You do not need a prophet to tell you which church to attend. You do not need a prophet to tell you whom to marry. You do not need a prophet to tell you to give away your car or your life's savings. You have the Word of God! You have the Holy Spirit and you have your common sense. The Bible tells us that God speaks to us in the New Testament, mainly by His Word and not by His prophets.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son [the Word]

(Hebrews 1:1,2).

Do not allow any so-called prophet to rob you of your possessions.

4. THE ACCURACY OF PROPHECIES CAN BE SO FRIGHTENING THAT YOU WILL FEEL THAT GOD MUST BE SPEAKING.

Sometimes, some prophets have an evil spirit operating through them. They give accurate "words of knowledge" by satanic power and then they rob you of your money. There are also some prophets who operate by a mixture of spirits. They will minister very accurately by the Spirit of God. After

realizing how enchanted you are by the accuracy of the gift, they will move into the flesh and operate by another spirit.

Is it possible for someone to operate with two different spirits at the same time? Of course it is! Samson had the Spirit of God operating in him, whilst at the same time he was operating in a spirit of adultery and fornication. Remember when Jesus asked Peter, "Who do men say that I am?" Peter answered accurately. Jesus immediately confirmed that Peter was moving in the Holy Spirit. There was no way Peter could have known what he knew, except the Spirit of God had revealed it to him. However, in the discussion that followed, Peter began to speak as inspired by Satan and Jesus had to rebuke him saying, "Satan, get thee behind me." Watch Peter under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

(Matthew 16:15-17).

Now watch Peter under the influence of Satan.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: THOU ART AN OFFENSE UNTO ME: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men

(Matthew 16:21-23).

THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP WITH A REAL PROPHET

So what exactly is a prophet supposed to do? How should I relate to someone who calls himself a prophet? Let us study the ministry of Jesus since He was a great prophet. Each office of the Body of Christ: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, has several different ministries under it. A prophet will also have different ministries operating under his office.

1. A MINISTER WHO STANDS IN THE OFFICE OF A PROPHET WILL PRIMARILY FUNCTION IN THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING AND TEACHING.

Beware of so-called prophets who do not preach the Word of God but only give personal prophecies. Don't misunderstand me, I believe in personal prophecies. However, let it be very clear that anything that does not put the Word of God in its proper place is doomed to failure with the passage of time. “In the beginning was the Word..”,” “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly”, “Thy Word is a light unto my path” “The entrance of thy Word giveth light”

Anything without the Word is in darkness and is not of God. All offices of the ministry have a primary function of teaching and preaching. The Word comes first and is of paramount importance in every ministerial office.

2. AFTER PREACHING AND TEACHING THE WORD, A PROPHET MAY OPERATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALING, AND OTHER REVELATION GIFTS.

A prophet may minister revelation gifts like the “word of knowledge” and “word of wisdom”. The prophet may also flow in the ministry of predictive prophecy or exhortative prophecy. From Scripture, you will see that Jesus was a great prophet.

And they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us

(Luke 7:16).

But His principal ministry was to go about preaching and teaching the Word of God.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel

(Matthew 9:35).

Jesus had a healing ministry.

How God anointed Jesus…who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil

(Acts 10:38).

He also operated in the gifts of revelation. Standing in the office of a prophet, He ministered to the woman of Samaria;

For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband

(John 4:18).

The woman of Samaria immediately realized that she had met someone standing in the office of a prophet. Look at her response to Jesus' ministration.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet

(John 4:19).

Jesus also operated in the ministry of predictive prophecy. In the book of Matthew, Chapter 24, He predicted the destruction of Solomon's temple. This happened in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. Speaking of the temple He said,

There shall not be left here one stone upon another

(Matthew 24:2).

Jesus gave extensive predictions concerning the end of the world. We would do well to take note of these prophecies because Jesus was a great prophet.

The Ministry Of A Prophet

It is clear from the above account that a prophet is someone who preaches and teaches. He also ministers healing and operates in the word of knowledge. A prophet also gives predictive and exhortative prophesies. This is a complete prophetic ministry, and as you can see, the Word of God comes first. Look out for real prophets and stay with what is authentic. Look for proven prophets whose foundation is the Word of God. That is how to relate to your prophet.

HOW TO USE THE WORD OF GOD FOR DIRECTION

The Bible contains the written Word of God. It is a reliable source of direction for us all. The Word of God is a silent voice. How can a voice be silent? The silent voices are a group of voices that the Holy Spirit uses to guide us. They are silent in the sense that you do not hear a person speaking audibly. They are however, common ways by which the Holy Spirit leads us all. You see, being led by the Spirit of God is not a very simple thing.

Today, human beings communicate by speech, by touch, by facial expressions, by letters, faxes, telephones, television, e-mail and so on. There are also many methods by which God communicates with His children. One of these is the written Word of God.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God is given to us for direction in our lives. Everything we do must be done according to the Word of God. In a very general way, the Word of God is the perfect guidebook for our lives. The Bible is a unique book that contains instruction on every possible issue that may arise. There are many people who think that the Bible is not a practical and relevant book for today. One lady told me that she believed she could practice fornication because the Bible was out of fashion. Three years later, when her boyfriend of many years ditched her, she realized that the Bible was not so archaic after all.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works

(2 Timothy 3:16,17).

The Scripture is profitable, useful, relevant and practical for every Christian today! There are many Christians who do not want you to open the Bible; they just want a prophecy or a word of knowledge.

1. THE WORD IS A LIGHT.

I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed

(Psalm 132:17).

Use the Word of God as a light for your path. There is so much darkness in the world. We often do not know what to do, but God has provided a light for Christians. What is this light that God has provided for Christians?

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path

(Psalm 119:105).

God's Word is a lamp and a light for us. It is only when you put on the light that you know where to go. It is only when you put on the light that you can prevent yourself from stumbling over furniture. Jesus Christ called Himself the light of this world.

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life

(John 8:12).

You need light in this life! Jesus (the Word) is the light for your life. People who have tried to live their lives without Christ and the Word have discovered that it is painful to stumble around in the darkness. A young man approached me and informed me that he was having terrible problems in his marriage. He wanted me to help him. He wanted to know the way out of his marital difficulties. As I talked with him, I realized that what he needed was the Word. He said to me, Are you going to pray for me to have my deliverance? I asked, Why do you need deliverance? He answered, Oh, I was told that my wife has a marine spirit. I asked him, What is a marine spirit? He said, Oh, it's something they say I have to be delivered from. So I want you to deliver me. I thought to myself, This man wants a quick fix. He does not want the Word. He does not know that nothing sets you free like the Word of God does.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free

(John 8:32).

I asked him, Are you a born-again Christian? Yes, I Am., Are you faithful to your wife I asked. He smiled, Um… not really.

Actually, he continued, I have not been faithful to her at all! I advised this man to have a pastor and belong to a church. I told him, your marine spirit is the least of your problems. What you need is the Word of God to guide you in this life. You need the light of life, otherwise, you will continue to grope in darkness.

There are people who wonder how I know the things I do. I remember arriving in Johannesburg one day for a convention. I was met by a South African delegation. When they saw me, one of them asked, Are you the Bishop? I said, Yes, I am. really! We were expecting someone much older! We have listened to your tapes and read your books. Somehow, we thought you were a much older person. When you walk in the Word, people will think you are much older than your real age.

2. The WoRD is WisDoM.

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). The Word of God will make you wise in this life. Advice and direction for business are found in the Word of God. There is more instruction for a businessperson in the Word of God than in any lecture on business management. There is more relevant and practical knowledge on philosophy, political science, literature and history in the Bible than in any other book I know.

3. The WoRD is insTRucTion.

I sometimes smile when people say, God has called me to do such-and-such for Him.

If you do not obey the simple instructions in the Word, do you think God is going to give you more? He that is faithful in little is faithful in much. If you do not obey the Word of God which says to pay your tithes, do you think God is going to speak to you about a miracle healing ministry?

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee

(Micah 6:8).

God will minister His Word to you through pastors and shepherds. That is why it is important to have a good church and a pastor who teaches the Word of God. Whenever your pastor is preaching, be open to receive direction for your life. In the last days, God is giving pastors who will feed us with knowledge and understanding. receive the knowledge and understanding that God is giving you.

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding

(Jeremiah 3:15).

God will also use men of God to give you instructions for your life. These instructions help you to become a better person. There are times your pastor will give a commandment to fast and pray. It is important to follow these instructions. The Bible teaches that we should obey those that have spiritual authority over us.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls

(Hebrews 13:17).

Listen to the voice of your shepherd. God has delegated the destiny of the sheep to the shepherd. God will bless your life and lead you through the voice of your shepherd. Jesus is the overall shepherd and He told Peter to look after the sheep. That means that He was delegating the care of His sheep to under-shepherds.

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?...Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep

(John 21:17).

The secReT oF DiRecTeD pATHs

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths

(Proverbs 3:5,6).

1. goD LeADs his peopLe ThRough DiRecTeD pATHs.

The promise of God in the Scripture above is not that He will direct you! God is promising here that He will direct your paths. What is the difference between God directing you and God directing your paths?

2. When goD DiRecTs you, he speAks To you AnD TeLLs you WhAT To Do. It is then up to you to do the right thing and obey His voice.

3. When goD DiRecTs youR pATHs, you Don'T hAve To Do AnyThing. It is your paths that have to obey instructions.

4. youR DuTy is To TRusT The LoRD ThAT he hAs ARRAngeD The ciRcuMsTAnces so ThAT you WiLL nATuRALLy FLoW inTo his WiLL.

This is what happens when you pray, Thy will be done. Jesus prayed Thy will be done for three hours in the Garden of Gethsemane. After getting an answer to that prayer, Jesus didn't have to do anything any more. He just allowed things to happen naturally.

God speaks to the paths

Once I was walking in a major international airport. Those of you who have travelled a bit know that modern airports are monstrous buildings with an often intricate maze of tunnels and corridors. This was the first time I had been in that particular airport. I travel frequently so I know my way around many major airports. This time however, I did not know the way. When I got out of the plane I just kept walking. As I walked in that airport, God gave me a revelation. I didn't get lost at all, not even for one minute! I walked confidently through the labyrinth of airport corridors and arrived at the right place to pick up my baggage. Would you believe that no one told me where to go or what to do, but I just kept walking? God showed me that I did not get lost in that airport because the authorities had arranged the corridors and tunnels in such a way that I could only go in one direction and arrive in one particular place. As I walked through the airport, I realized that many doors were shut. Access to many parts of the airport was blocked to me. There were signs everywhere showing where newly arrived passengers should go.

That is often how God will lead you if you will take the time to pray that His will be done in your life. Then you can walk on confidently. You may not even know what exactly to do, but as you keep on praying that His will be done, He will direct your paths. God will block certain doors and make it impossible for you to go on certain roads. He will ensure that you will only flow in a particular direction. He will ensure that you only meet certain people.

There are many times I don't know what to do. I am not a superman. I cannot pretend to know the mind of God all the time. Nobody knows all the will of God. Even Jesus prayed that the will of God be done. I spend hours praying that the will of God be done in my life. I believe that every serious Christian should do that! If you have committed your way to God, as the Bible says in Proverbs 3:5 and 6, God is committed to directing the paths of your life.

Do not cry any more because that man did not marry you. Do not be sad because that opportunity did not work out. Did you not pray that the will of God should be done? Did you not commit your ways to Him? God is answering your prayers right now! He is directing your life. You do not have to hear a voice. You do not need to see a vision. Just continue walking by faith and you will find yourself in His perfect will.

DeALing WiTh The voice oF The peopLe

Another important area of influence is the voice of human beings. What others say and do influence many people. Most of the time we want to be like others. Whatever the people in your peer group are doing is what you want to do! But many times that is not the will of God. God created a special nation called Israel. He planned to rule the nation directly through His prophets and spiritual leaders. When the people of Israel realized that all the nations around them had kings, they also decided to have a king. Even though what they were experiencing was better, they just wanted to follow the crowd.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: NOW MAKE US A KING TO JUDGE US LIKE ALL THE NATIONS. And the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them…howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them,…Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, NAY; BUT WE WILL HAVE A KING OVER US; THAT WE ALSO MAY BE LIKE ALL THE NATIONS

(1 Samuel 8:4,5,7,9,19,20).

'That is what I call the voice of the people' It is such a strong voice that it often drowns out the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit. You must be careful not to become someone who is easily affected by the opinions of those around. No one can be a successful minister if he still wants to please people around. That is why a church must not be run by democracy. The essential nature of democracy turns people into men pleasers and liars.

For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ

(Galatians 1:10)

1. iF you WAnT To seRve The LoRD, you MusT be cAReFuL noT To becoMe A MAnpLeAseR.

I am wary of people who are very conscious of making good impressions everywhere. Such people are usually two-faced and can easily betray you. On the 10th of March 1989, I qualified as a medical doctor. I was pastoring this fledgling church along with some other medical colleagues of mine. As was the custom, after one year of working in the hospital, most of my colleagues left the country for the USA and England. They were going to do further studies and earn more money.

At that time, I came under a lot of pressure from family and friends. They said, you are a doctor. You have a bright future before you. My father wanted me to specialize at the Cambridge University but I knew that the Lord had called me and I could not leave the ministry. My father-in-law even offered to help get me into a good department of the Teaching Hospital. I always noticed the anxious and

questioning look of my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law is very sweet and really cared about us. She was worried about both her daughter and me. I'm sure she thought I was destroying my life by refusing to pursue a lucrative and dignified medical career.

One day the pressure was so much, I had to tell my dear concerned mother-in-law not to bring up the topic anymore. At that time, our church was an unimpressive group of students and struggling Christians. A pastor's job has always been a controversial and disrespected profession. My father said to me, What sort of job is this that pays by the collection of people's pennies? That is not an honorable way to live! I was under a lot of pressure. If I had yielded to the pressure of the people, perhaps all the souls who have been saved through this ministry would have perished.

I am sure that there are people who are not in the ministry today because they listened to the voice of the people. I have decided to ignore the voice of the people when I am sure that God wants me to do something. I may look controversial! I may displease people! But I am accountable to God for my calling. Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel! People around say, “Do this” or “Do that!” They say to me, “You must have a hospital.” Others tell me, “You must have a university!” Still others say, “You must travel more often to other churches.”

But what does God say? Does God want me to use a million dollars to build a hospital or does He want me to use a million dollars to plant churches? I intend to do His will. You ensure that you do His will for your life and I'll make sure that I'm doing His will for mine!

2. The voice oF The peopLe is The voice ThAT DRoWns The voice oF The hoLy spiRiT.

There are many ladies who yield to the voice of the people. “Why are you a virgin at this age? Enjoy yourself and have some fun!” They will put pressure on you to marry an unbeliever. “He's a good guy. If you marry him you will be happy.” But the silent voice of the Word of God tells you not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. I know some associate pastors who are told by the congregation members, “You are a great pastor. I only enjoy coming to church when you are preaching.” The voice of the people is telling them, “If you were your own boss and not an assistant, you would do very well in ministry.”

Perhaps they would do very well in ministry. Perhaps God is calling them to a great new work. But make sure that it is the voice of the Holy Spirit that you follow and not the voice of the people. Some Jezebel-like wives tell their husbands, “You could have a nice car and a lot of money if you broke away from this tyrant of a General Overseer.” “Come on”, they say, “Do your own thing!” The voice of a wife is a very strong voice. It takes a very principled man to stay on course when his wife is prodding him to flow in another direction. Never forget this! The voice of the people is the voice that drowns the voice of the Holy Spirit. It was not they who called you into the ministry! People cannot

bless you! People cannot promote you! If you follow what people say, you will have to look to people for promotion. But promotion does not come from people, it comes from the Lord.

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another

(Psalm 75:6,7).

Not only are people powerless to help you, but they often turn against you after a while. Do you remember how people hailed Jesus as the Messiah on Palm Sunday? Just a few days later the same people screamed, “Crucify Him!” The people who hailed Him, did a one hundred and eighty degree turnaround and murdered Him. Do not let the voice of friends or family come up higher than the voice of the Spirit of God.

The LeADing oF ciRcuMsTAnces

And the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful

(Matthew 13:22).

The word circumstance is self-explanatory. “Circum” speaks of things around and “stances” speaks of things standing. Therefore, “circumstances” simply mean “things standing around in your life.” These circumstances could be school, marriage, work or any situational factors. Circumstances often dictate what Christians should do. We are to be led by the Spirit of God and not by circumstances. You cannot allow the circumstances in your life to prevent you from doing what you must do. When I became a medical student, I had very little time to do the work of God. The circumstances were such that it was almost impossible for me to pray or read my Bible. But what was the silent voice of the Word of God telling me? The Word of God was telling me to be steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord

(1 Corinthians 15:58).

And that is exactly what I did. The circumstances of a medical student were well known to other students. Because of this, medical students were not allowed to be leaders of the Christian fellowship. They knew that the circumstances of a medical student's life did not allow for much spiritual activity. You see, we were picked up by a bus at 7:00 a.m. everyday and shuttled to the Teaching Hospital, about an hour's drive away. We stayed there all day until the evening. When we returned to the university campus at about 6:00 p.m., we were exhausted and had a lot of academic work to do. How on earth could one be a useful Christian leader and at the same time pass the medical exams?

But the good news is that I was able to do it by the grace of God. In my first year, I started a Christian ministry on the university campus. That ministry is still there today! During my fourth year, I established a church that has grown into a worldwide ministry. There are many Christians who are led by circumstances. That is why they fall away from the Lord. The cares of this world (circumstances) quench the call!

And the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful

(Matthew 13:22).

God calls many people. However, the call of many is quenched by the circumstances of life. Many people are unfruitful today not because they are evil.

1. MAny peopLe ARe unFRuiTFuL becAuse The voice oF ciRcuMsTAnces pRevAiLeD oveR The voice oF The spiRiT.

When you have a baby, you are saddled with a real stressful schedule. It is up to you to rise above the circumstances and pray. Are you telling me that having a baby is a curse? Are you telling me that being married is a curse? If it is not a curse to you why do you allow these new circumstances to quench the zeal you once had? Rise up today in the name of Jesus. rise above the voice of your circumstances. God has called you to do great things in this life. It is only great men who rise above the voice of circumstances.

unMAsking The DeviL

And the devil said unto him

(Luke 4:3).

Our Lord Jesus was spoken to by the devil. Satan spoke to Him about three different topics. If you think that Satan will never speak to you, then you are joking. The devil tempts and tests everyone. Jesus taught, "A servant is not above his master." If He was tempted, then we will also be tempted.

1. iT is eAsy To suMMARize The WoRks oF The DeviL inTo one WoRD-DecepTion.

The devil is a liar and a deceiver. Jesus called him the father of liars.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it

(John 8:44).

The Bible describes Satan as someone who deceives the whole world. Anyone who can deceive the entire world must be a very good liar and deceiver.

That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world

(Revelation 12:9).

I know some politicians who have been able to deceive the masses. Some of them are able to deceive tribes and regions of a country. But to deceive the whole world is an awesome achievement. This means that all the intelligent and wise people have been taken in by the lie. If you visit Europe today, you will see millions of people who believe that there is no God. They sincerely think that religion is not practical. They believe that life is all on this earth and that when you die you are dead like a dog. It is not a few people who hold this concept.

These ideas are held by multitudes of intelligent but deceived Europeans. Satan has managed to captivate the minds and hearts of this world with gold, silver and pleasure. Even when the realities of death and life dawn on people at funerals, the intellectuals of this world still refuse to acknowledge the existence of God.

2. sATAn WiLL pRoDuce A counTeRFeiT To AnyThing ThAT goD Does in An ATTeMpT To Deceive us.

If the Holy Spirit gives dreams, Satan will also come up with his own dreams. If God speaks in an audible voice, Satan will also give audible voices to confuse and deceive you. That is why the Bible

says there are many voices in the world and none of them is without signification.

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification

(1 Corinthians 14:10).

3. The DeviL MAy open oR cLose DooRs To Deceive you.

That is why Jesus is described as the one who can open the door that no one can ever close. That is what distinguishes the opening of a door by Jesus and the opening of a door by someone else.

He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth

(Revelation 3:7).

If God has opened a door for you to marry Araba-Lucy, you will marry her. Nothing can stop it and nothing can change it! If God has determined that you should be a pastor over thousands of people, the wicked lies of your detractors cannot close that open door. If God has determined that you should be a millionaire in His kingdom, the economic circumstances around will not stop the blessings of God.

4. ouR MAin job is To be AbLe To DecipheR The DecepTive TRAps AnD Lies oF The eneMy.

The Bible never teaches that we should beware of the power of the devil. Satan's strength is not in his power. In fact, he is powerless against you. That is why God's instruction to us is to be careful of his tricks and lying traps.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [deception, tricks, lies] of the devil

(Ephesians 6:11).

Avoiding Mistakes When being led 36

THREE IMPORTANT SAFETY CHECKS

How do we fight against lying voices? There are three safety checks you must adhere to. This is to rule out the possibility of listening to the wrong voice. rule out the possibility of following the voice of your flesh by being honest with yourself. Admit to yourself when you realize that your flesh is influencing you. Remember that to be carnally minded is death.

1. The sAFeTy oF A MuLTiTuDe oF counseLLoRs

In the multitude of counsellors there is safety

(Proverbs 11:14).

There is nothing like the safety of counseling. If you have had a revelation from God, subject it to many counselors there is a difference between a counselor and a friend). When you subject your revelations to a multitude of counselors, you expose yourself to more information that helps you to take better decisions. One aspiring pastor wanted to marry a young lady in the church. He prayed for several hours about whom he should marry. He finally came up with a decision and said that God had told him to marry a certain lady. Just before he proposed to the young lady, he decided to consult with an elder and with his pastor. The elder said to him, “She's a nice girl. I see nothing wrong with your entering a relationship with this Christian lady.”

Then, as a matter of formality, he decided to mention it to his pastor. When he did, the pastor said, “Oh, I see. She is a nice lady, however, I want you to be aware of one important thing.” He told the aspiring suitor, “This young lady has a severe mental disease. I prayed for her myself when she developed the condition.” The pastor went on, “As far as I know, she is still taking medication to control the effects of this condition.” He continued, “Of course, this does not bar you from marrying her. However, it is important for you to be aware of this reality before you take a decision.” The young man was taken aback, “Oh, I didn't know this!” he exclaimed. He told the pastor, “Thank you very much. It will help me to take an informed decision.” This young man's safety depended on his consulting with more than one counselor.

The first counselor (the elder) had nothing contrary to say. It was the second counselor (the pastor) who had very important facts that the man needed to know. You can see from this true-life story that the safety of this young man lay in the multitude of counselors. There is no revelation, voice or instruction from God that cannot be subjected to a multitude of counselors. This is the reason why married couples must undergo extensive counseling. Many people who are getting married don't know the realities that are ahead of them. They have no idea about the journey that they are about to undertake. Their safety lies in the multitude of counselors.

2. pRove ALL Things.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good

(1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Has a prophet spoken to you? Have you received a personal prophecy? Have you heard a voice from God? Please subject it to the test of the Word of God. Please prove all voices that you claim to have heard from God. I sometimes operate in the prophetic gift. When I have a word of knowledge about someone, I often ask the individual concerned about the word I have received. I want to see if it is true and accurate because I know that I could be wrong. When a so-called prophet gives you a word

of knowledge to leave your husband for another, please submit it to the Word of God. Is it not the Word of God that tells us not to divorce? How could it be that a prophetic voice is speaking contrary to the Word of God?

Prophets can Make Mistakes

A prophet prophesied to two of my leaders who were about to become pastors. He told them that within a year they would be living outside Ghana. He went on to tell them that they would be in the ministry but it would not be under the banner of Lighthouse Chapel International. These pastors were confused and wondered whether the Lord had spoken or not! A year passed and these pastors were no nearer to going abroad than I was to the moon. After two years, it was quite clear that this prophecy had not materialized. They have rather become pastors who are established in Lighthouse Chapel International in Ghana. The passage of time proved that this was either a mistaken prophet or a mistaken prophecy. Prophets are human, and they also make mistakes.

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, WHICH I HAVE NOT COMMANDED HIM TO SPEAK, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but THE PROPHET HATH SPOKEN IT PRESUMPTUOUSLY: thou shalt not be afraid of him

(Deuteronomy 18:20,22).

All prophets, prophecies, revelations and voices must be proved. We must hold on to what is good. If you swallow every prophecy, revelation and dream, hook, line and sinker, you will soon find yourself gobbling down garbage. When Paul received the call and revelation from God, he subjected it to a valid test. Paul had more revelations than any of the prophets we have around today, but notice how he practiced this safety principle.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus

(Galatians 1:15-17).

Paul received a revelation from God. He did not confer with flesh and blood. The revelation was directly from the Lord. But after several years, look at how Paul subjected his revelation to the scrutiny of senior apostles. If you don't want trouble, follow the principles that Paul practiced and you will experience a sound and balanced ministry.

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, AND COMMUNICATED UNTO THEM THAT GOSPEL WHICH I

PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES, BUT PRIVATELY TO THEM WHICH WERE OF REPUTATION, LEST BY ANY MEANS I SHOULD RUN, OR HAD RUN, IN VAIN

(Galatians 2:1,2).

Paul received a revelation from God in Arabia. But he subjected his revelation to the scrutiny of Peter and other apostles who were of reputation. This is your key to safety in a minefield where there are many dangerous voices.

3. The conFiRMATion oF TWo WiTnesses

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established

(2 Corinthians 13:1).

God has set a standard in His Word. It says that the mouth of two or more witnesses establishes a thing. God's safety rule is simple: do not accept it unless a second witness confirms it. If a prophet gives a “word”, you may ask, “Who is the second witness?” The second witness can be you. The prophecy can confirm something that God has already spoken to you about. Even when it comes to dreams, a second dream helps to confirm the message that came in the first dream. Notice how Joseph applied this principle when he was interpreting dreams for Pharaoh.

And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass

(Genesis 41:32).

The principle of confirmation by two witnesses is an important safety check for everyone who desires to safely experience the voice of God's direction for his life.

Why you MusT LisTen To youR conscience

1. goD hAs given eveRyboDy A conscience.

2. The conscience is ThAT quieT inneR voice ThAT checks us When We go WRong.

In charismatic circles, we hardly hear anything about the conscience. Your conscience is that quiet voice within that tells you when you are doing something wrong. There are times when your heart (spirit) condemns you for doing something wrong.

For if OUR HEART CONDEMN US, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God

(1 John 3:20,21).

Your heart has the ability to condemn you for wrongdoing. It is only when your heart is not condemning you that you have confidence to approach God. The confidence comes because you know that you are doing the right thing. Pastors will do well to follow their consciences in the ministry. Christians will do well to follow the voice of their conscience. Apostle Paul said that he always tried to maintain a good conscience.

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE toward God, and toward men

(Acts 24:16).

3. Any chRisTiAn Who DeciDes To FoLLoW his conscience WiLL enD up being A MoRAL AnD upRighT peRson beFoRe The LoRD.

David prayed that God should keep him in the path of righteousness. Your conscience is the instrument by which God will keep you in the path of righteousness. Anyone who claims to be led by the Spirit or by prophets, but does not listen to the voice of his conscience is doomed to tragedy in life and ministry. As you continue to ignore the voice of your conscience, it becomes deadened and hardened. This is what Paul described as having your conscience seared.

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their CONSCIENCE SEARED with a hot iron

(1 Timothy 4:2).

One minister was having an affair with one of his members. The lady asked him, “Pastor, how will you be able to preach tomorrow?” He laughed and said, “Oh, when I commit fornication I feel the anointing flowing even more.” This minister was used to committing immoral sins. It was now part and parcel of his life and ministry. His conscience was no longer condemning him. His conscience

had become hardened. He now thought that sin was funny and made jokes about how the anointing was enhanced by fornication. As soon as you make a mistake, respond to the voice of your heart condemning you. It will cause you to repent and get in line. After some years of neglecting your conscience, you will make shipwreck of your ministry. Shipwreck simply means disaster!

Holding faith, and a good conscience; which SOME HAVING PUT AWAY concerning faith have made SHIPWRECK.

(1 Timothy 1:19).

I have watched ministers who ignored their consciences. The end of such ministries is one and the same-shipwreck! This is why you must be careful about the thoughts you allow into your mind. If you permit certain thoughts, they will lead to other developments. This is why you must be careful about telling lies, however small they are. Keep your conscience clear! Let your heart prick you whenever you are wrong! The voice of your conscience will lead you safely on the path of righteousness. I pray for you that you will live this life with the benefit of God's direction. I see you enjoying divine guidance as you apply the principles in this book to your everyday life! May the Lord bless you as you follow the voice of God into success and victory! Follow His voice to the top because that is God's plan for you!

SECTION V

Spiritual Fathers

The Importance of Spiritual Fathers 37

ye hAve noT MAny FATheRs

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel

(1 Corinthians 4:15).

Dad, as I was growing up, You always made my world feel safe.
The dear calm of your voice, calmed me... And the strong circle of your arms circled me.
I never felt vulnerable or afraid, Because to me, you seemed unshakable. As I got older, though, It dawned on me that the world you faced everyday Was a lot bigger and scarier Than the one you had created for me. And I wondered, sometimes, if you felt Like relying on someone else's strength for a change… Now that I am an adult and living on The outside of your safety net, I finally understand what sacrifices You made to make sure my world Felt alright all the time. Growing up in the sanctuary of your love Is something
I will always cherish and a memory I could never forget.

Deirdra J. Brown

The giFT oF A FATheR

1. The gift of a father is a rare gift.

2. Not every man of God is a father.

3. Not everyone who teaches well is a father. Paul pointed this out to the Corinthians. Not all the visiting preachers and teachers were fathers.

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel

(1 Corinthians 4:15).

4. There will be many people who will make an input into your life.

5. Instructors and teachers abound but these are different from fathers.

A father's input is comprehensive. It is a total package that cares about you more than just giving you a good teaching. Whereas a father's heart is concerned about your total welfare, the teacher's heart is only concerned about completing the lesson. As such, there are not many fathers! It is easier to go through the prepared notes than it is to give total care. People are so ungrateful that it takes the higher grace of fatherhood to patiently escort a person through the darkness of life. There are many, many pastors, evangelists and prophets, but a fathering prophet-who can find? That is why Paul said: “You can have ten thousand instructors but you do not have many fathers.”

6. The key characteristic of a father is not his age but his ability to produce after his own kind.

Contrary to some opinions, there are many young people with a father's heart. In the natural, people often become fathers at a young age.

7. The proof of fatherhood is in the children who are produced by the father.

8. It takes love, commitment and patience to bring up children.

In the end, the children attest to your fatherhood.

If you compare the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, for instance, you will find the differences between a fathering prophet and a non-fathering prophet. These differences become quite clear when you study their ministries. By comparing the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, you quickly see the differences between a man who has a father's heart and one who does not. Both Elijah and Elisha were excellent prophets. But Elijah had an additional gift of being a father. That is why he had a successor. Elisha had no successor. He cursed Gehazi who was next in line to him. He cursed Gehazi when he made a mistake with money. The father's heart does not curse his only child. The fathering spirit is that thing

which causes a man of God to produce people just like himself in the ministry. Very simply put, the fathering gift is a manifestation of God's love.

It takes love to bring up people who don't understand what they are being brought up for. It takes love to bring up people who will not understand you for many years. These people will have a wrong perception of you until they get to a certain stage of maturity. Everybody wants to look good all the time. Most people are not prepared to be misunderstood for many years. Truly, God sends many, many teachers who minister to our lives. They will minister the lessons and the points that make up the doctrine. But a father will go many steps further. In addition to teaching you, he will minister the love and the patience that are needed to bring us into God's perfect will. Idealism in a minister makes him look for perfection all the time.

9. Idealists and perfectionists are not usually good fathers.

They often do not appreciate how the grace of God is working in someone's life. They insist on perfection all the time and that is not possible with human beings. There are many people who receive me as a good teacher. Not as many are touched by the Lord to receive me as a father. May you find a father in this life! May you receive the capacity to love and to become a father yourself!

The succession oF FATheRs

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel

(1 Corinthians 4:15).

1. in This LiFe, goD is going To senD A nuMbeR oF peopLe To FATheR you.

The first of these is your earthly father whom you must receive as your father and not as some elderly outmoded person who is out of touch with the realities of modern life. This biological father will have his limitations as far as fathering you is concerned. Soon the relay will have to begin and the next person sent by the Lord to father you will arrive on the scene. Through his ministry, you will receive the fatherly care that you need to go through the next stage of your life. In a sense, a relay in which the baton of fatherhood is handed over from father to father has begun.

There are many things that your biological father doesn't talk to you about. Maybe he should talk about everything, but he doesn't. For many of us, our parents did not give us step by step counseling on choosing a wife or a husband. Most biological parents just cast insinuations about different tribes and their idiosyncrasies. That is often as far as their marriage counseling goes. Thank God for the pastors who often take up that role and guide children into marriage.

2. pAsToRs oFTen becoMe The nexT FATheRs in The ReLAy.

One day, my daughter asked me a question, “Daddy, how do people become pregnant?” I was taken aback by the question but I answered, “God makes them pregnant.” But she insisted, “I know God makes them pregnant but how does it happen?” I mumbled some answer and managed to change the topic. Later my wife said to me, “You have to talk to your children about sex.” I answered, “Why should I? You talk to them about it.” We began to argue and she said, “You are the head of the house so you are the one who must talk to them.” But I answered, “You are their mother and you are always talking to them, so why don't you talk to them about this as well?”

She continued, “It is your duty and you must play your role.” But I didn't agree. I used my authority as the head of the house and delegated her to talk to the children about all these things. You see, we had reached the place where our fathering abilities were wavering. We wished that God would send others to minister to our children as we had ministered to other people's children. We were praying that the next father in the relay would appear on the scene and help guide the children to safety.

3. AMong The hunDReDs oF insTRucToRs AnD TeAcheRs, iT is ALWAys iMpoRTAnT To Recognize Who The FATheRs ARe.

Fathers have a wider scope of concern for your life. Their input goes beyond even what they say. You will discover that their ministry cares for you totally. Their ministry has an uncanny wide-ranging effect on your life. One of the keys to recognizing a father is to recognize the love, care and direction of our Heavenly Father being transmitted through him to your life. Many people mistakenly think that the verse says you have ten thousand teachers but you have one father. The Scripture says that you do not have many fathers. It says in other words that you have a few fathers. Jesus said, “Don't call any-one father.”

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven

(Matthew 23:9).

This is because no human being could truly be all that a father is supposed to be. All men fall short of this role and only the Heavenly Father truly exemplifies what a father is. Have you not noticed how earthly fathers often compete and fight with their children? Even biological fathers can inflict a lot of pain and suffering on their children. There are many who hate their fathers. And there are many whose lives are distorted because of their fathers. This is ample evidence that fathering by the natural man is fraught with imperfections. This is the reason why there is a need for what I call, “the relay of the fathers”. The relay involves God sending one person after another for different phases of your life and ministry.

4. iT is iMpoRTAnT To Recognize The DiFFeRenT peopLe As They WALk inTo youR LiFe.

This is what Jesus was illustrating with the parable in Matthew 21. We will be judged by the way we received God's servants who were sent to us.

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him

(Matthew 21:33-39).

The senDing oF FATheRs

Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son

(Matthew 21:36-37).

God sends fathers into our lives who we often do not recognize. People even fight with their fathers! We must learn to receive the fathers God sends into our lives.

The Difference between Receiving a Father and Receiving an instructor

1. Receiving an instructor involves receiving the lessons he gives from the Word.

2. Receiving a father involves receiving an all-embracing ministry from someone.

In the natural, your biological father affects you in many ways. He teaches you how to eat, how to dress and how to live. He gives you wisdom, advice and little lessons for life. He sets an example for you to follow and serves as a source of inspiration and direction. Compare this with your school teachers. These instructors often do not guide and inspire us as our fathers do. When you come across someone who seems to have this wide-ranging influence on your life, you have probably met one of the fathers that God has ordained for you.

Don't Make the Mistake of Receiving a Father As a Mere Instructor

Some people make the mistake of receiving their fathers as mere teachers. They do this by not embracing all the fatherly input coming their way. By receiving only a part of the input of these fathers, we often reduce the role of fathers to mere instructors. There are people God has called me to father. But I relate with them as an instructor because that is what they want. The parable in Matthew, Chapter 21, clearly shows that God will judge us for the way we relate to the people He sends to us. There are fathers that God has sent to me. One day, I was enjoying the message on tape by a man of God and the Lord said to me, " I sent this man to you as a father."

From that moment, I regarded those tapes differently. I opened my heart to receive all aspects of the ministry that were offered to me through this minister. Suddenly, all his books and tapes were of interest to me. At first, I just enjoyed some of his teachings but now I wanted everything. I knew that I was to be birthed into a new level of ministry through this man. That was really when I understood that you can receive someone as an instructor but then you can go higher and receive him as a father.

The nine FATheRs oF LiFe

1. youR heAvenLy FATheR

When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven

(Luke 11:2).

Most of us have the impression that the Heavenly Father is an angry God who would have burnt us all up, if it had not been for the intervention of Christ. We often have the feeling that He still wants to burn us! Most of the revelations that people have had of God speak of His indescribable love. Our Heavenly Father cares for us. A close look at the story of the prodigal son shows the attitude of the Father towards His sinful children.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry

(Luke 15:20-24).

He loves us. Although we sin a thousand times, He still loves us.

2. youR FATheR in chRisT

This is the person who brought you to the Lord. He or she is the one through whom you gave your life to Christ and became a born-again Christian. God sends people to us who birth us into the Lord. We must always cherish and honor them. It is because of them that we will one day go to Heaven.

3. youR FATheR in The MinisTRy

This is the person who birthed you into the ministry of the Lord. Through him you find yourself involved in the work of the Gospel. Often, fathers in ministry are lumped together with our fathers in Christ. We generally call them spiritual fathers. God has blessed me with wonderful men of God through whom my life has been totally transformed. I have become a pastor and a minister through their fathering grace. In recent times, the Lord has blessed me by sending another father to lift me into the next phase of ministry.

4. youR bioLogicAL FATheR

This is the father from whose seed you were born. This person is often the only one who receives the recognition of a father. This is a great mistake because he is not and cannot be the only one who fathers his children. I always pray that God will send fathers into the lives of my children to help them at different stages of their lives. One day I was praying for some young ladies at a revival. I prayed for them with all my heart. Then it struck me: “Will there be somebody to pray for my daughter when she is twenty-one years old?” I prayed that God would send people into the lives of my children so that they would be blessed and cared for at the different stages of their lives. Jesus said , “Call no man your father!” He knew that no earthly person could single-handedly father anyone.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven

(Matthew 23:9).

5. subsTiTuTe FATheR

This type of father often replaces the biological father. The biological father may be unavailable because of death, divorce or abandonment. Many homes are not ideal and God raises people to do the work of fathering. One day, I stood in grief over the dead body of one of my pastors. I was holding his trembling wife, desperately trying to console her as she looked at her dead husband's body. Shortly after this, one of the doctors on the ward spoke to me. I will never forget what he said. He said to me, “Don't worry. I know you will be thinking: Why did he die? Why should such a good person leave us now?”

He continued, “People will say, “God must be angry with the church for a pastor to die. “He went on, “But you see, death is part of life. We do not understand everything that God does.” Then he said something that surprised me, “My father died at the age of twenty-five when I was in my mother's womb.” He said, “It must have been very sad for my mother. I never saw my own father.” He continued, “Perhaps I would not have become a world famous surgeon if my biological father had been alive.”

This man had become a world-class surgeon and was greatly respected all over the nation. He had achieved this great feat, not through the help of a biological father, but through the help of a substitute father. A substitute father is someone who steps in to father a child when the real father is not around. Sometimes, substitute fathers are even better than biological fathers. There are two lessons we can learn from this:

a. Don't be afraid to die. God will take care of your children. He will raise up substitute fathers who may be even better fathers than you are.

b. Don't hold back. If you have the chance to adopt or care for a child, go for it! You may be the substitute father that God is raising to care for a fatherless child.

6. youR FATheR-in-LAW

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb

(Exodus 3:1).

Your father-in-law can be another kind of biological father. Moses was greatly blessed through his father-in-law. He received important advice through his father-in-law. My father-in-law has been a great blessing to me. He inspired me to be debt free and to believe in real estate. Apart from my biological father, my father-in-law has really been an inspiration to me. There are many times I have pointed out to my wife how blessed she is to have such a father.

7. FATheR oF A chuRch

The father of a church is the founder of the church. He is the father in the sense that he gave birth to the church. Through his ministry, the church came into existence. Like Paul said to the Corinthians, "I have begotten you (given birth to you) through the gospel."

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel

(1 Corinthians 4:15).

8. FATheR oF A MoveMenT

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham

(Galatians 3:7).

There are also fathers of movements. For example, Abraham is seen as the father of the Faith Movement. Such people are recognized as those who gave birth to generations of similar people. Kenneth Hagin is seen as the father of the modern Faith Movement. John Wesley is the father of the Methodist Church Movement.

Fathers are special. Sons may do greater works than fathers, but they are still not recognized as fathers. For instance, in the ministry today, there are great healers and pastors, but the fathers always stand out as fathers. Elisha did greater works than Elijah did. Elisha's miracles were often twice as powerful as Elijah's and he did twice as many miracles as Elijah did. Joshua entered the Promised Land. He conquered a land which Moses was unable to enter. He accomplished Moses' dream with a

great display of power. But neither Elisha nor Joshua had a successor. They were great ministers but not fathers.

On the mount of transfiguration, neither Elisha nor Joshua was present with Jesus. The fathers were those who appeared in the vision. Never forget that fathers are special to the Lord. Young people should not be deceived by their accomplishments. Do not think that you are greater than your father! All that sons and daughters do is to build upon the advances already made by fathers.

9. FATheR in sin

A father in sin is the one who introduces you to many evils. Some of us would never have known the depths of sin if it had not been for those who virtually took our hands and led us into evil. Some of us would never have known about fornication, had it not been for those who well and truly baptized us into this practice.

The poWeR oF A FATheR

Honour thy father…that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee

(Exodus 20:12).

1. Fathers have the power to bless and to curse.

2. They occupy a seat of authority given by the Lord.

3. There is tremendous power released when a father speaks a blessing over a son.

There are three groups of people on earth that have been given divine authority. In the family setting, the father has been given authority. In the nation, the government has been given authority, and in the church, the pastor is the authority figure.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves

(Romans 13:1-2 NIV).

Your relationship with any of these authorities is vital for your existence on this earth.

4. Any kind of father assigned to you by God is an authority in your life.

If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences

(Ecclesiastes 10:4).

One day, I was in a lobby having a chat with some pastors. I overheard another pastor describing his woes. His child was in a coma and he had spent all his money trying to save the life of his child. He was now broke and desperate. In his own words, he described what he felt had led to his predicament. He had had a disagreement with an authority in his life and as he walked away from this authority, the father declared, “My covering has been removed from you.” That was the beginning of all my troubles, he said. “You see, spiritual people understand spiritual principles.” Strive to get the blessings rather than the curses of an authority figure.

Jesus and His Father

Jesus understood the power of His father. His very last words on the cross were to entrust Himself into His Father's care. “Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.” With those words He plucked His soul out of the jaws of death and placed it into the hands of His father. He trusted His father and even when the terrors of death were closing in on Him, He knew who had the power to rescue Him. That is the power of a father, which Jesus respected. Is it not amazing that His very last words on earth shed such light on the power of a father?

inheRiTing The FATheR's sins

a. Be careful how you criticize your daddy because the devils that fought your daddy will one day fight you.

They are just waiting for you to grow up. Whether you like it or not, one day, you will have to fight "your daddy's devil". One man of God said to me, "People want to retire me! They want me to be removed from my position in this nation. They think I have too many problems." He said something I will not easily forget: "When I am gone, the 'thing' that was fighting me will begin to fight them." This is an eternal principle and it will be wise to grow up and understand it quickly.

b. Many sons have had to swallow their words as they walked into their father's footsteps and made his exact mistakes.

Notice how this happened with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon.

1. DADDyAbRAhAM DisoWneD his WiFe AnD his son isAAc DiD The sAMe.

Abraham

And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister

(Genesis 20:1-2).

Isaac (son of Abraham)

And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister

(Genesis 26:6-7).

2. DADDy AbRAhAM seT AsiDe his FiRsTboRn son AnD his son isAAc AnD gRAnDson isRAeL FounD TheMseLves Doing The sAMe Thing.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba

(Genesis 21:14).

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing

(Genesis 27:34-35).

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch

(Genesis 49:3- 4).

3. DADDy DAviD hAD pRobLeMs WiTh WoMen AnD MARRiAge AnD so DiD his sons AbsALoM, soLoMon AnD AMnon.

And it came to pass in an evening-tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house

(2 Samuel 11:2,4).

So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel

(2 Samuel 16:22).

Solomon…had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines

(1 Kings 11:2,3).

4. DADDy AbRAhAM sLepT WiTh his WiFe's MAiD AnD his gRAnDson jAcob DiD The sAMe.

And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes

(Genesis 16:3-4).

And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel :… she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son

(Genesis 30:2-5).

seven signs oF sons AnD DAughTeRs

One day, a couple sat before me at the counseling table. The lady said to me, “Oh Bishop, I am your daughter.” But I corrected her and said, “You are not my daughter, you are just a church member”. She looked hurt but I continued, “You are a very nice church member who is always smiling around and encouraging us but that doesn't make you a daughter. You are a VNP but you are not a daughter.” (There are five types of church members: very nice people (VNPs), very encouraging people (VEPs), very important people (VIPs), very significant people (VSPs) and very dangerous people (VDPs).

I went on to explain to this very nice lady. I asked her, “When you see my children running around in the church, how do you know that they are my children?” She didn't answer so I answered myself, “They look like me. Can't you see that my children look like me?” She nodded. Then I asked her, What similarity is there between you and I? You are not involved in the work of ministry. You are not a shepherd, you are not involved in the ministry and you do nothing in the church. You are a nice person but not a daughter.

She finally understood the point I was making. Just being around and being nice does not make you a son or a daughter. On that day, there were many children playing around after church, but only two of them were my sons. Being around doesn't make you a son. There are certain things that make you a son or a daughter, and that is what I want to share with you in this section.

1. A son/DAughTeR ReseMbLes his FATheR.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father

(John 14:9).

When you see my sons and daughters in the ministry, you will find that they have some resemblance to me ministerially. The similarities between sons and fathers are the great telltale signs of the relationship. In the natural, the color of my sons' skin tells everybody that they are related to me. Spiritually and in the ministry, there are many similarities between my sons in the Lord and myself. Jesus said, “He that has seen me has seen the Father.” The reason why I don't have to run around all the different churches preaching, is because my sons and daughters are ministering powerfully. If you have seen the son, then you have seen the father. A son is not a clone or a photocopy of the father. But he has very important and essential traits that he received from his father. Every son has his father's genes, blood type and DNA. However, some sons have even more similarities and look exactly like their fathers. A close look at my daughters and sons in the ministry will reveal some essential traits that have passed on to them.

2. A son/DAughTeR is FoReveR.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever

(John 8:35).

real sons and daughters will always belong to the house. No matter what your natural child does, he always belongs to the house. He may even live elsewhere, but he belongs to the house. In his heart he knows where he belongs, he knows who brought him up and how he came to be what he is. Although it has happened before, a true son will rarely rise up against his own father.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us

(1 John 2:19).

3. sons AnD DAughTeRs TRusT TheiR FATheR FoR eveRyThing.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

(Matthew 6:9-13).

The real sons are filled with lots of trust. At a normal work place, there is a lot of mistrust. The junior staff do not trust the manager. But in a family, the children usually trust their father absolutely. I have never heard of children going on strikes or demonstrations against their parents. The constant exhortation to us as children of God is that we may have faith in our Heavenly Father. The more we trust Him, the more of His blessings we will experience. Differences between children of the same family usually stem from different levels of trust that they have shown for their father. In the ministry, I notice the same thing. More of God's blessings and anointing flow through me to sons and daughters who are more trusting. Some sons and daughters are weary, suspicious and cautious. Others are more trusting and faith-filled. These always get more of their father's blessings. These differences come from the different extents to which they trust me and what I say.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children

(Luke 11:13).

4. A son honouRs his FATheR.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour?

(Malachi 1:6).

Don't expect honor from servants or employees. You can only expect lip service and unreal smiles from employees. You can expect honor from a real son. Ministry should be made up of sons, daughters and their father. One mega church pastor said to me, "I have had many bad experiences by appointing pastors from other churches and Bible schools. Now I only have my spiritual sons and daughters working with me in the ministry." That is the way it should be! Your true sons and daughters will only bring honor. Apart from a few prodigal sons, most sons and daughters bring honor and joy to their father. God has often led me to honor people who have been fathers to me. I have tried to honor them in private and in public. I have honored them with my words and with my substance. True sons and daughters honor their father with their substance. It is a shame for your father or mother to struggle financially when you could help them. Do you want your parents to beg you for money? That is not honoring your father! That is humiliating him. Even when your father and mother do not need anything, you must honor them with your substance because that is what the Bible teaches.

A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts

(Malachi 1:6-8).

5. sons obey TheiR FATheRs.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth

(Ephesians 6:1-3).

True sons obey their fathers. I never try to exert authority over people I perceive are not my sons or daughters in the ministry. When I sense that someone is not a son or daughter, I am very limited in what I tell the person to do. It is only true sons and daughters who obey.

6. sons AnD DAughTeRs Do WhAT They see TheiR FATheRs Do.

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise

(John 5:19b).

A true son is looking out for what his father does. He is interested and feels that his father knows the way. This is what Jesus did. He healed only when He saw His father healing and He preached only when He saw His father preaching. Sons are rarely wiser than their fathers. Why didn't Jesus heal the whole multitude by the pool of Bethesda? He healed one man and left the rest untouched. It is like going into a hospital and healing only one person. It doesn't make sense but that is what the Father did. Jesus was content to do what He saw His Father doing.

I have noticed how my sons and daughters in the ministry flourish when they do what they see me doing. They preach what I preach and they teach what I teach. They see me healing the sick and they start to heal the sick. They are not mindless clones; they are simply good sons and good daughters! Of course, any human father (like myself) is imperfect and his life will never be the perfect example of things to follow. Our ultimate example is Christ! But God gives fathers on this earth that we may have practical examples to benefit from.

7. sons beLieve in TheiR FATheRs.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost

(Luke 23:46).

Jesus believed in His Father's ability. Jesus believed that His Father was powerful. Jesus understood the power of His Father. His very last words on the cross were to entrust Himself into His Father's care. “Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.” With those words He plucked His soul out of the jaws of death and placed it into the hands of His Father. He believed in His father and even when the terrors of death were closing in on Him, He knew who had the power to rescue Him. That is the power of a father, which Jesus respected. Is it not amazing that His very last words on earth shed such light on the son's belief in His father? Stupendous!

FATheRs AnD LongeviTy

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth

(Ephesians 6:1-3).

One of the highest blessings is that it may be well with you. Who would not like it to be well with him? However, it will never be well with you if you are disobedient to your father! The greatest blessing for sons is hidden in their obedience to their fathers. There is something I have noticed in large families with five or more children. The sons or daughters who are very obedient to their parents turn out differently from those who are rebellious, independent and resistant. It is a pattern you will discover for yourself. One pastor told me how she had noticed this phenomenon. She described how some of her father's children had constantly resisted their father's advice. “It is not easy for them today,” she said. “Marriage is not easy. And financially, it is very difficult for them.” She continued, “I can see a clear difference between those of us who obeyed and those who rebelled.”

Another pastor said to me, “I have a big family with many brothers and sisters but the difference is clear.” He described how his father was cared for by one of his daughters. He said to me, “This sister of mine cared for my father all the time. She did what he wanted and he was always pleased with her. In fact,” he continued, “my father died in her arms. She was nursing him when he died. Even my mother was not around when he died but she was there.” Today, her life is very different from some of her brothers and sisters. He began to describe horrific conditions of the cancer and poverty which had struck some of his other brothers and sisters. He mused, “There is certainly a difference between children who love and honor their parents.”

One day, a father went shopping with his two sons. As they walked through the department store buying clothes, the father suggested to his sons, “Take this pair of trousers, it will suit you, it is nice.” But there was a clear difference in the response of the sons to their father's suggestions. One of them constantly had a different opinion. He didn't like what his father liked. He always wanted something different. He even became grumpy and angry because he couldn't have some things. However, the reaction of the other son was very different. He would say, :Whatever you choose for me is okay. I like what you like for me. I want what you want for me.”

You see, these two attitudes can grow up and result in two different outcomes. The highest kind of blessing is that it may be well with you. It will be well with daughters who trust and obey their

fathers! It will be well with sons who trust and obey their fathers. This principle applies to all kinds of fathers whether natural or spiritual. Become a son who wants what his father wants for him. Become a son who likes what his father likes. Christianity is based on this principle: the principle of submitting your will to the will of your father. The principle of accepting the father's will instead of your own will. Do not be self-willed. Be subject to your father's will. It is safer and easier to say, " Father, into thine hands do I commit my life." Let's follow Jesus, He is the best example for us all.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth

(Ephesians 6:1-3).

pRincipLes FoR honouRing FATheRs

1. one oF The suRe WAys To shoRTen youR LiFe is To DishonouR FATheRs AnD MoTheRs.

Look around carefully and you will find this to be practically true. In the ministry, your longevity is also determined by your relationship with your fathers. Longevity speaks of how long you last in the ministry. You will always meet people ahead of you. It is important to honor these people as fathers. Even when you have a different ministry, you must respect the fathers for who they are. Two examples of long-lasting ministries are those of Jesus and David. Jesus' ministry has spanned thousands of years and is getting stronger. The ministry of King David is still being felt through the Psalms he wrote and the life he led. If you want to survive and persist through the years, learn this principle now!

2. jesus RespecTeD john The bApTisT.

He acknowledged him and went to his church. Jesus submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him

(Matthew 3:13-15).

Jesus spoke highly of John the Baptist even though He did miracles which John the Baptist didn't do.

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

(Matthew 11:7-10).

Jesus preached a different kind of message from John but acknowledged the greatness and relevance of John the Baptist.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

(Matthew 11: 11).

After Jesus had submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist, a voice from Heaven said, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.” Jesus had not won any souls when He received

this appellation-“this is my beloved son!” All He did was to submit Himself to someone ahead of Him in ministry. This is an important point for those who love to fight anything older or bigger than they. King David acknowledged Saul as being the anointed king before him. Even though Saul had many problems, David did not attack him. He called him “father” and not “the mad man of Jerusalem”. He called him the Lord's anointed and not the “demonized daddy”. That is why his throne is established forever.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David

(Luke 1:32).

3. TheRe ARe FouR Things AbouT sAuL ThAT WouLD hAve DRiven Any noRMAL son To RebeL AgAinsT his FATheR.

But not David, he knew better. He knew the verse in Exodus 20:12; that his longevity depended on how he related to the fathers.

Four Reasons Why David Could Have Rebelled Against Saul

a) Saul was rejected by God through the prophet Samuel

Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king

(1 Samuel 15:23b).

b) Saul; was demon possessed

He came under the influence of evil spirits and David knew it.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand

(1 Samuel 18:10).

c) Saul killed pastors

He had become a murderer and his victims were none other than God's priests.

And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests

(1 Samuel 22:21).

d) Saul was into witchcraft

His last night on earth was spent in a witch's house.

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor

(1 Samuel 28:70).

In spite of great provocation, David maintained his stance toward Saul. He refused to see him as anything other than a father. There are many ignoramuses who launch furious attacks against fathers because of the faults they see in them. Why not learn from David whose throne is established forever? Surely you do not have more good reasons than David did, to rebel against a father!

Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it

(1 Samuel 24:11).

The FRighTening Rebukes oF A FATheR

The curse of a father is deadly! A father is an authority figure and his words have heavenly backing. Fatherhood is actually a spiritual position. Words coming from this position contain power and must not be taken lightly. The Bible is full of examples of curses and blessings. Noah was a type of Adam in the sense that he was the only man on earth and had to repopulate the earth with his children. Noah built the ark and escaped the floods. He and his family were the only people alive on the earth after the flood.

The Curse Of Ham

However, one day something happened that changed the course of history even more than the flood itself. This was the day Noah had too much to drink and lay naked in his tent. One of his sons, Ham, the dark-skinned fellow, exposed his father's nakedness and told others about it. However, the other two children covered their father's nakedness. When Noah arose, he delivered one of the most frightening rebukes of all time. He pronounced “the curse of the servant of servants” on his son. This pronouncement, directed at the dark- skinned son, has had an effect that is felt up till today.

All over the world, black people are treated as second-rate beings. Billions of dollars are spent to fight wars and free oppressed people in Iraq. But there is no motivation to help the slaughtered sons and daughters of Liberia and Sierra Leone. A twenty-million dollar reward was offered for information leading to the capture of Saddam Hussein or his two sons. But in Africa, only twenty-thousand dollars was offered to capture the African terrorist Mohammed Farrah Aideed. Black people all over the world are suffering from the frightening rebuke and curse of Noah.

The continent occupied by black people is generally seen as a sub-standard place occupied by inferior people. Yet, it is the continent with the richest mineral resources. Some of the largest gold mines in the world can be found in African countries like Tanzania, Ghana and South Africa. Even within each continent, the parts occupied by black people are seen as second-rate zones. Whether it is black people in North or South America, black people in Australia or black people in Europe, the picture is the same. It is the picture of the servant or the servant of servants. How could such a unique pattern be established throughout the world?

It has been shown that black people are as intelligent as white people. The American space shuttle that crashed had a black astronaut on board. Black people have achieved equally great heights in education as white people. The best golfer, the richest woman, the best basketball player, the fastest male and female athletes, the best and richest boxers in the world are all black people. The king of pop music and the best-selling Christian musician ever, are both black men. Still, the curse and the

rebuke continue to daunt the black man. The words spoken by the father against his son, echo through the centuries, producing an unmistakable pattern of servanthood.

Managing your Relationship with Fathers

1. one oF The WisesT Things on eARTh is To cAReFuLLy MAnAge youR ReLATionshipWiTh FATheRs.

When young people fall in love, they often forget the importance of honoring and obeying their parents. Some time ago, I did not recognize this principle to its fullest. But I appreciated it when two young ladies died in the midst of their years after marrying against their parents' wishes. One husband described how his wife's family was totally against his marriage. But he insisted and went on against his parents' wishes. The young lady developed a strange form of paralysis. When she died, she left behind little children for her husband to take care of. I remember sitting on the hospital bed of a dying twenty-five year old girl. Her father was against her getting married but she had gone ahead and married without her father's knowledge. Because of my medical experience, I know when somebody is dying. I can tell by just looking at their faces. I was petrified as I sat on her bed.

She put her hand on my knee and said to me, “Bishop, are you afraid?” Unfortunately, I lied. I was scared out of my wits. But I said I was not afraid. Then she told me, “Don't be afraid, I am not going to die.” But I knew she was dying. I put my hand on her head and palpated several bumps, which seemed to be metastatic cancerous lesions to her skull. She had a rare and terrible cancer, which had spread all over. The disease was so strange that it was only diagnosed fully at her post-mortem. She died in a horrible and frightening way, which I have never forgotten. Throughout the ordeal, my mind was constantly on how she had gone against her father's wishes

2. The cuRse oF The FATheR MusT be AvoiDeD AT ALL cosTs.

Truly, the curse of the father must be avoided at all costs. Obey, flow in peace towards the fathers that God gives to you. They are given for your good.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you

(Romans 13:1-3 NIV)

The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it

(Proverbs 30:17).

ReLATing WiTh DeceiveD, bLinD AnD sick FATheRs

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see...And his father Isaac said unto him (Jacob)… Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee

(Genesis 27:1,26,28,29).

And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick…And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless

(Genesis 48:1, 20).

1. nATuRAL Men hAve MisTAken physicAL WeAkness FoR spiRiTuAL WeAkness.

They presume that old age, sickness and problems reduce a person's spiritual authority. That is one of the highest kinds of deceptions. Isaac was an old blind man. He could no longer see the difference between his two sons, Jacob and Esau. Isaac was deceived by Jacob and in his deception, he spoke a blessing over Jacob and it came to pass.

And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he {Jacob} and said, I am. And he came near, and kissed him…and blessed him, and said, See…the LORD hath blessed; Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee

(Genesis 27:24,27-29).

Do not be misled by the blindness and weakness of your father. He is still a father and that is the main lesson I am emphasizing here. If a blind father can speak a blessing for it to come to pass, then we must fear the words of fathers. You often hear people speaking against their fathers. They describe them as irresponsible men who didn't look after them. They don't want to have anything to do with their fathers. Sometimes in our youthful healthy state, fathers are seen as short-sighted, eccentric men, whose contribution is irrelevant. Unfortunately, some young people take up the hurts of their mothers and champion the fight against their fathers. This is a terrible mistake for which they pay a high price. Some pay the price of barrenness; some pay the price of death. Yes, he may be blind, irresponsible, and deceived, but he is still a father.

2. MAny Men oF goD in TheiR LATTeR yeARs Look bATTLe-WeARy AnD DRAineD.

They are often presented as fallen heroes, men of the past, forgotten ghosts! No one wants to have anything to do with them. But it is these “blind and deceived people”, who brought you forth and gave you the heritage you have today. When Ham exposed the nakedness of his drunken father, he forgot one thing. He forgot that if his father hadn't built the ark, he would have drowned. He would have drowned with the rest of the world. His body would have been eaten by sharks, barracudas, herrings, tuna, piranha and red fishes! What he did not know was that through his father's single act of faith, the whole world was saved. What he did not know was that God had recorded that act of faith and imputed it to him as righteousness. Ham was disgracing someone that God had honored. May we never be part of the team that dishonors the fathers that God has honored!

The inheRiTAnce oF A FATheR

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints

(Ephesians 1:18).

There is something known as spiritual inheritance. A "spiritual inheritance" is something that passes from fathers to sons. Only when you receive your man of God as a father do you receive the benefit of an inheritance. An inheritance will only flow from the fathers to their sons and daughters. You will notice from the story of Elisha that he had an earthly father called Shaphat.

Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat

(2 Kings 3:11)

However, at the time Elijah was being taken away, Elisha referred to Elijah as his father. He did this effortlessly and naturally.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father

(2 Kings 2:12).

The Importance Of Receiving The Man Of God As A Father

Why is it important to receive your man of God as a father?

1. This is becAuse FATheRs LeAve behinD An inheRiTAnce FoR TheiR chiLDRen.

People usually do not leave an inheritance for servants, employees, friends and colleagues. The inheritance is meant for the children! A person with an inheritance is very different from someone without it.

2. A peRson WiTh A FATheR Receives guiDAnce AnD DiRecTion FoR his LiFe.

A fatherless person has a life full of struggles. I never worked while I was in the university. My father provided for me fully until I became a doctor. The money he gave me each month as a student was more than my salary when I became a doctor. My father bought me a brand new car when I was in the fifth year of medical school. I was really blessed to have a good father looking after me. My life as a student was "struggle- free" because I had a father! However, the same cannot be said for many people. I have met countless people who did not receive guidance for their lives. They threw away their talents and became non-entities because there was no father to guide them. I know many people who do not even know their fathers.

The situation is even worse for orphans! Struggles abound for orphans. The future of an orphan is very uncertain. It is the same in ministry. When you have no one to influence you in the right way, your ministry is full of struggles. Although I have had different fathers in ministry, there are times I have been fatherless as far as developing into a pastor was concerned. I have had fathers in ministry from afar. I have gone through various struggles because I have not received support from nearby fathers. Many of the struggles and frustrations I've experienced in ministry are because I had no one to help me. In fact, people who should have been fathers to me when I was beginning my church were more of outright enemies. They opposed my cause and fought against me. Today some of these people are always eager to claim fatherhood over my life because I am successful in ministry.

3. inheRiTAnce FLoWs nATuRALLy FRoM A FATheR To his chiLDRen.

In the ministry, spiritual inheritance flows naturally from the fathers to the sons. When my father died, his Will was read in Court. He left his properties to his children. Although he had many employees and friends he didn't will anything to them --everything went to his children. Dear friend, that is the reality of life. Inheritance goes to children and not to colleagues or equals. There is something known as spiritual inheritance. This spiritual inheritance of anointing and gifts passes naturally from fathers to sons. It does not pass from father to equals, colleagues and friends. It does not even pass from father to servants. It passes from fathers to sons. I used to have a junior pastor who preferred to call me “boss”. I always felt uneasy when he called me “boss”, but I didn't know why. You see, when someone calls you “boss”, it means that he sees himself more as a hired hand. A few years later this pastor departed under unpleasant circumstances. Then I realized why I had felt uneasy. A servant or an employee does not stay around forever. He's only there for a while and will leave when it suits him.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever

(John 8:35).

If you have a relationship with a man of God, which becomes a father-son relationship, you can expect a spiritual inheritance of anointing to flow effortlessly from him to you.

heALing The heARTs oF FATheRs AnD sons

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse

(Malachi 4:6).

There is a time when sons are not interested in what their fathers do. These sons are interested in the exact opposite of whatever their fathers desire. This is a condition that leads to a curse. There are many examples of this. For instance, if a father is a university lecturer, the son may say in his heart, " I do not want to be a university lecturer." If the father is a politician and the heart of the son is turned away from his father, the son may grow up secretly deciding never to have anything to do with politics. Similarly, the father may be a pastor in the ministry and the son will say things like, " I want to be a lawyer or an astronaut but not a pastor." All these are as a result of the hearts of the children being turned away from the father. It is important to pray for your child so that his heart will be turned to his father. When children's hearts are turned away from their fathers, they become independent and rebellious.

The Turning Of A Daughter's Heart

Once, I was with a pastor's family and I got to talking with his daughter. As I chatted with her, she related how she was studying for her law degree. Her plans were for a corporate job in the corporate world. Meanwhile, her father was pastoring a great church with thousands of people but she had no interest in what he was doing. A couple of years later, I came back to that city and was chauffeured around by this same pastor's daughter. This time all she talked about was the ministry. I wondered where her legal dreams had disappeared to. There was no more talk of the corporate world. It was just God and His work. So I told her, "You have changed! I think a real change has come over you in relation to God and the ministry." So I asked again, "Have you changed?" She responded, "Yes, I have." I told her, "I noticed it the moment I interacted with you. The last time I was here, you were very different from what you are now." She nodded, "That's true."

Then she confessed to me, "I have always wanted to stay away from ministry life. Our family suffered so much because of the ministry and I never wanted to be in it. I can't even understand why I have changed so much." She added, "I am scared of my new interest in ministry. All I want to do is to travel with my father and help him in the ministry." But I understood what had happened to her. God had turned the heart of the child towards the father to avoid a curse. The turning of the heart is a spiritual thing and only God can do it. It is important for parents to pray for their children otherwise their hearts will be turned away from all that is good and recommended by parents.

Turning The Father's Heart

1. There are also times when the father loses interest in his sons.

2. This usually happens when the father is hurt or disillusioned with his children.

3. It brings a curse on the children because they are left without any fatherly input.

One day, one of my lay pastors who had been out of the country for some years came home. Before he left the country, he confided in another pastor. He said, “I think the Bishop has lost interest in some of us.” “I just feel that he is not as interested in us as he used to be.” I was surprised that he was able to quickly pick that up because he was right. I had been so disillusioned and disappointed in some of the pastors that I had lost interest in them. I wouldn't call them for meetings and I wouldn't say much to them. I would just smile to everyone and say, “You are blessed!” But I wouldn't engage in a deep and substantial discussion with any of them. You see, my heart had turned away from these pastors. But God began to turn my heart back to them. He made me pray for them and gradually, I regained the love and interest for these pastors. I then understood first-hand what it meant for the heart of the father to be turned away from his children. It is indeed a dangerous thing and it does bring a curse. Pray that your father's heart will not be turned away from you.

is eveRy MAn oF goD A FATheR?

Not every man of God is a father. There are pastors, apostles, teachers and evangelists who are not fathers. On the other hand, there are pastors, teachers, evangelists and apostles who are fathers. Any of these callings can take on the cloak of fatherhood. Fatherhood adds an extra dimension of love to whichever calling of ministry you have.

Marks of a Father

1. A FATheR hAs The AbiLiTy To pRoDuce sons AnD DAughTeRs.

The cardinal sign of a father is not his age. Unfortunately, most people equate old age to fatherhood. The opposite is true. Most of us became fathers when we were young and in our twenties. We develop and perfect the art of fathering as we grow older. The cardinal sign of a father is his ability to produce offspring. A classic example of this truth is seen in the lives of the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha. Even though Elisha had a greater anointing than Elijah, he had neither successor nor son in the ministry. Elisha had earlier cursed the only son God had given him (Gehazi). Instead of Gehazi becoming a son in the ministry, he became a leprosy patient! Elisha had also cursed some little children for laughing at him. Apparently, he had no time for children. The double portion of anointing on the prophet's life didn't transform him into a father.

2. FATheRs hAve LARge heARTs oF FoRgiveness.

Notice how Elijah was deserted by his first servant but still took another servant (Elisha). He had the heart to try again.

And the LORD said…go…and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room

(1 Kings 19:15-16).

When Elisha disobeyed and refused to stay in Jericho, Jordan, Gilgal or Bethel, Elijah did not become angry with Elisha and curse him. Instead, he was open to Elisha's request for a double portion of the anointing. Men of God who are unable to become fathers often suffer from idealism and perfectionism. These are delusions which keep us from the grace of fatherhood. No one is perfect and people with this delusion attack God's children who are making an effort to improve. They have no place for imperfections and lapses of any kind. This delusion frustrates the grace of God. God's grace helps us to climb the mountain until we reach the peak of perfection. If God had to wait until we were perfect, He would never be able to use anyone.

None of the apostles and none of us would have qualified under such conditions. Fathers have space in their hearts for all sorts of people. They can see that after several falls, a shining star will be born.

That is why the prodigal son's father called for the best robe and for a ring to be brought out for the wretched returnee. Notice how the elder brother, who had no fathering abilities, was angered by the return of his brother! The fathering heart has big latitude to accommodate all sorts of excursions made by potential sons and daughters. If our Heavenly father did not have this heart of love, which of us would be a son today?

3. A FATheR pRoviDes FoR his chiLDRen.

This role of a father is seen in the Lord's Prayer, where we ask our Father to give us daily bread. We also ask Him to deliver us from evil and to help us. A real father helps and provides. Unfortunately, some people misunderstand the role of a father to be that of a “receiver-general” . receiving honor and gifts is not the main function of a father. It is the opposite. Providing for children is the main duty of a father. If you are fortunate, some of your children will remember and honor you. Receiving honor and gifts is simply a privilege that you may or may not receive as a father. Fathers must provide direction! Fathers must provide protection! Fathers must provide for the needs of their children.

The pRincipLes oF *Allos*

“Allos” is a Greek word which means “another of the same kind.” This is in contrast to “heteros” which means “another of a different kind” . Heteros is used to describe something or someone who is different but similar. One of the strong delusions affecting up-and-coming pastors is the delusion that, “I am something special, new and original that the world has been waiting for.” The deception that, “At my arrival, a new and special thing will be introduced into the earth.” Our aim must be to love the Lord and to do whatever He wants us to do. There is a key Scripture that can keep us all on the right track.

But he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him

(John 7:18).

In all that we do, our aim must be to seek the glory of Him that sent us. Our aim must not be to be special or unique in any way. We must desire to be an allos of Jesus. Only the pure in heart shall see God. What is in our hearts is important. Why do we want to be different? Why do we want to be special? Is it not the pride of life that drives this need in us to be different from everyone else? I have come to see that I am not different from any other minister. I am not some rare species whom Christ has chosen for the end- time move. Such thoughts only lead to error. I am a member of the Lord's army. I stand among the ranks and I am glad to be another of the same kind (allos).

Do you want to be a teacher in the house of the Lord? God has been raising up teachers for many years. If God is going to give you a teaching gift, you will simply be another teacher of the same kind. Do you want to raise up a great church? Don't start your ministry in deception. Your church must simply be another church of the same kind. Thoughts of being unique keep people away from learning from obvious examples in front of them. God wants to raise up more shepherds of the same kind. Shepherds who love the sheep! Shepherds who are anointed to feed.

ALLos in cReATion

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness

(Genesis 1:26).

When the Lord created man, he created something that was like Himself. He said that let us make something that is like us: another of the same kind. We were all created as alloses. There are many similarities between man and God because we are made in His image. God is a Spirit and the Father of spirits. Human beings are also spirits living in bodies. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit make up the Trinity we know. Man as spirit, soul and body also makes up a triune being. When men walk in their creative and inventive elements they are clearly exhibiting the likeness of God. Allos: another of the same kind! And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind…and God saw that it was good. And God created…every living creature …after their KIND…and God saw that it was good. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind...and God saw that it was good

(Genesis 1:12, 21, 25).

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good

(Genesis 1:27, 31).

1. ALMighTy goD cReATeD Things To pRoDuce AFTeR TheiR kinD.

The grass produces another of the same kind, the herbs produce another of the same kind, and the whales produce another of the same kind. Even man produces another of the same kind. The Lord God saw that another of the same kind was a good thing! Instead of being preoccupied with producing another of a different kind, let us do what is good. Do you want to be a good singer? Do not aim wide. Aim at something you can achieve. Desire something that you can lay hold on. Desire to be an allos. Your singing ministry will by all means be another of the same kind. Make no mistake about it: when God wants to bring forth another great singer, He is just going to bring forth another of the same kind; an allos of someone else.

2. eveRyone ThAT is gReAT in MinisTRy is An ALLos oF soMeone eLse.

There is something that I have seen under the sun and it is this: Everyone who is a great worship leader is an allos of some worship leader somewhere. Everyone who is a great evangelist is an allos of another evangelist. Every great man of God is an allos of some man of God somewhere. Every anointing is the allos of another anointing. The anointing that came on Peter, James and John was

simply an allos of the anointing that was on Jesus their master. The anointing that was on Elisha was simply another of the same kind of what was on Elijah. recently, I was having breakfast in a hotel in South Africa. Here came a famous Christian singer whose music and CDs were played all over the world.

As we sat together, one of my pastors, Pastor Oko, asked him a question, "Who has influenced you in your music ministry?" He answered, "Oh, Andrae Crouch has been my greatest inspiration." I immediately understood why this fellow was doing so well. He was a shameless allos! He was proud to be another of the same kind. I have noticed that all those who do well in any field, are alloses who closely follow after someone of the same kind. Whether it is preaching, singing, healing, or to pastor, the principle is the same. God is producing another of the same kind and He continually says that it is a good thing.

The Benefits Of *Allos*

1. It is a good thing because it is a humble thing!

2. It is a good thing because no one can boast except in the Lord who created all things.

3. It is a good thing because it is possible to have many great gifts and not just one.

4. It is a good thing because the blessings of God are going to be passed on to another generation. Not only will there be one great man of God for this generation, but there will be another of the same kind for the next generation.

5. Not only will there be one great singer, but many of the same kind. Everywhere those gifted voices are needed to help the anointing flow, there will be an allos.

gReATness in *Allos*

Decide to be a great man of God, decide to be become a great worship leader. Become a choir leader and a shepherd people will not forget. How can you do this? The answer is simple: become another of the same kind. Let us not become mystical about the formula to greatness in God. Let us not beat about the bush. Let's go directly to God's method of producing another of the same kind. If it is great, another of the same kind will also be great. If it is anointed, another of the same kind will be anointed. If it is powerful, another of the same kind will be powerful.

I believe that God has called me to serve Him. I am not special and I am not different. I am simply another of the kind that God has raised up already. I want to find someone with a similar calling and follow hard after him. It won't be long and we will be going home. I don't have much time for trial and error. I cannot afford any time for experiments. I may be in the middle of an experiment when the Lord calls me. I need to get straight to the point. I need the anointing and I need it fast! I need to preach well and I need to preach well now! I need to heal the sick and raise the dead and I want it to happen within the time the Lord has given me.

How about you? How many years of experimentation are you going to dabble with until you become humble and become another of the same kind? Churches that work are pastored by pastors of a certain kind. Churches that grow are pastored by men and women of a certain kind. Since that is also your vision, why don't you become another of the same kind? Allos is the way to the anointing. Allos is the key to greatness in God.

Allos is the open door for you to enter the things of the kingdom. I cannot pretend. What I do is what I have learnt from others. What I teach is what has been taught by another of the same kind. How I minister is what I learnt from an allos. I have no shame about pressing hard after others of the same kind. God said it was good so it must be very good. If it is good for God, it is good for me.

The pRincipLes

1. When you becoMe An ALLos, you DiscoveR The TRuTh ThAT TheRe is noThing neW unDeR The sun.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us

(Ecclesiastes 1:9-10).

Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun. This is a fact that you must accept. You have nothing new to offer and your life will not introduce anything special. Like most ministers, I once thought I was introducing something new. I thought I had some new gifts and ideas, which no one else had ever had. With time, I discovered that all that I was doing had been done before. Every single thing I am doing and saying I have found people who said them before I did. The truth about my ministry is that I am simply following hard after others I genuinely admire. I want to be like them and I am not ashamed to say so! I like their spirit! I like their flow! If I can be another of the same kind, I think it would be a great achievement for me.

2. becoMing An ALLos is ADvAnTAgeous becAuse you ARe becoMing soMeThing ThAT is ALReADy successFuL AnD WoRking.

You are free from the disadvantage of experimentation. You are free from years of wasting time as you discover principles that have worked over and over again.

3. becoMing An ALLos sAves you FRoM The DisADvAnTAge oF hAving To cReATe A neW nAMe. MAking A nAMe is noT eAsy.

That is why names are sold as franchises. A good name is one of the most valuable things on earth. Becoming another of the same kind means you are another with the same kind of name. When you do not mind the association, you can truly benefit from being an allos.

4. becoMing An ALLos MAkes you huMbLe. iT TAkes huMiLiTy To ADMiT ThAT you ARe noT An oRiginAL.

When people are impressed with your ministry, it is not easy to reveal that your message is not original. When people are impressed with your style it is not easy to reveal that you learnt it from somewhere else. Thank God for the humility that becoming an allos gives.

5. becoMing An ALLos MAkes you DepenDenT AnD sheep-Like.

The sheep nature is different from the serpent nature. It is the nature of snakes to be independent and solitary. This is the very opposite of how you must be if you want to walk with the Lord. To be another of the same kind, you will have to depend on someone, you will have to learn from someone and you will have to follow someone.

6. becoMing An ALLos gives you Access To sTRATegies AnD FoRMuLAe ThAT hAve WoRkeD FoR youR kinD.

When I decide to become another of the same kind, all I need are the methods which are used by my allos. What worked for him will work for me. I simply copy the systems and techniques that have produced results in my allos. Since I am going to be the same kind, the same kind of methods that worked for him will surely work for me!

7. becoMing An ALLos MAkes you A MeMbeR oF A pARTicuLAR gRoup.

This unique group of people who are of the same kind, have many things in common. You can now fellowship freely because you have similar challenges and similar experiences. Whenever I meet allos pastors, I can relax and enjoy their company. I can share my challenges and be encouraged by others with similar experiences. In my experience, medical students were often a close-knit family. This is because, together, they experience intense struggles. Heteros students (other students of a different kind) were often unable to relate with the challenges of the medical students.

8. becoMing An ALLos gives you An eAsy RoAD To MinisTRy.

Many who are called to the ministry do not know how to walk the road of ministry. They know God has called them but don't have a clue as to how to progress. Many men of God do not know how to climb into higher heights in ministry. They see other men of God accomplishing great things but don't know that they can do the same! The road to accomplishing the same things is clear now. Humble yourself and become another of the same kind. Don't try to be unique, special or different. Just become an allos. Become another of the same kind. Use the techniques they used. Follow them very closely. Preach what they preach. Pray in the same way that they pray. Seek God in the same way that they do. Have as close a relationship to God as they do. You will surely become another of the same kind.

9. When you becoMe An ALLos, you Move inTo neW AReAsoF MinisTRy FAsTeR.

Becoming an allos quickens your rate of advancement in life and ministry. Because you are following a well-chartered road, you have the benefit of those who went on before you. You will not be slowed down by the things that slowed them down. You will move through obstacles faster because your kind will give you tips on how to overcome. Without experiments and trials, anyone would be faster. One

day, I was going somewhere with someone. He was in his car ahead and I was in mine. When he got into traffic, he called me and told me not to come the way he had gone because there was too much traffic. I ended up getting there faster than he did because he saved me from having to go through his problem. This is common sense. Becoming an allos is actually the art of using common sense.

10. unDeRsTAnDing ALLos heLps you When you encounTeR DiFFicuLTies.

Have you ever wondered why doctors are calm in the face of apparent emergencies? It is because they have seen many other situations of the same kind (allos). When you meet an allos problem or crisis, you are calm because you know this kind. You overcome it faster because you have been taught about this kind of situation.

11. ALLos cReATes An ARMy oF MuLTipLieD FoRce.

The joint effort of people of the same kind produces greater results. Bible teaches that two are better than one. It goes on to say that a threefold cord is not easily broken.

And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken

(Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Two of the same kind is better than one! Three of the same kind, are not easily broken. The multiplied strength of allos is phenomenal. When people of the same mind walk and work together, great power is released.

How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight

(Deuteronomy 32:30).

One of a kind shall put to flight a thousand but two of the same kind shall put to flight ten thousand.

12. ALLos is The nATuRAL WAy To incReAse.

The natural way that all of creation multiplies is by producing another of the same kind.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind…and God saw that it was good. And God created…every living CREATURE…after their KIND…and God saw that it was good. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind…and God saw that it was good

(Genesis 1:12, 21, 25).

The natural way that the church will grow from glory to glory is to produce pastors of the same kind, leaders of the same kind, and shepherds of the same kind. I do not dispute that there are other ways to

move forward. But I can share what has worked for me. Allos! Allos! Allos! I want to be like my Savior. I want to be exactly like Him.

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment because AS HE IS, SO ARE WE in this world

(1 John 4:17).

The keys oF *Allos*

I constantly preach and teach the Word of God in church and God has given me a mega church. This is nothing peculiar to me. It is another of the same kind of anointing that is on other men of God I follow. The world's system teaches that the way to be qualified is to go to school. But the biblical pattern of becoming anything in the ministry is to become an allos. Becoming an allos is the natural way by which God produces ministers. Pride and presumption often keep us from becoming alloses. Practically speaking, if you were able to do as much as certain people ahead of you, it would be a great achievement. Forget about outshining others. If you can just be as good as some of the guys ahead of you, you would achieve a lot.

1. The key To The AnoinTing

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another (ALLOS) Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever

(John 14:16).

In the Scripture above, Jesus calls the Comforter, another of the same kind. The word another in this verse, is the Greek word allos. This means another comforter of the same kind. Jesus could have used the word heteros which would also have been translated another. But heteros would have meant another help of a different kind. The Holy Spirit (Comforter) is the anointing. When Jesus promised another comforter of the same kind, He was promising another anointing of the same kind. He was showing that the same kind of anointing with which He had ministered would be available to the apostles when He left.

Most pastors would hasten their progress in the ministry if they would understand this simple truth. There is no new and special anointing that God wants to give you. He is simply going to give you another of the same kind. Even the apostles were promised another of the same kind. If you study my life and ministry, you will discover that all that I have done is to follow another of the same kind. I constantly train pastors and write books for ministers. This is nothing unusual. It is another of the same kind of anointing that is on my father in the ministry, Kenneth Hagin.

The ministry is a very difficult thing. It takes a lot of grace to even please God. The truth is, there is nothing we can do to please Him. This only complicates the matter. Because in our striving, we must always know that it is by His grace and not by our works. Yet, we are expected to bestow labor on the fields that are white unto harvest. Humility is the greatest achievement in the ministry, yet it is so elusive. Most of us follow after human indicators of greatness. But Christ has shown what true

greatness is. To humbly follow a man, to be obedient and to bear fruit in humility is no mean task. God does not require much from us. He expects us to become an allos of something that is working.

The Alloses Of Elijah

Elijah had two well-known alloses: Elisha and John the Baptist . The Bible is clear on this fact. Elisha asked for a double portion of the anointing that was on Elijah and he got it (2 Kings 2:9). Jesus described John the Baptist as coming in the spirit of Elijah. He actually said,

This is Elias, which was for to come

(Matthew 11:14).

Whenever you have another of the same kind of anointing, it produces the same kind of works. A close look at the lives and ministries of these two alloses will show us how true this is (Table 4-1, Table 41-2). This revelation should inspire you to get an allos anointing.

2. The key To soLving pRobLeMs

In the book of Revelation, John saw a terrible beast (problem) rising out of the sea. He was amazed at the strange and frightening appearance of this beast.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority

(Revelation 13:1-2)

But this was not the end. He suddenly saw an allos! Another of the same kind! The Scripture describes how he saw another beast of the same kind emerging from beneath the ocean.

And I beheld another (ALLOS) beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon

(Revelation 13:11).

It is important to recognize problems of a similar nature when they arise. This will help you to know what you are dealing with. I once preached at a church in which the people were really blessed. The pastor of the church was also happy with the message. However, a few days later, this pastor told me that he was not happy about certain things I had said in his church. I was taken aback because he had initially said that he was very happy with the message. This pastor continued to take up the issue, explaining that certain people among his pastors and congregation were not happy with my preaching.

I came to realize that there was a political spirit at work in that congregation. The church was run on the strength of rumors, criticism and gossip. The different groups and factions always had an opinion about what was going on in the church. It was a church fraught with division, politics and infighting. On another occasion, I preached in another church elsewhere. After the message, the pastor was very happy and congratulated me. He went on to say that he would have liked me to preach that very same message in his church at a larger Sunday service. He wanted the whole church to hear it. But I explained that I would not be available for that service.

However, to my surprise, this pastor called me up later and rebuked me for things that I had said in the message. I apologized immediately for the wrong things that I had said. He explained that after I left, some of his leaders had voiced their objection to parts of my message. I was taken aback. But it was just another of the same kind of church in which rumors, gossip and infighting were common. I noticed many similarities in these two churches. It was an allos of the church I described earlier. I was just having another of the same kind of experience. “The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another (ALLOS) steppeth down before me”

(John 5:7).

This verse shows how there were several people with the same kind of problem in the same place. Since they were all of the same kind, they all tried to receive their healing at the same time. Just as our friend was about to receive his miracle, another of the same kind would step into the pool and receive his healing first. In life and ministry, it is important to recognize allos problems. An allos problem is another problem of the same kind. Whenever you encounter another problem of the same kind, you know how it starts and how it ends. You have seen that kind before so you know what the progression is like. In the practice of medicine, doctors use this principle all the time.

They know about certain kinds of diseases and how they progress. This is how they are able to predict when people will die. that is why they can confidently say things like, “ You'll be alright.” That is how come they do not seem worried about things that disturb their patients. This is called “the prognosis.” The prognosis is the medical prediction of how things will turn out. Whenever doctors see a problem of the same kind, they immediately give a prognosis. Knowledge of the kinds of problems and challenges that face others can greatly encourage you in the ministry.

siniazo

I remember being challenged on many occasions by complex situations. I felt that I was constantly under great pressure. I remember praying to the Lord to relieve me of some of the diverse pressures I was experiencing in the ministry. I knew that none of the people around me could understand my problems. This is because no one in my team really stood in my place. There is a place of loneliness when you are the leader. Although people may not know it, there are several times I have despaired of life. I would long for Heaven because I did not want to be here any more. I began to understand how the day of one's death was better than the day of one's birth

(Ecclesiastes 7:1b).

Many of Solomon's sayings have become real to me. At a point, I thought I was simply depressed or becoming very melancholic. I did not know that I was experiencing another of the same kind of problem that the Apostle Paul had. Then I discovered a verse in which Paul described his problems. He described being “pressed out of measure, above strength”. He explained how he had even despaired of life. I was quite surprised that Paul would describe such pressure. But I was encouraged to know of someone who had experienced my predicament. I realized that it was an allos problem. Another of the same kind of pressure that confronts ministers at a certain level.

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead

(2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

After this, I also discovered how the enemy pressurized Peter. Jesus told him, “Satan wants to sift you as wheat.” “Sift” comes from a Greek word “Siniazo”, which means “to shake in a sieve” and “to cause inward agitation and to try one's faith to the verge of overthrow”. Then I realized that both Paul and Peter had experienced siniazo. God had allowed them to be brought to the brink. It is encouraging to meet another of your kind. You have much in common and your problems are similar. God is able to help you in the same way that He helped the other. My book, “Loyalty and Disloyalty” has blessed many people. I have had countless testimonies from pastors of different churches in different countries.

Some have said to me, “It is as though you knew what happened in our church.” When I preach on loyalty and disloyalty, pastors are always grateful that they didn't give me inside information before I preached. It was as though I was talking about particular people and what they had done in the church.

If you are running a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will encounter the same devil. Your church will encounter an allos of Judas. Why not find out more about this kind so that when you meet him, you recognize him and deal with him. Your challenge to achieve church growth will be the same as mine. It is an allos problem. Your challenge to eliminate disloyal leaders will be the same as mine. It is an 'allos' problem. I marvel when I meet pastors and leaders who do not read much. I am amazed at pastors who do not listen to preaching by others of the same kind.

Allos And Pastors' Wives

Pastor's wives have similar problems. They are married to men of God who have a supernatural and natural side. They are expected to be perfect wives and to have perfect marriages. Many pastors' wives live in fear that one day, the bubble will burst and people will know that their marriages and homes are not perfect at all. Just one discussion with an allos pastors wife, will give you 70% of the healing and help that is needed. The discovery that other pastors' wives experience the same challenges will be the greatest source of healing and restoration for your marriage. It is not easy to be isolated in your problems. Having fellowship with others of the same kind is essential.

Allos And Disloyalty

This is how I recognize disloyal people. By this principle of allos! Traitors and betrayers are so similar but they don't know it. They speak in the same way and act in the same way. The problems they give in the budding stages are often exactly the same. When they think they are outsmarting me, I just chuckle to myself because they are often exact copies of each other. Someone who is soon to leave to you often manifests certain traits. All you need is one or two experiences and you will always recognize them in their infantile stage. As you become experienced with allos disloyalty and familiarity, you will be able to detect and abort Satan's plan for your ministry.

3. The key To TeAM WoRk

And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and ANOTHER (ALLOS) reapeth

(John 4:37).

When people of the same kind work together, it is possible to truly play as a team: "One soweth and another reapeth". When people are not of the same kind, it is very difficult to work together. Conflicts in church leadership are caused when people of different motives are blended together. If I have ambitions for wealth, my decisions will be different from someone who has ambitions for bearing fruit. There will be continuous conflict because we are of different kinds. I have had great joy in transferring some pastors from certain churches to others. When another of the same kind takes over, there is great encouragement for the church. Such changes bring growth for the church. Both pastors

realize they are transitional servants of the Lord with a “limited lease period” in which to please the Lord. No one is there for personal gain and everyone wants to do his best in his season.

One plants the church, and another of the same kind waters it. Because they are of the same kind, they all recognize when it is time for change. However such moves do not work where there are people with different ambitions. Paul and Apollos were alloses: they were of the same kind.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another (ALLOS) buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon

(1 Corinthians 3:10).

Paul did not mind laying a foundation for another to build upon. He did not mind starting up and allowing someone else to continue the work. Paul planted the church and another of the same kind (Apollos) watered it.

4. The key To being LeD by The spiRiT

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification

(1 Corinthians 14:10).

Many years ago I heard Kenneth Hagin say that one of the most important factors in bringing him to where he was in the ministry was the ability to hear the voice of God and to be led by the Spirit of God. I think that after being in the ministry for some years myself, I fully agree with that statement. I believe that the single greatest factor that leads to promotion in ministry is your ability to hear the voice of God. Hearing the voice of God and obeying it is the key to promotion. read it for yourself; this fact is not implied, it is stated explicitly in the Bible.

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth

(Deuteronomy 28:1).

As you can see, being set on high is contingent on hearkening to (hearing) the voice of the Lord. The other day, someone asked me how I knew the voice of God. He said,: “How can you tell that it is God's voice?” The answer is simple: allos! I answered him, “How can I tell my wife's voice (or anyone's voice for that matter)? I have heard it several times so I just know when it is her voice.”

Allos Dreams

How can I know that this dream is from God or from the devil? How can I know whether this impression is from the Lord or from the enemy? How can I know whether this vision is from the Lord or not? The answer is simple. Is it an allos dream, vision or voice?

And I heard another (ALLOS) voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues

(Revelation 18:4).

The word another in the Scripture above is the Greek word allos and it means another voice of the same kind. As you walk with the Lord, you will initially experiment with dreams, visions and voices. After a while, you would have had some dreams, which you confirmed to yourself as being God -sent. From then on, you need to look out for allos dreams, visions and voices. In other words, when you have a dream you must ask yourself, "Is this another dream of the same kind?"When I have a dream or vision, the first thing I do is to find out whether this dream is another of the kind of dream that brings direction to my life or another that brings fear and accusations. One day, I had a dream about the presidential elections in our country. The dream was so vivid and I woke up unusually in the middle of the night (at about three a.m.). The dream came to pass and the elections turned out as predicted. Later on, I had another dream of the same kind (allos). It woke me up in the middle of the night and I had to write it down. I knew immediately that I had had an allos dream. I knew that this was the voice of God for me.

Allos Voices

There are times that God speaks to me by bringing things to my mind. One night, the Lord woke me up and spoke to me about a pastor in my church. As the thoughts came to my mind, I knew that it was the voice of God speaking to me. The Lord asked me to speak to this pastor in the morning. I did, and the results were exactly as He had told me. This fellow resigned immediately. Often, when the Lord speaks to me about one of my pastors, I know when He has spoken. It is the same kind of voice and it comes in the same way. That is how I recognize it. One day, the Lord gave me an unusual dream about one of my staff. In the dream, this staff member was complaining bitterly about several things. It was so unusual and didn't seem real. But I knew that it was the voice of God. It came to pass exactly as I had seen it. But I didn't have to wait for it to happen. It was an allos and it is easy to recognize the alloses. May your eyes be opened to recognize the kind of vision, voice or dream the Lord will speak to you by.

5. The key To A hAppy MARRiAge

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another [allos], committeth adultery against her

(Mark 10:11).

Many do not understand the stance of the Lord Jesus on divorce. The Lord says that it is sin to put away your spouse and to marry another. There is a reason for this. Marriage is a relationship between two human beings. Many of the problems encountered by one marriage are encountered by another. When taken over by deception, many spouses become discontent with each other. Husbands often feel that there is a better woman out there. This husband is affected by a common delusion. Deluded women are constantly discontent with the husband that God has given them. They wish they had a more charming, caring, suave gentleman. They super-imagine what it would be like to be married to certain people.

There are men who imagine that there would be some more exciting, less quarrelsome, less moody, less emotional ladies out there. There are some ladies who watch the pastor preach and have delusions of what it would be like to be married to him. All they need to do is to ask the pastor's wife what it is like to be married to him and their delusions will evaporate. This is why Jesus said it was a sin to put away your wife and marry another (allos). The Greek word is allos and it means another of the same kind. Jesus knew that you would only marry an allos. Another of the same kind! If you are a woman, you would only remarry another unemotional, non-communicating, liking-too-much-sex-male! The divorced man would only remarry another weaker vessel. Another of the same kind!

I have interviewed several men who had to remarry because their wives died. One of these men told me that he had to pick up his daughter from his mother's house. He went on, “My daughter and I used to live with my mother.” He explained, “She has been there since my first wife died.” “Oh, that is sad”, I said. “So are you remarried?” “Oh yes, long ago,” he answered. I was immediately interested and I asked him, “What is it like to be remarried? What is it like to be married to a completely different woman? “He shrugged,” “The same, basically the same”. Then he was quiet and repeated the answer, “I think it is the same thing. A woman is a woman and they are all basically the same.” He had experienced an allos! Another of the same kind! Did you know that more than 50% of people who divorce remarry the same person? Why would people who have bitterly separated come back to each other? They often realize that there is nothing new or different under the sun.

I get amused at people who are very guarded when speaking about their marriages. They try to give an impression of perfection and absolute bliss on earth. They want everyone to think highly of them. Such people are not aware that marriages are simply 'allos' relationships. They are the same kind of relationship between men and women. They are just experiences of the same kind. Refusing to speak

about what you are going through only isolates you and makes you an easy target for Satan. A great revelation is to know the four types of men or women that you could be married to: choleric, phlegmatic, melancholic or sanguine. These kinds or a combination of them summarize what you can expect. Everyone usually falls into these categories. Whoever you marry will be one of these kinds.

In our church, we insist on doing a test to establish what kind of temperament you have. When you know what a phlegmatic, a choleric, a sanguine or a melancholic temperament is, you know what to expect--an allos. Another of the same kind! Understanding allos is the key to a happy marriage. It is worrying to think you have a problematic and deficient spouse. A little reading will establish the fact that you simply have an allos: another of the same kind! May you be content, as you know that God has given us all alloses.

6. The key To The ART oF TeAching AnD pReAching

Hear another [ALLOS] parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country

(Matthew 21:33)

Jesus taught the Word of God in the most beautiful and anointed style ever known to man. His stories are remembered by little children long after they stop reading the Bible. His teachings are relevant two thousand years after He gave them. The things that Jesus said are read by more people, quoted by more authors, translated into more languages, set to more music and represented in more art than any book written by man. Jesus said are read by more people, quoted by more authors, translated into more languages, set to more music and represented in more art than any book written by man. As someone said, comparing the teachings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to those of Jesus is like comparing an enquiry with a revelation!

Years ago, I told my beloved that I wanted to be a teacher of the Word like Jesus was. I thought to myself, “The teachings of Jesus are not easily forgotten, even by children.” I decided to become an allos. Years ago, before I became a pastor, I decided to teach and preach with stories. Jesus told so many stories. He would say, “A certain man had two sons…,a certain man made a great party…, there was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple…,a certain rich man died…, a certain man went up from Jericho…, there was a certain rich man which had a steward…, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth bountifully…,a certain noble man went into a far country.”

I decided that I wanted to be a teacher like Jesus. I didn't want to be anything new; I just wanted to be an allos. The key to becoming a great preacher is to become another of the same kind. Just find a

preacher whose ministry touches lives and become another of the same kind. Learn how to preach by becoming the same as he is. Preach in the same way, teach in the same way and you will be very successful. Don't try anything new because there is nothing new. If the word you understand is “copy” then please copy, photocopy, photograph, replay, rewind, repeat what they say. You will find yourself becoming an allos. Another of the same kind! The reality is that whether you do this deliberately or not, you are becoming the allos of somebody. So why not choose and become the allos of somebody you admire!

ALLOS NO 1: ELISHA

Elijah	Elisha
He caused a famine for three and a half years. (1 Kings 17:1, James 5:17)	He also prayed and there was a famine for seven years (2 Kings 8:1-2)
Multiplied the meal and oil for a widow (1 Kings 17:8-16)	He also increased the oil of a widow (2 Kings 4:1-7)
He dried up the river Jordan (2 Kings 2:8)	He also dried up the river Jordan (2 Kings 2:13-15)
He prayed for the bringing back to life of a little boy (1 Kings 17:17-24)	He also prayed for the raising up of dead boy (2 Kings 4:32-37)
Made a miraculous utterances (1 Kings 21:28-29)	He also made miraculous utterances (2 Kings 8:12)
Had sixteen miracles in his ministry	Had thirty-two miracles in his ministry

ALLOS NO. 2: JOHN THE BAPTIST

Elijah	John the Baptist
Was anointed with the spirit and power (2 Kings 1:9)	Was filled with the spirit and with power (Luke 1:17)
Lived in the desert at a point (1 Kings 17:3,19:4)	Was also known to dwell in the wilderness (Luke 1:80)
Had a peculiar appearance (2 Kings 1;8)	Was also known to dress in camel skin (Matthew 3:4)
Elijah ate strange food from the mouth of ravens (1 Kings 17:4)	John also ate locust and wild honey (Matthew 3:4)

He confronted the king of his day, King Ahab (1 Kings 18:17-18)	He also confronted the ruler of his day, King Herod (Matthew 14:3,4)
The king desired to kill him (2 Kings 1:9)	The king sought to kill him (Matthew 14:3-4)
Elijah preached righteousness (1 Kings 18:20-24)	John the Baptist's main message was repentance (Matthew 21:32)
Was hated by the king's wife, Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-7)	Was also hated by Herod's wife. (Matthew 14:3-10)
Was very influential in the land (1 Kings 18:25-41)	Also had great influence in the land in his day (Mark 11:32)
Elijah was linked to John the Baptist in prophecy	John the Baptist was linked to Elijah in prophecy (Malachi 3:1, Malachi 4:5-6, Isaiah 40:3)
Shall be the forerunner to the second coming of Christ (Malachi 4:5-6)	Was the forerunner to the first coming of Christ (Malachi 3:1)

SECTION VI

Advanced Doctrine of the Anointing

Reasons Why You Must Be Anointed 42

seven ReAsons Why you MusT be AnoinTeD

1. you MusT be AnoinTeD becAuse no one cAn AccoMpLish his MinisTRy by nATuRAL MighT oR by huMAn poWeR buT onLy by The spiRiT.

True ministry will be successful only by the power of the Holy Spirit, (Zechariah 4:6). A false ministry operates at the level of a schoolteacher, lecturer, or a motivational speaker. Decide to become an anointed person and enter into true ministry. Lift up your ministry by the power of the anointing. Without the anointing, you can do nothing.

2. you MusT be AnoinTeD becAuse even jesus chRisT WAiTeD To be AnoinTeD in oRDeR To begin MinisTRy.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph

(Luke 3:21-23).

This event marked the beginning of the ministry of Christ. Up until the age of thirty we do not hear of Him. From this time, when the Holy Spirit (the anointing) descended on Him, Jesus began to preach, to teach and to heal.

3. you MusT be AnoinTeD becAuse even The AposTLes WeRe AskeD To WAiT FoR The hoLy spiRiT (The AnoinTing) beFoRe beginning TheiR MinisTRy.

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me

(Acts 1:4).

What kind of ministry do you think you will have without the Holy Spirit? Even the great apostles who walked with Christ needed to receive the anointing in order to make it in ministry.

4. you MusT be AnoinTeD becAuse gReAT pRopheTs Like eLishA AskeD FoR The AnoinTingWhen given The oppoRTuniTy To Ask FoR WhAT They WAnTeD.

Elisha recognized that ministry was accomplished only through the anointing. When Elijah asked him what he wanted he said he desired a double portion of the anointing.

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me

(2 Kings 2:9).

He could have asked for many other things. He could have asked for Elijah's good name, Elijah's money, Elijah's properties, Elijah's car or even Elijah's wife. But after years of walking with Elijah, Elisha knew where the secret of his ministry lay. He knew that it was all about the anointing, so he asked for a double portion of it. How come you seek something else when great prophets seek the anointing?

5. you MusT be AnoinTeD becAuse king sAuL WAs noT TRAnsFoRMeD inTo AnoTheR MAn unTiL he WAs AnoinTeD.

Saul was transformed from an ordinary person into a king when he was anointed. In the same way you will become a man of authority (a king) in the Kingdom of God when you are anointed. You may use other methods to manipulate and control people but you will never become a man of authority without the anointing. The anointing of the Holy spirit will transform you into another man.

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance

(1 Samuel 10:1).

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).

6. you MusT be AnoinTeD becAuse king DAviD, The AnoinTeD psALMisT AnD WRiTeR oF scRipTuRe, becAMe Who he WAs ThRough The AnoinTing.

David attributed almost every aspect of his life to the anointing. Highly spiritual people recognize the powerful effects of the anointing on different areas of their lives. In Psalm eighty-nine we find King David singing one of the most beautiful psalms of the Bible. In it, he describes the powerful effects of the anointing on his life. He spoke of help, strength, establishment, exaltation, and authority as things derived from the anointing. If the anointed psalmist derived all these things from the anointing, how do you expect to come by the same without the anointing? Can you blame King David when he cried to the Lord “Don't take the Holy Spirit from me”

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me

(Psalm 51:11).

The Holy Spirit (the anointing) was the most precious thing to him.

7. The AnoinTing is essenTiAL becAuse Moses ReFuseD To conTinue The MinisTRy WiThouT iT.

If even Moses would not take one step without the anointing, how come you have the confidence to carry on in ministry without it? In the book of Exodus, we see how Moses refused to carry on his ministry if God removed His power and anointing. When Moses referred to the presence, he was referring to the anointing and the power of God.

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy

(Exodus 33:15-19).

FiFTeen poWeRFuL eFFecTs oF The AnoinTing on youR MinisTRy

Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; WITH MY HOLY OIL HAVE I ANOINTED HIM: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him

(Psalms 89:19-21 NASB).

In one of the most beautiful psalms of the Old Testament, King David sings about the blessings he perceived because he was anointed. In my experience, I find that very few people are able to relate certain blessings with the actual source of those blessings. They do not know where and how they came to be where they are and to have what they have. That is often the foundation of ungratefulness and rebellion. I think it is the greatest quality of a long-lasting minister to be able to think deeply and to realize the source and the origin of all blessings.

It is wonderful to read how David ascribes all kinds of advantages to the anointing. He treasured the anointing so much and would often refer to himself as “the Lord's anointed”. May God open your eyes to see the value of His anointing on your life and ministry! I believe that if more ministers could see what the anointing did, they would desire it and seek it above everything else. If the anointing had such an effect on David's life and ministry, you must expect the anointing to have the same effect on your life and ministry!

1. The AnoinTing WiLL ResuLT in youR Receiving supeRnATuRAL heLp FoR youR LiFe AnD MinisTRy.

David felt that his ministry as a king was helped because of the anointing. He said,

I have given help to one who is mighty;

(Psalm 89:19b NASB).

2. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To be RAiseD up To heighTs in MinisTRy AnD in goD.

David saw his exaltation as a result of the anointing.

I have exalted one chosen from the people.

(Psalms 89:19c NASB).

3. The AnoinTing WiLL esTAbLish you in The MinisTRy.

You can see a clear difference between a ministry that has been established by God and one that is not established. King David became established because of the anointing. '

I have found David My servant; With My holy oil I have anointed him. With whom My hand will be established

(Psalms 89:20 NASB).

4. The AnoinTing WiLL inTRoDuce sTRengTh To youR MinisTRy.

Many times ministers are weak in their preaching and ministry. The strength of delivery and the power to change people's lives is simply not there. The anointing will remove all sorts of weaknesses from your life and ministry. King David felt he was becoming stronger because of the anointing. David said

My arm also will strengthen him

(Psalm 89:21 NASB).

5. The AnoinTing WiLL pRoTecT you FRoM DecepTion.

The greatest and commonest evil that plagues ministers is deception. Deception develops into blindness and hypocrisy in ministry. Many experienced ministers have huge blind spots. They are able to see and remove a small insect but cannot see a huge animal like a camel when it comes by!

You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

(Matthew 23:24 NASB).

Jesus severely rebuked experienced ministers for their deception, blind spots and resulting hypocrisy. “Woe unto you, ye blind guides,” (Matthew 23:16 NASB); 'Ye fools and blind” (Matthew 23:17); “Ye fools and blind” (Matthew 23:19 NASB); “Ye blind guides” (Matthew 23:24 NASB); “Thou blind Pharisee,” (Matthew 23:26 NASB). However, King David felt that he overcame deception because of the anointing, “The enemy will not deceive him” (Psalm 89:22). May you be delivered from deception because of the anointing!

6. The AnoinTing WiLL DeLiveR you FRoM AFFLicTions oF The DeviL.

David believed that sickness and other afflictions did not affect him because of the anointing. Nor the son of wickedness afflict him

(Psalm 89:22 NASB).

7. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse eneMies Who FighT AgAinsT you To be DesTRoyeD.

The Lord's anointed did not think the enemies were being destroyed because he was a good strategist. He did not think his victories were because he had such a great army or that his enemies were weak and unprepared. David felt that he had victory over his enemies because of the anointing.

But I shall crush his adversaries before him, And strike those who hate him

(Psalm 89:23).

8. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To expeRience The Loving kinDness oF goD.

King David realized that God was being kind to him. He could sense divine favors and continual mercies. He believed that he experienced the loving kindness of God just because he was anointed.

My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him

(Psalm 89:24 NASB).

9. The AnoinTing WiLL esTAbLish you As A MAn oF AuThoRiTy.

The horn was a symbol of the king's authority and the phrase “his horn will be exalted” speaks of the establishing of the authority of a person. Authority is something you could take for granted till you lose it. When Solomon died, Rehoboam his son, was unable to maintain control over the country. People simply would not obey him nor serve him! Even though David had never had the devastating experience of losing authority, he recognized that he had great authority which was a result of the anointing. David believed that he was able to exercise authority in his kingdom because of the anointing.

And in My name his horn will be exalted

(Psalm 89:24 NASB).

May your horn be exalted and may God establish your authority and your calling! May you find it easy to lead and to establish control!

10. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To expAnD.

The Lord's anointed, King David, saw his ability to expand beyond the rivers and the seas as a result of the anointing. God gave me a ministry that extended beyond my country. To see the fruits of my ministry I have to fly over many rivers and oceans. All this is a result of the anointing. David believed that he was able to expand his ministry as far as the seas and the rivers because of the anointing.

I shall also set his hand on the sea And his right hand on the rivers

(Psalm 89:25 NASB).

11. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To DeveLop A poWeRFuL ReLATionship WiTh goD.

You see, everything you have is a gift. Even your ability to seek God and to find Him is a gift. I see that the greatest gift a person can have is a close relationship with God. David recognized this and treasured the ability to relate with God. Once again he knew the source of this gift. Long before the era of grace he believed he enjoyed a father-son relationship with Jehovah because of the anointing

He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father.' My God, and the rock of my salvation I also shall make him My firstborn

(Psalm 89:26- 27 NASB).

12. The AnoinTing WiLL give you soMeThing eTeRnAL.

David recognized that he was receiving something more precious than what the kings of the Earth had. Something eternal! Something truly valuable! The anointing will cause your life to have eternal value. Your ministry will bear fruit beyond this Earth and into eternity because of the anointing.

Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth

(Psalms 89:27).

13. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To hAve A covenAnT ReLATionship WiTh goD

. Many people do not realize that God does not relate to everyone by covenants. Do you have agreements with everyone you know? Your marriage covenant and other business covenants are very special agreements with special people! God chooses special people to have covenant relationships with. David believed he had a covenant relationship with God because of the anointing.

And My covenant shall be confirmed to him

(Psalm 89:28)

NASB. May you be one of the special people with whom God has covenants!

14. The AnoinTing WiLL DeFiniTeLy AFFecT youR chiLDRen.

You can expect the anointing to influence your children and bring them to God. All experienced parents know that only the power of God can turn a child in the right direction. Most children abandon childhood ideals that their parents instill in them when they become teenagers. Soon you realize that only the power of God can turn the child in the right direction. Depend on the anointing and your children will be established and become a praise in the Earth. David believed that even his children would benefit from the fact that he was anointed. Indeed the anointing affects the children.

So I will establish his descendants forever

(Psalm 89:29 NASB).

15. The AnoinTing WiLL give you A Long-LAsTing MinisTRy.

Many ministries fizzle out after a few years. Many things that we build have no lasting value. It takes the power of God to cause things to survive and endure. The anointing gives you that edge in ministry. Permanence and longevity will be released into all that you do.

His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven

(Psalms 89:36-37 NASB).

one sTep To The AnoinTing

Are there only seven steps to the anointing? The anointing is the Holy Spirit. The anointing is the power of the Holy Spirit. Are there seven simple steps to the Holy Spirit? If there are seven simple steps to this anointing, why haven't more people received the anointing? When you talk about the anointing, you are talking about God. Can there be seven steps to God? Can God be accessed by following seven simple steps? Certainly not! He says in His Word,

Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour

(Isaiah 45:15).

God hides Himself and is not easily found. That is why He says ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Sometimes you will need to go beyond asking and begin to seek. Sometimes you will need to go beyond asking and seeking, and begin knocking. Years ago, I heard someone sharing about seven steps to the anointing and I was really blessed by the truths in that message. After soaking it in for years I realized that there are many more sets of "seven steps" to the anointing of the Holy Spirit. In this section, I will attempt to share about some of the sets of "seven steps" to the anointing. I want to show you the one-step to the anointing that overrides all other steps in this or any other book. It is the step that involves the sovereign will of God. No matter how hard you work or follow certain principles, God divinely chooses whom He will allow to come close to Him.

Four People Who Understood The Source Of The Anointing

1. jesus chRisT TAughT ThAT goD's pRoMoTion, poWeR, AnD bLessings ARe uLTiMATeLy heAvenLy Decisions MADe by goD.

The mother of the sons of Zebedee desired that her sons sit at the right and left hand of the Lord. Jesus said that they would have to drink of the cup of sacrifice first. But even after paying the price and drinking from the cup of sacrifice, the decision as to who sits on the left or the right is taken only by the Father. This means that no matter how hard you work and how much you sacrifice there are certain things that are decided divinely. Certain positions are given divinely. No matter how many steps you take towards the anointing, it is God who decides whether you will be anointed or not.

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father

(Matthew 20:20-23).

2. king DAviD unDeRsTooD ThAT goD uLTiMATeLy DeciDes Who Receives The AnoinTing.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple

(Psalm 65:4).

God chooses people to come close to Him. God makes people approach His courts. David said 'thou causest them to approach unto thee.'

3. iT WAs ReveALeD To Moses ThAT The pResence oF goD WAs given by goD's oWn choice.

"God's presence would be with you, "Moses was told. Don't forget that Moses was a murderer who was wanted in Egypt for his crimes. God had divinely decided to show him His mercy and His grace. God chooses whom He will honor with His anointing and presence. Your sacrifice and hard work will not always earn you that.

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy

(Exodus 33:15-19).

4. pAuL hAD This ReveLATion Too. he kneW ThAT goD DeciDes Who is honoReD To cARRy The AnoinTing AT The enD oF The DAy.

On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?

(Romans 9:20-22 NASB)

seven pRAcTicAL sTeps To The AnoinTing in joRDAn

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased

(Matthew 3:13-17).

In the seven steps to the anointing in Jordan, we see how our Lord Jesus received the Holy Spirit and became anointed for ministry. Within these few verses lie powerful revelations that will lead you to the anointing you desire. They are steps that our Saviour Himself took. They are the steps that lead to the highest kind of anointing. The anointing Jesus carried was the anointing without measure.

sTep 1: go To youR MAn oF goD.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John

(Matthew 3:13).

God has an anointing for you and He will give it to you through His servant. Unfortunately, many people join the wrong church or ministry. In so doing they end up not receiving the anointing. Sometimes the person carrying the anointing you need is younger than you are or from the “wrong” country. Maybe he is black when he should have been white. Maybe his accent is different from yours and you despise him. John the Baptist lived and ministered far away in the wilderness and wore homemade panties to minister. He ate locusts and wild honey for lunch everyday. Yet this was the person that our Lord was attracted to. You must be attracted to the anointing. You must see beyond the physical. You must see beyond the unattractive human frailties and buy into the anointing.

sTep 2: subMiT To youR MAn oF goD.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized

(Luke 3:21).

Jesus did not only attend John the Baptist's ministry, He submitted Himself to it. When everyone was being baptized He joined them and received his blessing. He did not become a spectator and a commentator. He did not become a critic of John the Baptist's ministry. He was actually baptized by John the Baptist. In other words, he actually followed the teachings and directives of John the Baptist. John was a man of violent preaching and water baptism. Jesus Christ joined fully and flowed with everything. When it was time for baptism, He went forward and participated in it. There SEVEN STEPS TO THE ANOINTING / 309 are many people who do not follow the teachings and instructions of their spiritual fathers. They hang around and are associated with the ministry but do not actually submit themselves to what is being taught.

sTep 3: huMbLe youRseLF in The kingDoM

When Jesus came to John He humbled Himself and joined the ranks of the congregation. 'Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized

(Luke 3:21).

Jesus joined all the people and received His baptism as a commoner. It is important to be humble in the church or ministry God has brought you to. Older, rich people rarely receive the anointing. It is difficult for people who are elevated in society to receive the anointing. The master key to receiving anything in the Kingdom is humility. Jesus said that, “Unless you are humble like a little child you cannot enter the kingdom.” Entrance into the anointing is granted through the key of childlike humility. If Jesus had not humbled Himself and been baptized He would not have received the anointing.

sTep 4: Do noT be LeD by Men.

But JOHN FORBAD HIM, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

(Matthew 3:14).

The fourth step of the anointing involves avoiding the mistake of being led by men. Do not let any human being keep you from doing anything you must do to become anointed. John the Baptist tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized. You may be surprised to know that men of God sometimes give advice that directs you away from the anointing. The anointing is the most precious gift you can receive from God. It therefore comes with the most stringent tests. Who would suspect that the words or advice of a trusted man of God could actually direct you away from the anointing. That is a difficult high-level test for anyone. We all know that the devil would love to prevent you from becoming anointed. This is what happened when Elijah tried to stop Elisha from following him. From Gilgal to Jericho to Bethel and even at Jordan, Elijah tried to get rid of Elisha. This very difficult test shows whether the man desirous of the anointing is tuned to hear God's voice even in the most doubtful, vague and unclear circumstance. When you become anointed you will have great authority and you must be in tune with God.

sTep 5: coMpLeTe ALL necessARy FoRMALiTies AnD FuLFiLL ALL RighTeousness.

You may not know that there are legal requirements for you to be granted access to the anointing. Just as there are formalities that have to be completed for you to enter a school, a bus, an airplane or even a country, there are things you must fulfill in order to legally qualify for the anointing. It would have been a great mistake for our Lord to miss the baptism. His submission to John the Baptist's ministry was essential to legally establish His own authority. Years later, when Jesus' authority was questioned He only made reference to John the Baptist and asked if they recognized John the Baptist's authority. When John Wesley was challenged about the authority by which he preached, he declared that he preached on the authority given to him by his ordination under the Church of England. Every great minister must legally establish the basis for his spiritual authority by having submitted himself to the ministry of his man of God. Unfortunately, many ministers deprive themselves of this legal spiritual authority by not being properly ordained and ushered into ministry.

sTep 6: unDeRsTAnD The TiMings oF goD.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now

(Matthew 3:15).

The Kingdom of God operates with times and seasons. Jesus knew that it was time to be submitted to someone else. There is a season for everything. To become anointed, you must discern when it is time for you to do certain things. Sometimes we are afraid to relate to certain people or do certain things because we feel we will have to do it forever. Do I have to honor this man of God forever? Do I have to submit forever? Do I have to give an offering to this fellow every year? What people do not understand is that there is a time and a season for everything. Jesus would live His life and conduct His ministry independent of John the Baptist. He would even preach and teach on a completely different theme. But at that time of His life and ministry He needed to attend the meetings of John the Baptist and submit to the practices of John. What are you supposed to do at this time? Do not abort your ministry by misbehaving during a crucial and humbling season of your life.

sTep 7: pRAyeR AnD spiRiTuALiTy

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and PRAYING, the heaven was opened

(Luke 3:21).

Pray for the anointing! Pray for the Holy Spirit! Prayer is an important step to receiving the anointing. If you pray and ask God for the Holy Spirit He will give it to you. Whilst the rest of the congregation were probably holding their noses to keep the water out, Jesus was praying. He prayed and the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost descended. Perhaps the most important prayer you will ever pray is the prayer for the anointing. Jesus taught us to specifically pray for the Holy Spirit. This is a prayer for the anointing. The Holy Spirit is the one thing all ministers should pray for.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

(Luke 11:13)

The Holy Spirit will help us. The Holy Spirit will fall on us and our desert ministries will turn into green fields.

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).

The Coming Of The Anointing

And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him

(Matthew 3:16).

Finally, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on the Lord. There began a powerful ministry of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The power that would make mighty miracles happen had arrived. The power that would raise the dead three times was now present. The Holy Spirit had descended in a bodily form on Jesus Christ. He was no longer someone who had just taken up the form of a man, He was someone anointed with the Holy Ghost and power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. May you be anointed by the Holy Spirit! May you have the experience of becoming an anointed person! May you walk with God and follow Him until the day when the precious substance of the anointing is yours.

seven sTeps To The WiLDeRness AnoinTing

“1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 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.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.”

(Luke 4:1-15)

sTep1: being LeD by The spiRiT

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit

(Matthew 4:1).

To arrive at the place of the anointing, you will need to be led by the Holy Spirit. Most people think of the Holy Spirit as someone who leads us to different physical locations. You may think that the Holy Spirit will lead you to go to certain countries or cities. But the Holy Spirit is leading you to a spiritual destination. Your destiny is to become an anointed person. Your destination is a pool of oil and ointment from the Holy Spirit! Years ago, I heard Kenneth Hagin say that the secret that distinguishes ministers, one from another, is the ability to be led by the Spirit. From then on, I became very interested in being led by the Spirit. I believe it is one of the most important skills a person can acquire - the ability to be led by the Holy Spirit!

I fell in love with Kenneth Hagin's book “How To Be Led By The Spirit of God”. Indeed, I believe that it is the distinguishing feature of every minister. Indeed Moses taught that the ability to hear the voice of God would cause Israel to be set apart and distinguished from other colleague nations.

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth

(Deuteronomy 28:1).

Do you want to be set apart and become unique, prominent, outstanding, and even exceptional in ministry? Then learn how to follow the voice of the Holy Spirit. He is ready to lead you to the place of the anointing, just as he did with Jesus .

sTep 2: being soMeone Who cAn be LeD by The hoLy spiRiT To A WiLDeRness

Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness

(Matthew 4:1).

The Holy Spirit led Jesus to a wild and barren desert - a place of hardship away from all comforts and delights. Yet Jesus followed the Holy Spirit to this difficult place. Most people will follow the Holy Spirit only if He is leading them somewhere nice. You must become someone who has the ability to follow the Holy Spirit even when He is leading you against your natural inclinations. This is a higher level of being led by the Spirit. To be anointed, is to be endowed with supernatural heavenly powers. These powers are not for games or for casual use. The anointing cannot be used for your personal interests. An anointed person must follow the Spirit and obey His instructions all the time. If you have not learnt how to follow the Holy Spirit you will probably be a dangerous holder of the anointing. You would be like an irresponsible terrorist with nuclear weapons at your disposal. This is why you must first become someone who can be led anywhere, anytime, any day and even to your own death.

sTep 3: pAssing The TesTs AnD TeMpTATions oF MinisTRy

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted

(Matthew 4:1).

It is important to understand that God tests us so that He can promote us. The children of Israel were led through the wilderness by the pillar of fire. Their first port of call was a pool of bitter waters. Then Moses led Israel from the red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah

(Exodus 15:22-23 NASB)

I believe that God will lead you to bitter experiences as part of His overall plan for your life. It will bring out the best or the worst in you. It will separate believers from nonbelievers. By the time you finish with the wilderness your faith will either be rock solid or you will be out of the ministry. I remember one day when the Lord whispered into my spirit “All that happened was a test.” This was after I had struggled through various experiences for some years. I was indeed taken aback. It had not occurred to me that what I was going through was any kind of test. Many of your experiences are simply tests on the way to the anointing. Allow God to take you through the wilderness and the bitterness of ministry. Surely it is but a step towards the anointing you desire.

sTep 4: pAssing The TesTs oF The FLesh

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God

(Matthew 4:3-4).

Before you are anointed, you must pass the test of the flesh. Jesus was tested with a temptation that involved His fleshly and natural desires. When you become anointed the virgins will love you and men will give themselves for you.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee

(Song of Solomon 1:3).

The anointing will give you easy access to adoring multitudes. If you have not gained control, over your flesh, you will sleep with many women or men before your life and ministry is over. The anointing will eventually give you power and authority over much money. This relationship between finances and the anointing is a prophecy of Isaiah.

But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves

(Isaiah 61:6).

In the day that you walk in the anointing and have access to the riches of the Gentiles how will you behave? Will you steal all the money that belongs to God's church or will you control yourself? Will you exercise self-control over your desires and fancies in the day that you are anointed? This is why God tests your flesh on the road to the anointing. If Jesus was tested in that way so will you! When you are an anointed person you cannot just do anything you want. It's that simple. You can't behave any way and do anything. You are under greater restriction because of the anointing.

sTep 5: pAssing The TesTs To Misuse AuThoRiTy

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God

(Matthew 4:6-7).

On the way to the highest anointing, you will be tested just as Jesus was. Jesus was offered the chance to misuse His power. He was offered the chance to redirect the authority that He had in ministry. He was tempted to use the power, finance and influence of His ministry on something that God had not called Him to. He was tempted to use the influence of His ministry to accomplish some personal feat different from the real call of God. Many ministers use the influence of their ministry to build things which are not inspired by God. The anointing on Jesus was not for mountain climbing or cliff hanging! Jesus was not about to use the gift of God to become the world record holder for the high jump. Jesus was tempted to redirect spiritual energy into secular and social ventures. Before you receive the mighty power of the Spirit, God will test you to see how much you will deviate from His calling when He gives you ultimate power and influence.

sTep 6: being TeMpTeD To TAke shoRT cuTs in MinisTRy

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve

(Matthew 4:8-10).

On the road to the anointing, Jesus was also tempted to take short cuts. He was tempted to simply bow to the devil and receive back the world He had come to save. This was the shortest route to the salvation of the entire world. Through this shortcut He would not have to preach and travel to so many villages. He would not have to suffer persecution at the hands of hateful men. What a quick way to achieve your dreams. This is a common test on the road to the anointing. There is a way that seems right to a man but the end of that way is death.

Sometimes it is not just about getting things done. It is about how the thing was done. It is good to start a church, but how you start the church can affect the future. It is shorter and faster for you to break someone's church and begin your church with half of his congregation. That shortcut will not lead you to the anointing. There are many other shortcuts that avoid humiliation, rejection and accusations. Dear friend, through much tribulation we must all enter into the Kingdom.

sTep 7: going To The pLAce WheRe youR AnoinTing cAn FLouRish

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee

(Luke 4:14 RSV).

The last step to the anointing is the wisdom to go to the place where the gift and anointing on your life can flourish. As you will notice, Jesus went to Galilee and not to Jerusalem. Jesus basically ministered in the region of Galilee which is a few hours drive from Jerusalem. Why did He not go to Jerusalem? He did not go to Jerusalem because the anointing would not flourish in that town. When He ministered in Nazareth He was not received and was able to do very few miracles, (Mark 6:2).

Years ago I had the mind that, “If you are anointed, you are anointed. If it is God, He can work everywhere and with anyone.” However, I have come to discover that God does not work everywhere with everyone no matter how strong the anointing is. One of the most

surprising Scriptures in the Bible is where Jesus lamented over certain towns. Those towns were described as places where He did most of His great works.

Then began he to upbraid the cities WHEREIN MOST OF HIS MIGHTY WORKS WERE DONE, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes

(Matthew 11:20-21).

It is apparent that He did not do great works everywhere. Surprisingly, the Scripture tells us that He could not perform miracles in His own country where He had been brought up. The Bible does not say He did not, it says He could not perform miracles there.

And he COULD THERE DO NO MIGHTY WORK, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching

(Mark 6:5-6)

It is important for you to go to your Galilee. There is a Galilee waiting for you. It is in Galilee that you will find the greatest fulfillment. You will discover cities like Bethsaida and Chorazin where you will do great works for the Lord. Do not try to be greater than Jesus. If Jesus had done great works everywhere, then you can expect that too. But He didn't and He couldn't! If Jesus did great works in certain places then expect to do great works in certain places. Just plug yourself into your Galilee and begin to prosper in the anointing.

sTeps To The AnoinTing in coRneLius' house

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter

(Acts 10:1- 5).

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter...

(Acts 10:44-46).

sTep 1: giving oFFeRings To goD.

A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway

(Acts 10:2).

The story of Cornelius is the story of a man who miraculously received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He was selected from his town, Caesarea, and anointed with the Holy Spirit. The passage in the book of Acts gives us a glimpse into the life of this special person who received the anointing. The first step in the progression of Cornelius' anointing was the fact that he gave to the Lord. The passage does not actually say that he gave anything to God but the Scripture teaches us that anyone who gives to the poor is giving to the Lord.

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed

(Proverbs 19:17 NASB).

Being gracious to the poor was Cornelius' chance to give something to God.

Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God

(Acts 10:4).

These prayers and acts of giving to the poor caught the attention of the Lord. It is not my theory that giving offering catches the attention of God. The angel informed Cornelius that it was his alms (giving) and prayer that arrested the attention of God. Dear friend, the anointing that you seek and the help that you desire can be acquired when you learn this great act of worship.

sTep 2: give oFFeRings To The pooR.

A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway

(Acts 10:2).

Giving to the poor is a special form of giving which is very precious to the Lord. If you observe closely, you will discover that the most anointed people usually have a strong ministry to the poor. Ministering to the poor does not remove poverty from the Earth. Giving money to the poor does not usually solve the problems of poor people. That is not the issue here. God loves the poor and anoints people who love them.

Five Supernatural Benefits Of Ministering To The Poor

David, the anointed psalmist knew that people who remember the poor would attract the power of God. David prophesied that those who helped the poor would be delivered (v.1) and kept alive (v.2). He declared that they would be preserved, (v.3), blessed, (v.4) and strengthened, (v.5), because they remembered the poor.

BLESSED is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will DELIVER him in time of trouble. The LORD will PRESERVE him, and KEEP HIM ALIVE; and he shall be BLESSED upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will STRENGTHEN him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness

(Psalm 41:1-3).

Who wouldn't want these blessings on his ministry? No wonder Cornelius received one of the most precious outpourings of the Holy Spirit recorded in the Bible.

sTep 3: pRAy.

And prayed to God always …Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God

(Acts 10:2, 4).

The next step to Cornelius' anointing was prayer. Scripture tells us how Cornelius' prayers attracted God's attention. Prayer has always been a key to the anointing. No one comes into the presence of God without praying. One of the only prayer topics Jesus taught us to pray was to pray for the Holy Spirit.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

(Luke 11:13).

If you desire to be anointed pray specifically for the coming of the anointing. Ask God to give you the Holy Spirit. Ask God to bless your ministry with His presence and power. Keep praying the same thing for years and your prayers and alms will come up before God and arrest His attention. He will send an angel to you to guide you and bring you to the place of the anointing.

sTep 4: obey visions.

And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa

(Acts 10:7-8).

The next step to the anointing is to obey heavenly visions and dreams. Most of us have dreams and visions which we do not obey. If we were to obey the visions and dreams that God gives to us we would come nearer to the anointing. I know that your dreams seem hazy and vague. You think to yourself, "Surely, the visions and dreams of world famous anointed men of God must have been clearer." I tell you, we all have vague and unclear dreams and visions from the Lord. The drive to obey these visions is the drive towards the anointing. I cannot but thank God for the dreams and visions He has given me, no matter how vague they are. I would not be writing this book if I did not obey my visions and dreams.

You will become anointed as you obey the visions and dreams that God gives you. Each vision and each dream will take you one step closer on the journey to the anointing. Cornelius obeyed the vision and came into contact with Peter. Peter also obeyed a vision and met Cornelius. This opened a door for Peter to preach to Cornelius. Whilst Peter was preaching, Cornelius and his entire household received the anointing. As you can see, one thing leads to another until you are standing in the river of the anointing. Flow with your dreams! Flow with your visions! They are God's instruments encouraging you along the road to the anointing.

sTep 5: bReAk necessARy TRADiTions.

In order to be anointed, traditions had to be broken. Peter was not given to mixing with Gentiles. However, in order for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be released, the lifestyle of Peter had to change.

And there came a voice to him, rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common

(Acts 10:13-15).

There are new things that God has in store for your life. People who cannot be guided into new things often do not receive the anointing. Anointed people often wade into unchartered waters. Do you want God to use you? You may have to do some new things you've never done before. You may have to go to places you've never gone before.

sTep 6: obey The MAn oF goD.

Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: WHO, WHEN HE COMETH, SHALL SPEAK UNTO THEE

(Acts 10:32).

And he commanded them

(Acts 10:48).

The next step to Cornelius receiving the anointing was to be obedient to the instructions of the man of God. Just like dreams and visions, the commands of a man of God gently prod you further down the road towards the anointing. One day, you will operate under a strong anointing and people will listen to you and obey your commands. However, if you do not obey the instructions of a man of God, you are simply sowing the seeds of rebellion for your future.

sTep 7: LisTen To The WoRD oF goD.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word

(Acts 10:44).

Cornelius and his household were listening to the preaching of the Word of God when the Holy Ghost fell on them. Ezekiel declared that the spirit entered into him when the Lord spoke to him.

And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me

(Ezekiel 2:2).

Anyone who exposes himself to the preaching of the Word of God will become anointed. The Word of God is God!

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God

(John 1:1).

That is why I say that the Word of God is God. God is His Word and His Word is He. Cornelius' household was not prayed for. No one laid hands on them. No one touched them. No one blew wind on them. No one anointed them with oil. No one received an anointed prayer cloth. They were just listening to the anointed preaching of the apostle Peter. This is one of the greatest steps to the anointing and it is the step which I experienced for myself in 1988 in a town called Suhum in Ghana. God anointed me powerfully as I was listening to preaching by Kenneth Hagin. Since then I have walked in the anointing and enjoyed God's power and that is why you are reading this textbook.

hoW To peRsisT unTiL The AnoinTing is puT To use

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps

(Matthew 25:1-4).

Will you use the gift that God has placed in you? How sad it is that many talents are never used. In the famous parable of the ten virgins, only five of the virgins actually used their oil for the wedding. The other five virgins ended up going back home frustrated and unfulfilled. Many start out well but are not able to get to the place where the anointing can be used practically. I remember sensing the call of God many years ago. I was a student and I would dream of preaching and teaching. This was a call of God being stirred up by the Holy Spirit. One day, when I found myself standing before thousands of people and preaching, I realized I was beginning to fulfill a longstanding call. Many people are called in their youth but miss the road that leads to practically using the anointing because they do not take the necessary steps. We will discuss how five out of ten virgins were able to persist in their calling until they actually used their gift.

sTep 1: The sTep oF viRginiTy

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins

(Matthew 25:1).

In this story, only virgins carried the oil. Virginity is a sign of purity. “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” It is the pure in heart who end up seeing the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit. Virginity is a sign of purity that is not easy to see. The kind of purity that is needed to obtain the anointing is often difficult to see. It is only God who sees the heart and judges accordingly. That is why people are often surprised at who God uses. They expect that God would use somebody else but God looks at the heart. Practice your Christianity before the Lord so that He would see it. If He is pleased with you, you will receive the anointing.

sTep 2: The sTep oF phRoniMos

And five of them were wise (phronimos) Matthew 25:2)

The virgins who used the anointing were described as wise virgins. The word wise comes from the Greek word “phronimos.” This means to be sensible or practically wise. This kind of wisdom is different from being intelligent or clever. This word speaks of being sensible, levelheaded, reasonable, and practical. Many anointed people are not sensible or practical. Because of this lack of wisdom, many anointed men and women are not able to persist in ministry. Often, being sensible or practically wise makes you look unspiritual. It also has a way of making you look as though you have deviated from a spiritual road. Yet it is this practical wisdom that causes ministers to last longer.

Relaxing and resting often look like unspiritual and off-track activities. Taking your tablets everyday may not sound powerful or anointed, but it is sensible. Playing golf may look like a deviation from spiritual activity. Yet, it is this key that the five virgins had that enabled them to attend the wedding and use the anointing they had. Wisdom is a key ingredient to arriving at the place where you use the anointing. Someone had a vision in which three angels, Faith, Hope and Love were battling on behalf of the saints. The battle was turning against Faith, Hope and Love and the saints of God. Suddenly, a fourth angel appeared and that angel was Wisdom. As soon as the wisdom angel appeared, they began to win the battle. This vision shows the importance of wisdom in our fight to serve the Lord.

The absence of wisdom in your dealings can greatly set your ministry backwards. Financial problems, health problems, administrative problems and managerial problems will always hamper the anointing on your life. In the end, you will not be able to live long enough to practice all that you know and to use the anointing. One day I spoke to a young pastor who had begun a new independent church. I sensed the presence of God and the anointing in his life. I also sensed that he was at an important crossroad which would make him or break him. He would either go over or sink under. The key that would help him survive and persist so that the presence and unction in him would be put to the fullest use is the key of wisdom. O how I pray for wisdom! With wisdom, you can survive and stay out there longer. You can achieve what God has in store for you only through the key of wisdom.

sTep 3: The sTep oF knoWing The LoRD

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not

(Matthew 25:12).

This is a very important step on the way to using the anointing. Without knowing God you cannot survive. God is not a set of principles neither is He a law book. He is Jehovah and you cannot come to Heaven without knowing Him. Similarly, you cannot go and live in someone's house if he does not know you. Why do you expect to live eternally in God's house when He does not know you and has no relationship with you? Spend time seeking after the Lord. A daily quiet time, a daily personal time with the Father will change your life more than ten thousand church services which you attend.

sTep 4: The sTep oF The exTRA MiLe

The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps

(Matthew 25:4 NIV).

The step of going the extra mile is a great key to actually fulfilling the call of God. Unfortunately, Christians do not know that the devil is going the extra mile to keep them out of the call of God. The devil is working overtime to deceive even the elect. I have realized that Christians who don't go the extra mile for fellowship, soaking in the word, prayer, fasting, etc., do not amount to much in the ministry. Five of the virgins were ready to make the extra effort and to find some extra money to go the extra mile. They made assurance double sure that they were going to be part of the wedding. The other five assumed that they would get in anyway. They took the ministry for granted and assumed that it would always be there for them. How wrong we can be. The result of this tragic presumption was that they were left out of the glorious opportunity to partake in the wedding. May you not be left out of any spiritual impartation because you fail to pay the extra price necessary for the ministry.

sTep 5: The sTep oF TARRying

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept

(Matthew 25:5).

Two types of tarrying are necessary for the anointing to become effective. The first is to tarry for years until your time of fruitful ministry arrives. The bridegroom tarried and all the virgins slept. There is nothing wrong with sleeping. What matters is to still be around when the right time comes. The five foolish virgins did not know that they would have to wait a long time to be able to use their gift. Dear Christian friend, if you are not prepared to wait for several years for the right time and the right place and right people, you will probably not amount to much in the ministry. A certain level of ministry is realized only after many years. That is why it is important to start ministry early so you will be alive when that day comes. The second type of tarrying involves praying and waiting on the Lord for hours. Without tarrying you are simply not going to experience God's power and anointing. Tarrying takes up a central place on the road to practically using the anointing!

sTep 6: The sTep oF noT pARTAking in oTheR Men's sins

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves

(Matthew 25:8-9).

It is also important not to partake of other people's sins. Many people who are called will not end up fulfilling the call. Through laziness, sin and many other excuses, they will fail to do what they must do. Such people can easily take you along with them and drag you with them. The five wise virgins recognized that they were about to be drawn into a problem they did not have. They were about to become a part of a group to which they did not belong. They would soon be equally disqualified if they listened to these people. It looked as though they were being asked to be ‘kind’ and ‘share’ what they had but actually it was a temptation to forfeit their ministry. They said, ‘Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.

Do not forsake your ministry for anyone. Neither your father, your mother, your husband nor wife must be able to keep you from God's purpose. Children are no excuse to keep you from your calling. Don't join the people who have sacrificed their call for family, finances and comfort. You are different! You have gone the extra mile. You ought to enter and fulfill your ministry for the glory of God.

sTep 7: The sTep oF eveR-ReADiness

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps

(Matthew 25:6-7).

God will demand your life from you at anytime He wants. The bridegroom decided to have his wedding at midnight. This may sound unusual but that was what he decided to do. You cannot tell God to call on you when you are ready. You cannot give God a time to check up if you will go or not. Sadly, this is what many of us do. You hear them say, 'Wait till after my graduation,' 'wait till after I get married!' 'When you ask them to do the work of ministry they say,' 'Wait till after I get my new nationality,' 'Wait till my children complete their school term then we, as a family will be available', 'Wait until I pay for my house then I will apply for full-time ministry', 'Wait until I buy a new car', 'Wait until after my promotion; then I can serve God.'

This is one reason why many people never practically use their mighty callings and gifts. They are just not ready at the time God calls on them. They wish God would call them at a more convenient time when they would have rounded up various things they are involved with. But the bridegroom calls at midnight! The bridegroom arrives later than expected and there is simply nothing you can do about it. It is time to respond immediately! If you hear His voice, do not harden your heart! Do not disrespect Him with your funny family excuses! All those excuses simply abort your opportunity to use the oil! remember that the devil is going the extra mile to prevent you from ever using that precious gift!

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh

(Matthew 25:13).

seven sTeps To The AnoinTing in The uppeR RooM

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth

(Acts 1:8).

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance

(Acts 2:4).

Here stands the famous promise of our Lord Jesus Christ to send the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit to us! This section teaches about how to move from the promise of Acts 1:8 to its fulfillment in Acts 2:4. How to move from the hope of the anointing to the reality of actually experiencing the power of the Holy Ghost.

sTep 1: FoLLoW The LoRD FAiThFuLLy FoR seveRAL yeARs.

Every single one of the people who received the anointing in the upper room had followed the Lord faithfully for several years. In choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot, the apostles specified that it had to be someone who had been around for a long time.

Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us -- beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us -- one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection. So they put forward two men.

(Acts 1:21-23 NASB).

Do not expect to receive the most important treasures of God's Kingdom after serving the Lord for a few minutes. The qualification for becoming an apostle was to have been around for at least three years.

sTep 2: be AvAiLAbLe To expeRience eveRyThing goD hAs FoR you.

The people who received the anointing were those who had actually seen the risen Lord. For forty days some people had the amazing experience of meeting with the Lord who had been crucified a few days earlier. Definitely the experience of seeing the resurrected Christ would have an impact on their spiritual lives.

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God

(Acts 1:3).

Those who missed this experience were obviously going to be different. There could be no experience that compared with meeting a resurrected person. This would have a profound effect on anyone. All the different experiences God allows you to have, prepare you for the anointing. People you meet and know can change your life forever. The things you hear and experience are not by accident. They are part of the build up towards the day when the power of the Spirit will be poured out on you. The churches I attended, the pastors I knew and the people I met were all divinely arranged to prepare me for my ministry. I believe this strongly. To a believer, there is no accident or coincidence to anything. God rules in the affairs of all men. Do not shy away from any work of the ministry or opportunities to be close to God's power.

sTep 3: DeciDe noT To FoLLoW poLiTics.

Sadly, many people are distracted by politics and earthly power. The disciples fell for this common ministry trap. Following the Lord's resurrection, they felt that this great power would now be turned towards the achievement of earthly goals. The disciples would have fought for the political liberation of Israel from the Romans.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power

(Acts 1:6-7).

Having been in the ministry for some years, I can see how easy it is to be distracted from real Holy Spirit ministry and into a humanistic gospel.

sTep 4: be A huMbLe pART oF The gRoup ThAT goD hAs cALLeD you To.

Being part of your fellowship is one of the greatest steps towards the anointing. God has called us to be sheep that belong to a flock. It takes humility to stay a part of the group which you belong. When you become a minister, you are still a sheep and you belong somewhere.

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem

(Acts 1:4).

Continuing to assemble together with the fellowship that God has given you will eventually lead you to the anointing. Do not abandon your fellowship. Do not desert your brothers and your friends. Through your participation in this group you shall be anointed. I can point to several levels of the anointing that I experienced because I was a part of a fellowship. God's power will come to you through the group He has appointed you to.

sTep 5: FoLLoW The WisDoM AnD The DiRecTion oF The LoRD.

Commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem

(Acts 1:4).

The ministry belongs to the Lord. It is His church. He said, 'I will build my church.' To become anointed, you need to follow the directives of Jesus. If the disciples had not waited in Jerusalem, they would not have received the anointing. No one who was not in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost received the Holy Spirit. If you learn to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit you will become anointed. One thing leads to another. Often we do not know the far-reaching implications of the commands of God to our lives.

sTep 6: WAiT on goD.

But wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me

(Acts 1:4).

Waiting on God is an important step to becoming anointed. As you wait on the Lord, you will become anointed. Isaiah's prophecy contains God's ancient Jewish promise about the power of waiting on the Lord. Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary

(Isaiah 40:31-41:1 NASB)

Right here, there is a promise for strength and for soaring up in ministry. There is also a promise for running and walking in the ministry without becoming weary. Anointed people do not get tired because of the anointing. Unfortunately, few Christians have the time to wait on the Lord. They therefore leave out of their lives one of the most powerful keys for becoming anointed.

sTep 7: Love AnD uniTy

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place

(Acts 2:1).

If you want to experience the anointing, you will have to move away from strife, confusion, and bitterness. Your ministry team will need to be of one mind and one heart. God does not anoint a confused, quarrelling mob filled competition and politics. You will notice that the apostles had to wait until they were all in one place and with one accord before the anointing came into their lives. You will not find the anointing in a team which is filled with bitterness and hatred. You will always find the anointing where there is unity.

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God

(2 Chronicles 5:13-6:1). .

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head

(Psalm 133:1-2).

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves

(Philippians 2:1-3 NASB).

seven sTeps To The AnoinTing in youR oWn coMpAny

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness

(Acts 4:23-31).

sTep 1: knoWAnD beLieve ThAT you cAn be AnoinTeD AgAin AnD AgAin.

It is obvious from the text that Peter, John and many of the other disciples were present for two of the recorded anointings of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. This means that they received the Holy Spirit twice. They were filled twice. They were anointed twice. They received the Holy Spirit repeatedly… The first anointing of the Holy Spirit was recorded in Acts chapter two and the second in Acts chapter four.

The First Anointing: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).

The Second Anointing: And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

It is important to believe that you can be anointed many times. Recently, the Lord impressed on me that there are many gifts and anointings available for His servants. Somehow, there is a feeling that there are only five main gifts of ministry which work with nine subsidiary gifts. Also, there is a feeling that there is one baptism of the Holy Spirit after which we have finished with the Holy Spirit. These two thoughts are delusions that keep us from further anointings and gifts of the Holy Spirit. You can be anointed many times and you must expect many gifts. At different times and seasons of your life, God will give you the anointings that you need. There is not just one anointing. There are several measures of anointing that you will have before it is all over. Jesus is the only one who had the anointing without measure.

sTep 2: eMbRAce peRsecuTion becAuse iT bRings ouT The AnoinTing.

Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ

(Acts 4:25-26).

The disciples experienced persecution. Persecution either makes you bitter or better. It brings out the best in you or the worst in you. When the children of Israel marched through the wilderness, only two pastors eventually qualified to experience the promise. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for forty days and nights. He came out shining and ready to flow in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord does not tempt us but He does test us. The Scripture unambiguously teaches us that God leads us through the wilderness to see what is in our hearts.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no

(Deuteronomy 8:2).

Persecution will either make you bitter or better. Let your troubles lead you to trust in the Lord and in His power and anointing.

sTep 3: choose To obey goD RATheR ThAn Men.

The next step towards the anointing is to be like Peter and John who said they would rather obey God than men.

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard

(Acts 4:19-20).

This is a crucial step towards the anointing. Obey God in spite of the pressure you have from men. In the day that you decide to stop following the pressure that comes from human beings you would have advanced significantly towards the anointing.

sTep 4: Do noT be MoveD by ThReATs, AccusATions AnD oTheR FoRMs oF inTiMiDATion.

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go

(Acts 4:21).

If threats, and accusations can move you from your calling, then you are not worthy of the anointing. As you serve the Lord, there will be threats, constant accusations, and much intimidation. It is part of the package to be harassed continually by accusations of having evil motives and doing wrong things. It takes strength to continue walking steadily towards your goal, in spite of insinuations and aggravating accusations

sTep 5: hAve youR oWn coMpAny To Which you beLong.

And being let go, they went to their own company

(Acts 4:23).

When they were let go they went to their own company. It is important to have your own company who believe in you and who can accommodate you as you really are. Your own company is the small group or fellowship to which you belong. They are your brothers and sisters in the Lord. They are your colleagues in the ministry. They are your friends with whom you will live and die. You will be buried together with your own company and rise together at the resurrection.

seven Advantages of having your own company

a. Your own company will believe in you when no one else does.

b. Your own company will help you when no one else does.

c. You own company will accommodate your weaknesses when no one else will.

d. Your own company will like you when no one else does.

e. Your own company will welcome you when no other group is happy to see you.

f. Your own company will cover up for you when you fall into their hands. g. Your own company will lift you up when you make a mistake.

sTep 6: pRAy speciFicALLy FoR poWeR, MiRAcLes, signs AnD WonDeRs.

This group, which received the anointing, prayed fervently to the Lord. They prayed specifically for signs and wonders to be done at the hands of the apostles. It may interest you to know that God does listen to specific requests that we make. They prayed for healings, they prayed for signs and wonders and they prayed for God's outstretched hand.

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said … By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together

(Acts 4:24, 30- 31).

What a powerful prayer! Someone said he prayed for twenty five years to receive visions and dreams. After twenty-five years he began to have some of the most amazing visions which have blessed many people. Do not minimize the importance of your powerful prayers. Pray for the anointing. Pray for miracles. Pray for healing. It will be yours in the name of Jesus.

sTep 7: uniTeD gRoup pRAyeR

They lifted up their voice to God with one accord

(Acts 4:24).

There is a power that is released when you wait on God alone. But there is a completely different experience that comes by praying together with others who have the same mind and heart. Jesus had two kinds of prayer times. At times He prayed all alone and at times He prayed with His disciples.

Two Kinds Of Waiting On God

This is the kind of prayer that the prophets and teaches practiced in the book of Acts which led to the apostolic ministry and Paul and Barnabas.

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away

(Acts 13:1-3)

This is what happened when Moses went up into the mountain all alone to wait on the Lord.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them

(Exodus 24:12).

sTeps To The AnoinTing in The hoLy hiLL

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved

(Psalm 15).

In the book of Psalms, the dwelling place of God is often described as the holy hill. David often sang about going up to the holy hill and the holy place where God dwelt. The anointed psalmist had visions of himself ascending into God's habitation. His dream was to dwell in the house of the Lord forever. David also knew that not everyone would come into that holy place. He knew that help and answers for prayer would come from this holy hill.

I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill

(Psalm 3:4)

Even in the natural, not everyone comes into the king's palace. Few people ever even see the presidential or royal palaces. It is a common sight to see thousands of tourists standing outside the Buckingham Palace gazing longingly at the building. I have done so myself. I wondered, where exactly does the Queen live? What are their rooms like? What do they eat in the palace? Do they have special sausages and special bread made for them? We all know that it would be a privilege to even peep into one of these royal rooms.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

(Psalm 24:1).

Who amongst us will be privileged to ascend into the holy hill where God dwells? Which of us will enjoy His presence and His power in our lives? We can only have that great power if we can come near to where God dwells.

sTep 1: WALk upRighTLy.

To approach the place of the anointing, you need to be a person who is upright and straightforward,

He that walketh uprightly

(Psalm 15:2).

sTep 2: WoRk RighTeousness.

The second step to the anointing is to be a doer of works of righteousness. Give yourself to doing the works of God and the good deeds that God has determined for you.

And worketh righteousness

(Psalm 15:2).

sTep 3: speAk The TRuTh in youR heART.

Speaking the truth in your heart is all about being honest and saying the truth to yourself.

And speaketh the truth in his heart

(Psalm 15:2).

sTep 4: Do noT bAckbiTe WiTh youR Tongue.

This next step to the anointing is to keep your tongue from speaking evil. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. You can let your tongue bring you into a place of anointing or you can let your tongue destroy your ministry.

He that backbiteth not with his tongue

(Psalm 15:3).

sTep 5: Do noT Do eviL To youR neighbouR.

The next step to the anointing is to be good to people that are near to you (your neighbors). Doing evil to people who are close to you is a sign of a dangerous person.

Nor doeth evil to his neighbour

(Psalm 15:3).

Watch out and make sure you do not do evil to your neighbor - to your husband, your wife, your brothers and your sisters.

sTep 6: Do noT Accuse youR neighbouR.

An anointed person is not an accuser. Train yourself to intercede and to have eyes of love and understanding.

Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour

(Psalm 15:3).

sTep 7: Do noT ADMiRe eviL DoeRs.

Do not admire rebels and evil doers. What you admire speaks volumes about who you are.

In whose eyes a reprobate is despised

(Psalm 15:4).

You must despise what God despises and love what God loves.

sTep 8: honoR Those Who FeAR goD.

The next step to the anointing is to honor people who love God. This means to honor and love all people who serve God, even if they are not in your denomination and even if they are not famous evangelists When God detects that your heart is bigger than your little group, you are ready for the anointing.

But he honoureth them that fear the Lord

(Psalms 15:4).

It's time to see the good in the many different groups of people that love God. Since God revealed this to me, I have found myself admiring all kinds of people whom I had previously despised. The people to be despised are reprobates and not those who fear God!

sTep 9: keep youR pRoMises.

Keeping to your word is very important in the service of God. You need to be a man whose words mean something. God is looking for people who do what they say. When this characteristic is established in your life, you will be ready for the anointing. God has no time for fools whose words mean nothing more than a nursery rhyme.

He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not

(Psalm 15:4).

You may continue to be a member of the church, but if you want to carry the precious anointing you may need to become a man who keeps his words and promises.

sTep 10: Do noT cheAT The innocenT peopLe.

When you become anointed, you will be a man with much authority. If you misuse this authority you will hurt a lot of people. Your wickedness will result in much suffering for many people.

He that putteth not out his money to usury nor taketh reward against the innocent

(Psalm 15:5).

You must become someone who does not take advantage of innocent and poor people.

The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully

(Psalms 24).

sTep 11: hAve cLeAn hAnDs.

To have clean hands speaks of guiltlessness in the secret places.

He that hath clean hands

(Psalms 24:4). When your hands are clean it means you have not engaged in certain sins. When you are anointed, God will use your hands to touch many lives.

sTep 12: hAve A puRe heART.

And a pure heart

(Psalms 24:4).

It is also important to have a pure heart if you are going to be anointed. God deals with the heart and not the outward things that human beings see. David was anointed because of the kind of heart he had. Unfortunately, most people look on the outward appearance. Even an experienced prophet like Samuel looked on the outward appearance and was rebuked by God. Work on your heart because that is what God looks at. Do not feel secure because people praise you. What people think is often wrong. It is what God thinks and says that matters.

sTep 13: AvoiD vAniTy.

Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity

(Psalm 24:4).

An anointed person cannot be interested in frivolous and inconsequential things. There are many useless time-wasting activities that an anointed person cannot be involved with. remove from your life useless socializing and television watching that is vanity. Within the ministry, you must treasure things that have eternal value and that God Himself desires. You cannot lift your soul up into vanity.

sTep 14: Do noT sWeAR DeceiTFuLLy.

Nor sworn deceitfully

(Psalm 24:4).

Making useless promises is a sure step away from the anointing. An anointed person has to keep his word. He cannot deceive with his words. He is a proclaimer of God's word and God's purpose.

sTep 15: seek The LoRD.

This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob

(Psalm 24;6).

Seeking the Lord and waiting on Him is a sure way to approach the anointing. He that waits on the Lord will surely renew his strength.

sTep 16: FoLLoW The LighT AnD TRuTh oF goD's WoRD

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. 4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God

(Psalm 43:3-5).

As you follow the light of God's word, you will come into a place of the anointing. Perhaps the greatest thing that I believe has propelled me towards the anointing is the light and truth of God's Word.

seven sTeps To An AnoinTing you cAn FeeL

The woman with the issue of blood had a common gynecological disorder and was desperately in need of a miracle. Her testimony is one of the most powerful illustrations of how a person can receive an anointing. It is a very important testimony because it illustrates:

a. How healings actually take place: healings take place when the healing anointing leaves the man of God and moves into the one who is healed.

b. The role of feelings in the ministry of the Spirit: we learn from this story that the anointing can be felt. 'I am not moved by what I see, I am not moved by what I feel' is a nice song and is true in many ways. However, this testimony reveals that there is a place for feeling the anointing.

c. The experience of how the person ministering can sometimes feel the anointing moving.

d. The experience of how the person receiving the miracle may actually feel it happening. e. The revelation of the steps that someone can take to receive the anointing

sTep 1: enDuRe youR AppoinTeD suFFeRing.

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse

(Mark 5:25-26).

In order to receive the anointing, you will have to suffer certain things first. In the Kingdom of God, it's not about what you know or who your parents are, it's about what you have been through, what you have suffered, what you have survived!! Contrary to what is taught by the Church today, we are actually appointed and ordained to suffer certain things.

And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto

(1 Thessalonians 3:2- 3)

When Paul came to the Kingdom, God sent a prophet to show him how much he must suffer.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake

(Acts 9:15-16).

The apostle Paul's calling to the high office of apostle was basically a calling to suffer. It was a calling to experience hardships and difficulties. Somehow, suffering softens you, humbles you, and enables you to receive the anointing. Pride cannot receive from God. Pride causes God to dislike you and resist you. Many times, in order to get rid of the pride, God will take you to the place of humbling.

sTep 2: WAiT FoR youR TiMe.

There is a time for everything, including a time to be anointed

(Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV).

Also, because there is a time for everything, you must wait for the time of the anointing. God had determined that this woman would receive the anointing only after twelve years of suffering.

A certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years

(Mark 5:25).

She came in contact with Jesus only after she had suffered for twelve long years. Often, people who experience a certain level of the anointing and ministry have suffered for many years. What have you been through? What have you suffered? What have you survived?

sTep 3: heAR The RighT Things.

'When she had heard of Jesus' (Mark 5:27). Perhaps one of the most obligatory steps to the anointing is hearing the right things. You will be ushered into all that God has for you through what you hear. Faith simply comes by hearing. If you hear about the anointing, you will believe in it and you will expect it. If you hear about visions and revelations you will expect them. Every minister is limited by what he hears. Expose yourself to the right preaching and teaching and you will come into a place of anointing.

sTep 4: go To The AnoinTeD FoR his AnoinTing.

When she … came in the press behind

(Mark 5:27).

This woman physically went to seek Jesus to receive the anointing for healing. Sometimes you have to physically go to a place so that you can be anointed. You may have to travel to another country in order to come in contact with the anointed man and his anointing. Do anything you need to in order to encounter anointed people. There are some people who are carrying a mantle that God has determined to give to you. They are actually in possession of an anointing that is yours. Elijah carried Elisha's anointing for years and it was up to Elisha to get it. Elisha had to leave his oxen and be with the anointed man in order to get his anointing.

sTep 5: sAy The RighT Things.

For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole

(Mark 5:28).

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. What you say will greatly affect everything about your life and future. Even your jokes can affect you. receiving or losing the anointing is associated with what you say. The Syrophenician woman received the healing anointing for her child because of what she said. Jesus told her why she was going to receive the power of God - because of what she said.

For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter

(Mark 7:25-29).

sTep 6: unDeRsTAnDing hoW The AnoinTing is cARRieD AnD TRAnsMiTTeD

For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole

(Mark 5:28).

The anointing is often symbolized and carried by wind, oil, cloth, a dove and garments, etc. It is important to understand these realities if you are to receive the anointing. Coming into physical contact with these things can actually cause you to be anointed. That may be how God will choose for you to be anointed. In this case, the woman believed that she would receive the anointing through a cloth. She believed that there was power in the garments of an anointed person. Perhaps her Jewish background caused her to understand and believe in this reality even more. She had seen how the priests' garments were anointed. She had heard of the anointing being carried by the mantle of the anointed person.

a) The garments of priests were anointed in the Old Testament.

This showed that the anointing was to be carried in the clothes of the priests.

And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him

(Leviticus 8:30-3).

b) Handkerchiefs and aprons were taken from the body of Paul.

These cloths carried the anointing and were able to drive out diseases.

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them

(Acts 19:12).

c) The mantle of Elijah(another type of cloth) carried the anointing.

That is why Elijah threw it onto Elisha when he called him into the ministry. That is why Elisha picked it up after Elijah was taken up to Heaven. He used it as a tool of the anointing to strike the river Jordan and to part it.

d) Saul recognized the Prophet Samuel by his mantle.

Saul asked the witch to describe the man she saw. When she said he had a mantle on, Saul knew it had to be the prophet.

And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself

(1Samuel 28:14).

e) The garments of Jesus were anointed

That is why the woman with the issue of blood had only to touch the hem of His garment in order for her to be healed.

sTep 7: be A DAughTeR.

And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague

(Mark 5:34).

Be childlike. Be humble and you will have access to all the gifts of the Kingdom. The key that opens all the doors to all the rooms of the anointing is humility. Jesus could have referred to her and said 'Woman, thy faith hath made thee whole.' But He called her 'daughter.' There is a difference between a woman and a daughter. A daughter is a trusting, humble and childlike person. Perhaps that is why you have not received the anointing. You need to be childlike and trusting in relation to the anointed and his anointing. A lot of analysis and critique will not bring you into a place of the anointing.

AnoinTing oF pRopheTs AnD RighTeous Men

Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things

(Matthew 13:17).

Jesus was the anointing that many prophets and righteous men had desired to see. He was the great anointing expected for centuries by the Jews. He was called ‘Christ, the anointed one.’ There was no greater power ever to be available on this Earth. Yet, the people could not receive nor engage this great gift. What is it that kept them from the power that was walking around in Jerusalem? What was it that blinded their eyes from seeing the anointing when it was right in front of them? Here was the anointing that many prophets and righteous men had hoped for and they could neither recognize nor receive it. Is it possible that there are great anointings near us that we are neither able to recognize nor receive?

In this section, I am going to share with you seven steps that Jesus spoke about. These steps would have caused even the people of His day to experience that great anointing. These same steps will lead you to receive powerful gifts and anointing that God has for you. There is no point in having great anointings near you and not being able to access them. You can be anointed! You can receive it too. God's will will be done and the anointing will come through to you! These seven steps begin with Jesus explaining how God sovereignly chooses who is to receive of the mysteries of God and end when conversion and healing come to the soul.

seven sTeps ThAT jesus gAve sTep

1: To be DivineLy chosen FoR The AnoinTing

It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given

(Matthew 13:10-11).

It is important to recognize that the anointing is a divine gift. In as much as we are sharing some steps to receiving this anointing, it is not something anyone can just work up. It is God's choice if anyone will receive anything.

sTep 2: To hAve soMe AnoinTing

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath

(Matthew 13:12).

One of the most encouraging realities is to know that if you already have some anointing you become a candidate to receive even more. Over and over in the Scripture it is shown that if you have some gift you are in a position to receive more. If you perceive that God has given you some gift, please open your heart to receive more because that is the law of the Kingdom. This must be very encouraging to anyone who is in the ministry. If you are a pastor you are more likely to receive higher anointings for a greater ministry. If you have dreams and visions, you are more likely to receive even greater revelations. So press on and expect more power to be available to you.

sTep 3: To be AbLe To see WhAT you MusT see

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear

(Matthew 13:16).

The third step to the anointing is to have eyes that can see. Sometimes, I would ask, 'Did you see Sister Comfort?' And the answer would be 'Was she the one with long curly hair in the red and mauve silk scarf?' And I would say, 'What was that?' 'I surely saw Sister Comfort but I don't remember what hair she had nor whether she had a scarf on'. You see, everybody's eyes see different things. When someone stands to minister, some people see a doctor ministering. Others see a tall half-caste preacher. Others see an unmarried man and a potential husband. Still others see an educated person in action. But very few people see what they should really see.

It is important to see and recognize the gift of God when it is at work. One day, I encouraged a sister to serve God in full-time ministry. After talking to her for hours, she stared at me blandly and

remarked, ‘Pastor, my family does not have as much money as yours. If I do not work in the secular world, I will not be able to survive.’ I was taken aback. I realized that all this lady could see was my father's wealth. She could not see the anointing or the grace of God at work. Unfortunately, the inability to see that it was God's power and not my father's money that I was depending on prevented her from coming towards the anointing. Perhaps this is the greatest blockade to receiving the anointing. When you see someone there is often an aspect of the person that your eyes focus on. You may see his wealth, his background, his education, his kindness, his wisdom, his love, his car, his house, and the list goes on. Some people only look at the wife.

Some only analyze the kind of person you have married. One Sunday, one of my pastors introduced me to preach in his church. Somehow, I always remember that introduction. He introduced me as an anointed person! He said he had realized that there was a very strong anointing on my life that supernaturally affected people. He spoke about how the anointing on me had supernaturally affected him. He did not speak about how many churches I had built nor how many sermons I had preached. He did not say where he met me or how kind I was. He just spoke about the anointing and I realized that his eyes were trained on something precious, that was both spiritual and eternal. What you see will greatly determine what you will ultimately receive.

sTep 4: To be AbLe To heAR WhAT you MusT heAR

Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed

(Matthew 13:15).

Once again, as people listen to you they all hear different things. The first thing most people here is your accent. If it is the wrong accent, they will not hear the powerful words of life that you speak. Others only hear the correctness of the grammar and your choice of words. Some people hear the stories that you tell and others remember only the jokes! Still others hear the principles and the Scriptures that you share. And yet there are some who hear things that are beyond any of these. They hear the Spirit speaking! They receive wisdom from the Holy Spirit! Some receive life changing guidance from the Holy Spirit! Somehow, everybody hears differently! Jesus knew that people were hearing differently and that is why He said; ‘hearing they cannot hear.’ May your ears hear what they must hear! If you begin to hear correctly, you will come closer to the anointing that prophets and anointed men desire.

Step 5: To be AbLe To unDeRsTAnD

And shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive

(Matthew 13:14).

Many people have difficulty in understanding issues. This becomes a great barrier to receiving anything. Such people cannot have a peaceful marriage. They never understand issues, no matter how it is explained and how many illustrations are used. There is no point counseling such people as their minds are made up already. The Scripture is clear, 'With all thy getting get understanding.' Understanding what is being said is crucial to the anointing passing through the barrier of your mind and entering your spirit. When you lack understanding, your mind forms a blockade that cuts out the Word of God and all its attendant blessings.

How difficult it is to be married to someone who does not understand issues. This person (man or woman) never agrees to anything, never says yes, never says no, never bends, never yields, never gives in, never sees the point, never flows, and ultimately never understands!! May God touch your understanding that you may see and know the greatness of the anointing that is near you.

sTep 6: To unDeRsTAnD WiTh The heART

And should understand with their heart

(Matthew 13:15).

There is yet a higher level of understanding. This is the place of understanding issues with the heart. When a person understands with his heart, there is no need for extensive explanation. To understand with the heart means to have a depth of revelation that takes away the need for numerous discussions, meetings, demonstrations of data and statistical analysis. When someone understands with the heart, at the beginning of the discussion, he would say something like, "I understand;" "Don't bother to explain;" "I will sort it out;" "Just leave it to me." What a blessing it is to have people who understand with the heart. Many times, the man of God cannot explain everything that is going on. He may not even be able to describe everything that he is feeling. He needs people who are in tune with him and who understand with their hearts. When you begin to understand God, the ministry and men of God with your heart, you are getting nearer to your conversion, your healing and your anointing!

sTep 7: To be conveRTeD

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM

(Matthew 13:15).

The final step towards the anointing that even prophets and righteous men desire is to be converted (to change). Ultimately, God is changing us into His image. Everyone who becomes anointed has been worked upon and has undergone various ‘conversions.’ The Scripture above is clear that a change is required before the ‘healing’ anointing comes. Much change is required to carry the grace of God. The vessel must change! Your life must be completely transformed by the changes God will introduce.

Why TheRe ARe ResTRicTions on AnoinTeD peopLe

The restrictions placed on an anointed priest give us great insight into the restrictions that pertain to a truly anointed person today. Under the old covenant, anointed priests had some restrictions. These old covenant restrictions teach us about restrictions that anointed men of God have on their lives today. Moses gave these restrictions to Aaron and the other priests because of the anointing oil that was poured on them. There were no other reasons for the restrictions but the fact that the anointing oil had been poured on them. You see, when a person is anointed, he is sanctified by the anointing.

Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy

(Leviticus 21:8).

'To be sanctified' means that you are now a special person, reserved and separated for God's service. In a sense, you are married to God's house. You are not free anymore and cannot just do whatever you want. What a small price to pay for the privilege of being an anointed person. I would like to give you reasons why there are restrictions on anointed people.

1. AnoinTeD peopLe ARe sAncTiFieD by The AnoinTing.

And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; AND SANCTIFIED AARON, AND HIS GARMENTS, AND HIS SONS, and his sons' garments with him

(Leviticus 8:30).

2. The WoRk oF The MinisTRy is ResTRicTeD To sAncTiFieD peopLe.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I WILL BE SANCTIFIED IN THEM THAT COME NIGH ME, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace

(Leviticus 10:3).

3. To be sAncTiFieD is To be sepARATeD AnD MADe speciALLy hoLy FoR seRvice.

Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy

(Leviticus 21:8).

And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office

(Exodus 28:41).

4. sAncTiFieD (sepARATeD AnD hoLy) peopLe ARe TheReFoRe ResTRicTeD peopLe.

And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses

(Leviticus 10:7).

NEITHER SHALL HE GO OUT of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; FOR THE CROWN OF THE ANOINTING OIL OF HIS GOD IS UPON HIM: I AM THE LORD

(Leviticus 21:12).

5. iT is DAngeRous To vioLATe The ResTRicTions on The AnoinTing.

And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace

(Leviticus 10:2-3).

FiFTeen ResTRicTions oF AnoinTeD peopLe

1. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT noT hAve Much To Do WiTh The DeAD.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people

(Leviticus 21:1).

Dead things contaminate the anointing. Death is one of the greatest enemies of God and will be dealt with at the end when we sing, 'Death where is your victory. O grave where is your sting?' Jesus said, 'Let the dead bury their dead.' An anointed person has more to do with life than death. When you are truly anointed, you will not spend your time dabbling with death and all that it stands for.

2. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT hAve A coveRing.

They shall not make baldness upon their head

(Leviticus 21:5).

Baldness, (a lack of hair) speaks of the lack of a covering. Paul stated that the hair was a symbol of a covering of a person.

But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering

(1 Corinthians 11:15).

All ministers should have a covering over their head. There should be somebody you look up to and from whom you derive spiritual direction and inspiration. The existence of such people over you in the ministry from whom you derive guidance and inspiration provides an important covering for your life.

3. An AnoinTeD peRson is ResTRicTeD in his physicAL AppeARAnce.

Neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh

(Leviticus 21:5).

Unusual trimmings of the beard and marks on the flesh would make a priest look bizarre and even frightening. When you are anointed, how you dress and appear will be guided by the Holy Spirit. The most anointed people like Elijah and John the Baptist had a peculiar appearance which seems to have been dictated by the anointing. That is why both John the Baptist and Elijah had the same appearance because they carried the same anointing. In fact they were recognized by their unusual appearance.

And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite

(2 Kings 1:7-8).

Some well-known anointed people often have a particular appearance by which they are recognized.

4. AnoinTeD Men ARe ResTRicTeD in The WoMAn They MARRy.

They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God. And he shall take a wife in her VIRGINITY A WIDOW, or a DIVORCED WOMAN, or PROFANE, or AN HARLOT, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife

(Leviticus 21:7,13-14).

Because of the anointing on your life you cannot just marry anyone you want. Many ministries are aborted because this principle is overlooked. Perhaps this should be one of the easiest principles to relate with because it is a well-known fact that marriage makes or breaks a ministry.

5. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT be As peRFecT As possibLe.

Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath ANY BLEMISH, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God

(Leviticus 21:17).

Any kind of physical blemish disqualified a person from being a priest. Paul gives a parallel instruction when he says to Timothy that a bishop must be blameless.

6. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT noT be spiRiTuALLy bLinD.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: A BLIND MAN … or that hath a BLEMISH IN HIS EYE

(Leviticus 21:18,20).

The absence of visions and dreams in a person's life often speaks of the absence of the Holy Spirit. An anointed person will have a minimal amount of supernatural sight even if he is not a prophet.

7. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT noT be spiRiTuALLy sLoW-Moving.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach:…Or A LAME

(Leviticus 21:18).

Following God often involves moving along with the Spirit. The Spirit is always moving. If you cannot or do not move with the Holy Spirit, you become useless to Him because you fall out of step. Sluggishness in spiritual things will leave you far behind God's agenda.

8. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT be spiRiTuALLy sensiTive.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: … or he that hath A FLAT NOSE

(Leviticus 21:18).

A flat nose speaks of someone whose ability to smell or sense things are affected. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is vital for an anointed person.

9. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT noT hAve excesses.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: … or ANY THING SUPERFLUOUS

(Leviticus 21:18).

A man of God cannot be superfluous. An anointed man is restricted because he is anointed. He is not allowed to have certain excesses, which normal people may engage in. When you are anointed you cannot eat as much as you want to. You cannot have a lifestyle with the excesses that many non-anointed people indulge in. You may be restricted in what you eat, drink, buy , wear, drive, live in and do. What a small price to pay to be an anointed person.

10. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT be AbLe To go AnyWheRe AnD Do AnyThing The LoRD WAnTs.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: … Or a man that is BROKENFOOTED, or BROKENHANDED

(Leviticus 21:19).

To be anointed, you cannot restrict God in what He will use you for. There are people who want to be anointed but also want to dictate to God what they will do in the Kingdom. A broken foot and broken hand limit what you do and where you can go. As soon as the anointing comes on your life you are His servant and you will go where He says you will go and do what He says you must do. You cannot say I am above the work of a secretary if that is what He wants you to do.

11. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT noT FAiL To DeveLop AnD conTinue gRoWing.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: … Or CROOKBACKT, or A DWARF

(Leviticus 21:20).

A hunchback or a dwarf speak of someone whose growth has stalled. On the contrary, being anointed requires even more spiritual growth and development than ever before. You cannot stop developing yourself and growing in the Spirit because you realize that God has anointed you. I have to spend even more time developing myself because I am anointed.

12. An AnoinTeD peRson MusT noT hAve unheALeD WounDs.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: … or be SCURVY, or SCABBED, or hath his stones broken

(Leviticus 21:20).

Scurvy is the famous illness caused by the lack of vitamin C. In this illness, the main problem is the inability of the body to heal. Patients are often given vitamin C to promote wound healing. A scab is also a kind of wound. Every minister must be healed of the numerous wounds in his life and ministry. You must not minister out of your wounds and hurts or you will go astray in ministry. When you minister out of your wounds, unforgiveness and bitterness have taken root in your soul.

13. AnoinTeD peopLe MusT sTAy in TheiR cALLing.

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and OFFERED STRANGE FIRE before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD

(Leviticus 10:1-2).

An anointed person cannot offer strange fire which the Lord has not asked them for. Strange fire is something that God has not asked you to do. You cannot switch from being a pastor to being a prophet if God does not require that from you. You cannot change your ministry and do anything within the church just because it is a good thing. Nadab and Abihu paid with their lives for doing things in the church that God had not asked them to do.

14. AnoinTeD peopLe cAnnoT go bAck To The WoRLD. TheiR Lives beLong To goD.

And YE SHALL NOT GO OUT FROM THE DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of

Moses

(Leviticus 10:7).

Anointed people are restricted to staying within the tabernacle. This is why many who are called by God sense that they will die if they leave the ministry. They know their lives are restricted to God's house and His service. That is why Paul said, ‘Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.’

(1Corinthians 9:16).

He sensed death outside the tabernacle. He knew he was doomed if he ventured outside the ministry God had given him.

15. AnoinTeD peopLe MusT onLy be inFLuenceD by The hoLy spiRiT.

DO NOT DRINK WINE NOR STRONG DRINK, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die.

(Leviticus 10:9).

Wine and strong drink are influences that guide the behavior of a person. An anointed person must be under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who guides the ministry. Every ministry that is guided by secular and human wisdom is in great danger. The Holy Spirit has been given to help us walk through the darkness of our generation.

The kingLy AnoinTing

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

(1Samuel 10:1).

The kingly anointing is the anointing that ushered people into the office of a king. It is the anointing that made an ordinary person a king of Israel. The two greatest examples of the kingly anointing are David and Saul. The anointing that was poured upon David is discussed extensively in the section on 'The Lord's Anointed.' You will notice how King Saul rose to a place of authority through the anointing. The Lord sent Samuel to anoint Saul, an ordinary person and the effect of this kingly anointing upon Saul is the subject for discussion in this chapter. You will see how Saul was transformed into a completely different person and was exalted in his kingship because of the anointing.

You may ask; what does this kingly anointing have to do with us? Well, God has called us to be kings and priests unto Him.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father

(Revelation 1:5-6).

And it is only by the anointing that you will fulfill this calling to authority and true kingship.

FiFTeen poWeRFuL eFFecTs oF The kingLy AnoinTing

1. AFTeR you ARe AnoinTeD, you WiLL RecoveR Things you hAve LosT by FoLLoWing goD's WiLL.

When thou art departed from me today, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

(1Samuel 10:2).

2. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL MAke you go FoRWARD AnD MAke pRogRess in LiFe.

Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine

(1Samuel 10:3).

3. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL MAke Men sALuTe you.

You will no longer be ignored and disregarded. Those who despised you will be forced to reckon with you.

And they will salute thee

(1Samuel 10:4).

4. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL cAuse Men To give

To you. It is because of the anointing that men will come to you with gifts and offerings.

And give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands

(1Samuel 10:4).

5. you WiLL go To goD's pResence.

You will find yourself spending more time in the house of God because of the anointing on your life.

After that thou shalt come to the hill of God

(1Samuel 10:5).

6. The AnoinTing WiLL seT you up To MeeT ceRTAin peopLe.

You are now destined to meet certain spiritual men who will sharpen your ministry. When their mantle combines with yours, your spiritual authority will be multiplied.

Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy

(1Samuel 10:5).

7. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL MAke you pRophesy.

To prophesy is to speak under the guidance of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. You will definitely speak under inspiration of the Holy Spirit because of the anointing.

And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them

(1Samuel 10:6).

8. you WiLL be TRAnsFoRMeD inTo AnoTheR MAn.

People who knew you before you were anointed will be unable to relate with you in your transformed status.

And shalt be turned into another man

(1Samuel 10:6).

9. you WiLL Do As occAsion seRve Thee

You will take decisions naturally and flow with God as you go along. Your decisions will be inspired by the Spirit of God from the day that you receive the kingly anointing. That is why you can do 'as occasion serve thee.'

That thou do as occasion serve thee

(1Samuel 10:7)

10. youR heART WiLL be chAngeD.

Without a change of heart, you cannot receive the anointing nor use it. God had to give Saul another heart with which he could carry the anointing.

God gave him another heart

(1Samuel 10:7).

11. youR cALLing WiLL be quesTioneD.

You cannot enter the ministry without being challenged, questioned and resisted. Such things are to be expected at the beginning of your ministry.

And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?

(1Samuel 10:11-12).

12. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL cAuse soMe peopLe To suppoRT you.

And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king

(1Samuel 10:24).

13. soMe peopLe's heARTs WiLL be ToucheD To FoLLoW you.

And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched

(1Samuel 10:26).

14. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL sTiR up opposiTion.

The sons of Satan are equally inspired to oppose every new thing that God does. Without opposition, you should even question your calling. The presence of opposition is a sign of God's calling and anointing.

But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us?

(1 Samuel 10:27).

15. The kingLy AnoinTing WiLL sTiR up DespiseMenT.

Some people will not honor you with gifts and offerings in spite of what God does with your life. Scoffers and mockers are a normal feature on the road to the anointing. Take heart and press on. God has also touched the hearts of several people who will support you.

And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace

(1 Samuel 10:27).

The pRopheT isAiAh's AnoinTing

Isaiah prophesied of the coming of the Spirit of the Lord upon him. In one of the most beautiful chapters of the Bible, he outlines the powerful effects that the coming of the Sprit of God would have on his life. He declares that the Spirit of the Lord (the anointing) would be upon him and would make him do certain things, and would also make certain things happen. When the anointing comes on you, it will also make you do certain things. Let us look at fifteen powerful effects of the anointing that Isaiah prophesied about.

1. The AnoinTing WiLL enAbLe you To pReAch To The pooR.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek

(Isaiah 61:1)

It is the anointing that will release the finances that enable you to preach to people who cannot pay for the gospel.

2. The AnoinTing in youR LiFe WiLL cAuse youR pReAching AnD MinisTRy To heAL bRokenheARTeD AnD DisAppoinTeD peopLe.

He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted

(Isaiah 61:1).

Even though you may have no practical solutions for their problems, the anointing will heal their broken and disappointed hearts. This is why poor multitudes flock to churches that have an anointed pastor. He may not have husbands to give the lonely widows and single women, but the anointing heals their broken hearts.

3. The AnoinTing on youR LiFe WiLL cAuse peopLe ThAT ARe bounD To be seT FRee.

To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound

(Isaiah 61:1).

Many people are bound through the presence of evil spirits and curses. Logical teaching and systematic lectures cannot open the prison doors. It is by the anointing that freedom will come to those you minister to.

4. coMFoRTing peopLe ThAT ARe MouRning is pART oF The MinisTRy oF The spiRiT.

To comfort all that mourn

(Isaiah 61:2).

When you are anointed, people will be encouraged by just seeing you! They will be encouraged when they hear you! They will be encouraged when you lay hands on them! The fact that someone is encouraged does not mean he is healed. Sometimes there are legal reasons why people cannot be healed in this life and this comforting ministry is therefore a powerful alternative for them. This comforting effect is very different from the healing anointing! The power of God that comforts without actually healing the problem is equally powerful. May people be encouraged and comforted when you speak or minister to them.

5. The AnoinTing WiLL ResToRe youR beAuTy AnD ATTRAcTiveness.

To give unto them beauty for ashes

(Isaiah 61:3).

When that anointing is upon a pastor, many people are attracted to his church without knowing why. When the anointing is upon an evangelist many people are attracted to his crusades without knowing why. Anointed people are beautiful. Non-anointed people have to spend a lot of money to make themselves look good. The anointing will make you fresh, beautiful and attractive. Unfortunately, people do not realize when they are being attracted to an anointed person. Through accusations, they shy away from anointed people, thinking they are desirous of something that is not theirs. They do not realize that the anointing has made the person attractive and they are in fact responding to the anointing on the person.

6. The AnoinTing WiLL MAke you joyFuL.

The oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness

(Isaiah 61:3).

This is a reality. The spirit of heaviness is the spirit of depression. The feelings of depression (worthlessness, hopelessness and guilt) are not inspired by the Holy Spirit. They are often demonic affectations. When the anointing is on your life, you will have joy, praise and thankfulness in your heart.

7. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To be A RighTeous peRson.

That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified

(Isaiah 61:3).

Righteousness and holiness are not things that are easy to practice. Most human beings are unable to gain control over their passions and human weaknesses. There are many ministers who boast of their moral uprightness. They secretly think it is their principles and respectable lifestyle that guarantees righteousness. It takes a depth of spiritual insight to realize that it is actually the anointing that makes you a tree of righteousness.

8. The AnoinTing WiLL enAbLe you To buiLD AnD To ResToRe Things.

And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations

(Isaiah 61:4).

You will have the ability to raise up foundations and establish the work of God. You will have the ability to lay brick upon brick. Because of the anointing you will take lives that are shattered and hopeless and make something out of them. Years ago, I appointed someone as a pastor. When another minister heard about this fellow becoming a pastor, he was amazed and said 'Dag is doing wonders.' He could not believe that a desolate person like that could be lifted into the ministry.

9. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse you To ReAch beyonD youR oWn counTRy, youR oWn TRibe AnD nATion.

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers

(Isaiah 61:5).

Some people are international ministers and fathers. Others are simply ministers for their country. Others still are ministers for certain tribes and languages. It takes the anointing to reach beyond your borders and affect foreigners. In the natural, people do not respond much to people who do not have their color or accent. It takes the anointing to break these barriers.

10. becAuse oF The AnoinTing you WiLL be A pRiesT.

But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God'

(Isaiah 61:6).

What an honor and privilege to be called a priest of the Lord. What on earth could make someone like you or me have such an honorable and holy vocation? Only the anointing could do such a thing!

11. The AnoinTing ATTRAcTs WeALTh (AnD iTs ATTenDAnT peRsecuTion).

Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves

(Isaiah 61:6).

This is why many ministers of God are very wealthy. The riches and glory of the Gentiles speak of amazing wealth that comes to the anointed. No one should seek these riches nor the glory thereof. What we must seek is God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. However, it is simply a reality that the anointing causes wealth to come into the hands of the anointed.

12. The AnoinTing ReMoves The shAMe oF youR pAsT.

For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them

(Isaiah 61:7).

Many shameful men and women with an appalling and reprehensible past now stand behind pulpits on Sunday mornings. The anointing has removed the shocking and scandalous past. The spirit of shame and disgrace is bound and they have become men and women of honor and even admiration. The anointing removes confusion. Confusion is a spirit that harasses good people who try to serve the Lord. Confusion is ministered through powerful accusations that sound true. As the anointing comes upon you, shame and confusion depart.

13. The AnoinTing WiLL cAuse youR chiLDRen AnD DescenDAnTs To be bLesseD.

And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed

(Isaiah 61:9).

Throughout the Bible it is clear that God's power affects many generations that come after the anointed. Make a demand on the anointing and expect your children to be helped because of the anointing on your life.

14. The AnoinTing WiLL cLoThe you WiTh gARMenTs oF sALvATion.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels

(Isaiah 61:10).

An anointed person is greatly concerned about salvation. He understands salvation. He marvels at salvation. He speaks about salvation. He preaches salvation and he ministers for people to be saved. When the anointing is departed, the garment of salvation is removed and salvation is no longer a priority in the ministry. In the book of Acts, the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit was that the disciples would be empowered to be witnesses of Christ and His salvation. Truly, the absence of the Holy Spirit changes the church dramatically and makes it into a secular group.

15. TheAnoinTingWiLLcAuseRighTeousnessTo incReAse in TheWoRLD.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations

(Isaiah 61:11).

The anointing will cause praise to be offered to the Lord in many nations. It is only the anointing of the Holy Spirit that can bring about the formation of churches and the gathering of congregations who lift up the name of the Lord to make His praise known.

The beneFiTs oF being The LoRD's AnoinTeD

To be the Lord's anointed is one of the greatest blessings a human being could ever have. King David was anointed as a youth. He had absolutely nothing that would qualify him for the great position he came to occupy. The only new thing in his life that he could point to was the fact that he had been anointed by Samuel. Going forward, he therefore attributed everything to the anointing he had received. He virtually changed his name and called himself the Lord's anointed. In his psalms and songs you see how he refers to himself as the Lord's anointed.

1. WickeD scheMes AnD iDeAs AgAinsT youR LiFe WiLL AMounT To noThing becAuse oF The AnoinTing.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? … against the LORD, and against his anointed

(Psalms 2:1-2).

One day, I heard somebody praying an interesting prayer. He said, 'I cancel all decisions that are taken against me.' I realized then that people meet and take decisions against the Lord's anointed. Their wicked schemes and ideas against your life will amount to nothing because of the anointing. That is why David asked why people even imagine such futile things. What a blessing it is to be anointed! All meetings that are held to plan and to take decisions against your life will amount to nothing in Jesus name.

2. goD WiLL be MeRciFuL To you.

And sheweth mercy to his anointed

(Psalms 18:50).

A man of God is still a man. No matter how God uses you, you will need His mercy. Because of the precious ointment on your life, you can expect the mercy of God when you fall into sin. David was a human being and he fell into sin many times. But he knew that the Lord would show mercy to His anointed. What a blessing it is to be anointed.

3. goD sAves his AnoinTeD.

Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed

(Psalm 20:6).

King David fought many battles. Perhaps he had almost lost his life on many occasions and he knew how easy it was to get killed. He himself said, there is just a step between life and death.

And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death

(1Samuel 20:3).

David believed that it was the anointing that had kept him from taking that step of crossing from life to death. Because you are the Lord's anointed, He will save you from sin and temptation. He will give you the upper hand in the day of your crisis. He will save you from falling into the hands of those that hate you. The anointed psalmist said, 'I know that the Lord saves His anointed.'

4. The AnoinTing MAkes you gLAD.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows

(Psalms 45:7).

The anointing makes you glad. All your sadness will be taken away because of the anointing. What a joy it is to serve the Lord. The futility and emptiness of this life is taken away by the anointing. Any reason for depression is taken away. The anointing is the oil of gladness.

5. The AnoinTing is WhAT gives you spiRiTuAL AuThoRiTy.

But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil

(Psalms 92:10).

Your horn being exalted speaks of God establishing you as a man of authority. The anointing is what gives you spiritual authority. Men will obey you even unto death because of the authority God has given you. Without the anointing your words will carry no power and no one will listen to you. With the anointing even little instructions will be obeyed.

6. youR Wishes FoR youR eneMies WiLL coMe To pAss becAuse oF The AnoinTing.

Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies

(Psalms 92:11).

Those that torment you will be destroyed. You will see the end of those that hate you. You will hear of their funerals and burial services but you will live long and do the works of God.

7. The AnoinTing WiLL MAke you incReAse AnD pRospeR in WhATeveR you Do.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon

(Psalms 92:12).

It is indeed the grace of God that causes a man to flourish when others just deteriorate. The flourishing of a palm tree is unusual because a palm tree can survive almost anywhere. When the anointing is on you, your ministry will flourish everywhere. You may be in a small town but God will cause you to thrive. You may be in a poor city but because of the anointing you will flourish and prosper. You may have been sent to a place of no earthly significance but because of the palm tree anointing you will still succeed and become a fruitful ministry.

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God

(Psalms 92:13).

remember that you will flourish in the courts of God. When you move out of your calling do not expect to flourish. When you leave the ministry, do not expect to flourish. God's promise is for you to flourish within His courts.

8. When you ARe The LoRD's AnoinTeD, you WiLL bRing FoRTh FRuiT even in youR oLD Age.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing

(Psalms 92:14).

When you are the Lord's anointed, you will bring forth fruit even in your old age. God has designed all His creation to have just a short season of fruitfulness. But even when the youthful season of fruitfulness is gone, the anointing will cause you to thrive. Many ministers experience great success at the beginning of ministry but end in tragedy, misery and smallness. When you are the Lord's anointed, your ministry will extend beyond a few years of fruitfulness.

9. The AnoinTing cReATes An invisibLe coveRing AnD shieLD oF pRoTecTion.

Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm

(Psalms 105:15).

The anointing creates an invisible covering and shield of protection. Many people hate the Lord's anointed and criticize him. When you are anointed, people will discuss you and invent stories about you! You will hear all kinds of things about yourself. Perhaps it is a natural temptation to criticize the Lord's anointed, but God gives a very stern warning to all and sundry - Do not touch my anointed!' Many there are who have discovered how dangerous it is to touch the Lord's anointed. How sad it is that aspiring ministers engage in much criticism about people whom the Lord has anointed. Perhaps

this is the one seed which undermines their entire life and ministry - the fact that they have touched the Lord's anointed.

10. goD hAs pRoviDeD A speciAL LAMp Which DiRecTs his AnoinTeD.

I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed

(Psalms 132:17).

God has provided a special lamp which directs His anointed. This lamp will guide the anointed person in the darkness of this life. Expect illumination! Expect visions! Expect dreams! Expect special insight to the Word of God because of the anointing that is on your life. Often I feel the very presence of the Spirit when I read the Bible. May you become an anointed servant of the Lord and may somebody call you 'the Lord's anointed.'

seven sTeps To Losing The AnoinTing

Saul is one of the beautiful Bible examples of someone who received the anointing. Unfortunately, he is also a sad example of someone who lost the anointing. Not only did he lose the anointing but became tormented by evil spirits. A study of his life will reveal how he lost the precious gift and position he had.

Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

And Samuel said, 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. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent

(1Samuel 15:10-29).

sTep 1: Disobeying The speciFic coMMAnDs oF The LoRD To you FoR youR MinisTRy

To disobey God is to reject his commandments. If you sow a seed of rejection you will be rejected yourself. Saul had a specific charge to eliminate the Amalekites. His failure to do this specific duty led to his losing the anointing.

Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night

(1Samuel 15:10- 11).

sTep 2: becoMing big in youR oWn eyes

Saul was anointed when he was small in his own eyes. It is important to continue to see yourself as little, unimportant and insignificant in order to maintain the anointing in your life. ‘And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?’ Saul was made the head when he saw himself as little. The surest way to lose your leadership in ministry is to stop seeing yourself as a little nobody.

sTep 3: becoMing inTeResTeD in The FinAnciAL AnD eARThLy beneFiTs oF MinisTRy

Saul jumped onto the benefits of his war with the Amalekites and grabbed what he could. This angered the Lord because he had not obeyed Him and had developed an interest in other things.

And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

(1Samuel 15:18-19).

sTep 4: sAcRiFicing RATheR ThAn obeying goD

And Samuel said, 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

(1Samuel 15:22).

Doing all sorts of difficult and sacrificial things for God rather than listening to the voice of the Spirit angers God and leads to the anointing being leaked out.

And to hearken than the fat of rams

(1Samuel 15:22).

It is common as the ministry develops to want to do certain things that you know to be sacrificial rather than listening to the direction of the Lord. It will surprise you to know that some of the directives of the Lord will actually be easy and even pleasurable to do. Failure to do these 'easy' things in place of the sacrificial ones is a common reason for losing your place and the anointing.

sTep 5: RebeLLion AnD WiTchcRAFT

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king

(1Samuel 15:23).

Saul was rebuked for witchcraft and rebellion. Witchcraft is the use of other power to control people. Unfortunately, some ministers can use other powers apart from the Holy Spirit to control people. People are not set free and liberated to serve God. They depend on manipulative power and other controls such as curses, accusations, scorning and fear.

sTep 6: sTubboRnness

Saul was also rebuked for stubbornness. Stubbornness has to do with an unyielding and resistant spirit. Someone who needs repeated counseling and prodding to do the right thing is stubborn. Such people have to be rebuked over and over and need countless and diverse methods of communication which yield very little. They never agree, just like Saul never agreed that he had sinned. They never say yes, they never say no, they never give up, they never give in, they never bow, they never yield, they never bend - because they are stubborn. May you not be difficult to reach and difficult to communicate with. It is a sure way to lose the anointing. Try to understand issues quickly.

sTep 7: iniquiTy

All kinds of sin can make you lose the anointing. Sin opens the door for demons to come into the house. Sin becomes the foothold and the legal access of the enemy to your life. Jesus told us that the devil had no access to His life.

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me

(John 14:30).

sTep 8: iDoLATRy

Samuel's famous rebuke of Saul was also for idolatry. Any kind of idol or god that comes between you and Jehovah will cause you to lose God's favor and anointing. The history of the kings of Israel testifies to how God removes His grace when people follow idols.

sTep 9: FeARing The peopLe

Being afraid of people rather than being afraid of the Lord is a common cause for losing the anointing. It is important to fear the Lord.

And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice

(1Samuel 15:24).

The end of Saul's life was as someone who was never anointed. He died the death of someone who had never experienced the grace of God. David lamented

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil

(2 Samuel 1:19- 21).

eLishA's RoAD To The AnoinTing

a. Elisha is the best example of someone who recognized the anointing as the main thing.

b. Elisha is the best example of someone who asked for the anointing.

c. Elisha is the best example of someone who received the anointing.

d. Elisha is the best example of someone who used the anointing.

e. Elisha is the best example of someone who received his spiritual mentor as a father.

f. Elisha is the best example of someone who served until he received the anointing.

g. Elisha is the best example of someone who was more anointed than his father.

Within three remarkable verses of Scripture, we see the amazing revelation of how Elisha moved from being an ordinary plowman to becoming the famous and extraordinary prophet who succeeded Elijah.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him

. (1Kings 19:19-21)

Let us join Elisha on his road to the anointing. Everyone who walks on a particular road ends up at the same place. roads do not lead to different places for different people! That means you can receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit if you walk the road Elisha walked.

seven sTeps on The RoAD To The AnoinTing

1. AccepT The cALL eAgeRLy.

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah

(1 Kings 19:20).

It is important for you to accept the call of God. God calls many but they do not accept the call. Pouting a thousand and one excuses, they give themselves to other pursuits. Many whom God has called choose to live uneventful lives as 'normal.' moral, good Christians. In the name of being conscientious parents and responsible citizens, they choose to ignore the call of God. These people receive a pat on the back from society and friends. They are applauded by the world as the 'type' of Christian they want to see. However, Elisha eagerly ran after the call. God is looking for people who respond eagerly to the offer of ministry.

2. be A FighTing MAn .

And him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu SHALL ELISHA SLAY

(1 Kings 19: 17).

Elisha was a man who could fight with the sword. The Christian life is a battle and the ministry is even more of a battle. Much of the fight goes on in the mind and in the form of temptations, ideas, imaginations, and alternatives to the will of God. There will be continual pressure to fulfill your natural desires and instincts in the wrong way. Satan will present you with a cocktail of fantastic thoughts, suggestions, deceptions and delusions. Until your very last day, an array of people, events and circumstances will present themselves as a complicated network of tests and temptations. Devils presenting as angels and angels whom you suspect to be devils will add to the confusion and the clamor of the battle on this Earth. If you are not prepared to fight, you cannot have the anointing. Paul fought throughout his life and ministry. When he was dying he said, 'I have fought a good fight.' You will fight for every drop of the anointing that you ever receive. You will fight for every position that you ever occupy.

3. be A pLoughing MAn…

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, WHO WAS PLOWING with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth

(1Kings 20:19).

Elisha was plowing when he was called. Plowing the ground speaks of hard work. Elisha was a hardworking and diligent person before he was called. The ministry is full of hard work that lasts for many years. rarely does a lazy person amount to anything in the ministry.

4. unDeRsTAnD WhAT iT MeAns When The MAnTLe is ThRoWn on you...

And Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him

(1 Kings 19:19).

It is important for you to rise up and understand what is happening in your life. The call of God is mysterious and often vague to you. You will sense a call and you will know that something is happening. However, what exactly God is saying and what He intends to do is often hidden from you. It is important to understand the gentle indications that God sends to you. Elisha could have asked Elijah 'Why did you throw your mantle on me? What are you trying to say? Do you think I need some extra clothes?'

Elisha did not say any of those things. He knew what it meant. He lost interest in his oxen! He did not want his plowing business anymore! His eyes were lifted up to something higher. Sometimes when a mantle falls on you, you just have a desire to serve God and to live for him. Sometimes when a mantle falls on you, your interest in secular things dies forever. Nothing attracts you and no amount of money can lure you. These changes in your life are signs that a mantle has fallen on you.

5. kiLL youR oxen…

And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat

(1 Kings 19:21).

Everybody has something valuable when he is called. It is important to sacrifice what you have and follow the call of God to its logical conclusion. Every call has a price. Do not think that you are going have the anointing without paying as high a price as all anointed people do.

6. LeAve youR FAMiLy.

Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee

(1 Kings 19:20).

The call often involves some kind of separation from your family. The family always to pay a price for you to live out the call of God. Many people have a priority list in which they say God first, family second and then ministry third. I wonder where they got this list. I do not agree with that priority list. To me, it is in conflict with what Jesus said.

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple

(Luke 14:26-27).

Husbands, wives, children, brothers and sisters all pay a price because God has called you. Although the cost of ministry is high, the cost of disobedience is even higher and this is what people do not know.

7. seRve The AnoinTeD MAn.

Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him

(1 Kings 19:21).

How necessary it is to humbly serve in the house of the Lord. Elisha was known to the public as the one who poured water on the hands of Elijah (2 Kings 3:11). The apostles were known as the servants and disciples of Christ. Joshua was known as the servant of Moses. Before you receive the depth of the anointing, you must be identified as a servant of somebody.

THE BATTLE FOR THE DOUBLE PORTION

Elisha chose the anointing. He recognized that the greatest thing he could have from Elijah was the anointing. Sadly, many people do not realize that the source of all blessings is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Elisha cheekily asked for a double portion of that precious gift. And he got it!

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, LET A DOUBLE PORTION OF THY SPIRIT BE UPON ME

(2 Kings 2:9).

receiving the anointing was not easy for Elisha. Elijah told him that he had made a difficult request. Elisha had to battle for the anointing. He had to battle to stay with Elijah. The battles took place in four locations: Gilgal, Jericho, Bethel and Jordan. Each of these four places is symbolic of something important on the road to the anointing. The mention of each city brings memories of important spiritual events that took place in the Bible.

THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF GILGAL

In Gilgal, Elijah tried to get rid of Elisha. This was a test to see whether Elisha would persist in his quest for the anointing.

And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from GILGAL. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to BETHEL. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth,

and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel

(2 Kings 2:1-2).

There is a symbolic meaning of Gilgal in the battle for the double portion anointing.

1. giLgAL - The pLAce oF ciRcuMcision

This is where the Israelites were circumcised before they crossed the Jordan. It symbolizes the pain of sacrifice. Cutting away of the flesh; the painful cutting away of the world; cutting away the reproach of the world.

And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, AND ENCAMPED IN GILGAL, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did JOSHUA PITCH IN GILGAL. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. AT THAT TIME THE LORD SAID UNTO JOSHUA, MAKE THEE SHARP KNIVES, AND CIRCUMCISE again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised

(Joshua 4:19-5:5).

2. giLgAL - The pLAce WheRe The MAnnA ceAseD

The supernatural provision of manna ceased in Gilgal. From now on, the Israelites would have to sow and reap for themselves. They were no longer going to stumble into things accidentally. When you get to Gilgal you will be expected to deliberately do the right things that lead to the anointing. We often stumble into many of the blessings in the Kingdom. However, there comes a time when God expects you to deliberately work to get what you need. You may have stumbled into the right church and enjoyed the ministry of a good pastor. But a time may come when God will expect you to deliberately choose a man of God to serve and to follow.

And the children of Israel ENCAMPED IN GILGAL, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. AND THE MANNA CEASED on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year

(Joshua 5:10-12).

THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF BETHEL

In Bethel, other prophets were used to discourage Elisha and to try and dissuade him from following Elijah. Elijah himself advised Elisha to give up his quest for the anointing and stay away. But Elisha was too clever to fall for this suggestion.

And the sons of the prophets that were at BETHEL came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to JERICHO. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho

(2 Kings 2:3-4).

There is a symbolic meaning of Bethel in the search for the anointing.

1. beTheL -- The pLAce Which TAkes you FuRTheR AWAy FRoM youR vision

If you look on the map, you will find that going to Bethel meant going further away from Jordan. Just as coming to Bethel meant a diversion from the path to Jordan, you will have to follow the Spirit into places that may seem like a diversion from your goal. Dear Brother, there are times God's direction may seem very strange but it is all part of the road to the anointing.

And JACOB went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. AND HE DREAMED, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And HE CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE BETHEL: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first

(Genesis 28:10-19).

2. beTheL -- The pLAce oF DReAMs AnD visions

This is the place where Jacob had dreams and visions of God. When you come to Bethel you will have visions and dreams and God will direct you in more supernatural ways.

3. beTheL -- The pLAce oF encounTeRing goD peRsonALLy

Bethel is the place where Jacob encountered God Himself. He did not depend on Abraham's experience. He got to know God himself when he got to Jordan. When you get to Bethel, you will not depend on what someone says about God. You will begin to know Him for yourself.

4. beTheL -- The pLAce oF coMMiTTing youR FinAnces To goD

It was at Bethel that Jacob committed his tithes to the Lord. Surprisingly many men of God have difficulty in doing the right thing when it comes to finances.

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. AND JACOB VOWED A VOW, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I WILL SURELY GIVE THE TENTH UNTO THEE

(Genesis 28:18-22).

5. beTheL -- The pLAce oF MAking covenAnTs WiTh goD

It was at Bethel that Jacob made a covenant with God. He promised to serve Him and worship Him. He promised his tithes to God. There comes a time in the ministry when you enter a deeper relationship with God. A marriage relationship is a deeper and higher relationship because of the covenant involved. Your ministry enters a new dimension when there are covenants between you and God.

THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF JERICHO

Once again, junior prophets and other anointed people were used to discourage Elisha. Elijah told Elisha that it was all over and that they needed to separate. Elisha refused to leave the old man even though he knew they had come to the end. What is the point in following an old man who has no future? But that may be the road to the anointing.

And the sons of the prophets that were at JERICHO came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to JORDAN. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on

(2 Kings 2:5- 6).

1. jeRicho -- The pLAce oF WAR

This is the place where Joshua fought his first battle.

2. jeRicho -- The pLAce FoR geTTing RiD oF DisLoyALTy

This is the place where disloyal people must be eliminated. The elders of Israel promised to kill anyone who murmured against Joshua. This is a good place to get to in your ministry. With the removal of disloyal people, traitors and liars, you have the peace you need to build.

Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage

(Joshua 1:18).

3. jeRicho -- The pLAce oF AuThoRiTy

It is in Jericho that Joshua cursed anyone who would attempt to rebuild Jericho. His words came to pass because he had become a man of authority in Jericho.

In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun

(1Kings 16:34).

THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF JORDAN

Finally, they got to Jordan, the place of the anointing. Elisha had to ignore the staring eyes of fifty unanointed prophets. Under the intense glare of these other ministers, Elisha persisted with his vision of getting a double portion - and he got it.

And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan

(2 Kings 2:7).

1. joRDAn-- The pLAce WheRe youR DesiRes ARe MeT

Elisha's dream of receiving the double portion was fulfilled at the Jordan.

2. joRDAn -- The pLAce oF spiRiTuALvision

Elisha's eyes were opened at the Jordan and he saw spiritual chariots and spiritual horses. This was a condition for him to receive the anointing – 'If you see me!!' When you get to Jordan, you will begin to have important visions and dreams that will you lead to the heights of ministry.

And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, IF THOU SEE ME when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so

(2 Kings 2:7,10).

Having spiritual eyes and spiritual vision is key to receiving the anointing. Peter James and John's eyes were touched at the mount of transfiguration. Paul's eyes were touched on the road to Damascus and he saw a bright light. Jesus' eyes were opened and He saw a dove and heard a voice at Jordan. Every time you have a vision, you are being drawn nearer to the spirit realm.

3. joRDAn -- The pLAce oF ALeRTness

Spiritual alertness is important to receiving the anointing. Elisha was awake and alert when the spiritual chariots and horses were passing by. That is why he received the anointing. People who sleep during powerful services often miss the moment the mantle falls. They are fast asleep when the chariots and horses come by. Forgive!

4. joRDAn -- The pLAce oF becoMing A son WiTh youR FATheR

It is at Jordan that Elisha called Elijah his father. When you get to the place where you see your spiritual mentor as a father, you are qualified to receive the anointing. You may initially see him as a friend or even a boss. But when he becomes your father you are ready to receive the blessings of a son or a daughter.

5. joRDAn -- The pLAce oF RenDing youR cLoThes AnD puTTing on The gARb oF youR FATheR

This is the place where you take off your own identity and put on the identity of the spiritual person you are following. You will begin to look like him and act like him. John the Baptist looked like Elijah because he carried his anointing.

6. joRDAn -- The pLAce WheRe you Receive The AnoinTing

Jesus was baptized and filled with the Spirit in the Jordan. The Jordan was parted three times by heavily anointed people. The first time, the Jordan was parted by Joshua as he walked across with the people of Israel. The second time the Jordan parted was when Elijah and Elisha crossed it together. The third time the Jordan was parted was when Elisha crossed back with the double portion he had just received.

The LiFe oF The AnoinTeD

1. An AnoinTeD LiFe is DeDicATeD To The sAMe hARD MessAge.

Elijah faithfully delivered difficult messages to the king. A truly anointed person does not mind how unpopular he becomes.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word

(1 Kings 17:1).

2. An AnoinTeD LiFe is A LiFe oF pARADoxes AnD conTRADicTions.

a) Elijah had the power to stop rain but needed to hide from the Queen.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan

(1 Kings 17:1-3).

b) Elijah, the anointed person had power to hold back rain and power to make the rain fall.

Yet Elijah had no power to keep the river from drying up And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land

(1 Kings 17:7).

c) Elijah had power to hold back rain but no power to prevent a widow's son who lived with him from dying.

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him

(1 Kings 17:17).

3. An AnoinTeD peRson WiLL Live AnD pRospeR in goD's WAy.

God will decide how you get money and also how you will use it. Usually, anointed people are blessed with finances, but in a humbling way.

a) Elijah was fed by ravens

And THE RAVENS BROUGHT HIM BREAD and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook

(1 Kings 17:6).

b) Elijah was fed by widows

And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I HAVE COMMANDED A WIDOW WOMAN THERE TO SUSTAIN THEE

(1 Kings 17:8-9).

4. goD coMMAnDs vARious peopLe To beLieve in AnoinTeD Men!

God commands various people to love anointed men! God commands various people to help anointed men!

And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days

(1 Kings 17:15).

5. AnoinTeD Men hAve To enDuRe being The MinoRiTy.

Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men

(1 Kings 18:22).

6. AnoinTeD Men MusT oveRcoMe The jezebeLs oF TheiR MinisTRy.

The highest kind of anointing often attracts the spirit of Jezebel. Jezebel may manifest in different ways

a) Jezebel may be a woman who uses her body to entice and seduce you.

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and SHE PAINTED HER FACE, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot

(2 Kings 9:30-33).

b) Jezebel may be a woman who tries to control your ministry by eliminating those she does not like and manipulating the rest.

For it was so, when JEZEBEL CUT OFF THE PROPHETS of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water

(1 Kings 18:4) c

c) Jezebel may be a wife who manipulates and controls her husband’s life and decisions

But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I WILL GIVE THEE THE VINEYARD of Naboth the Jezreelite.

SO SHE WROTE LETTERS in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And SHE WROTE IN THE LETTERS, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. And THE MEN OF HIS CITY, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, DID AS JEZEBEL HAD SENT unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them

(1 Kings 21:5-11).

d. Jezebel may be a man who controls your ministry and your decisions.

e. Jezebel may be a husband who manipulates and restricts his wife.

eighT WAys you cAn knoW ThAT you ARe AnoinTeD

People often ask, ‘How will I know when I am anointed?’ I think there are several biblical pointers that can help answer that question:

1. When you begin To Do ceRTAin Things ThAT youR MenToR/FATheR Does, iT is A sign you ARe cARRying his AnoinTing.

Elisha did many of the same kind of miracles that Elijah did. He actually did twice as many miracles because he had a double portion of his anointing. One day I realized I was writing books that were similar in direction and content to someone I had been following for years. This, to me, was a sign that I had been carrying a certain anointing for some time.

2. When peopLe MAke pARTicuLAR coMMenTs AbouT youR pReAching.

Almost every preacher has people commending him after he ministers. That is not what I am talking about and that is certainly not a sign that you are anointed. However, there are certain remarks and comments that are made about anointed preaching. I always notice when those kind of remarks are made about people I know. To me, it is a sign that the anointing has began to seep through into their ministries. Notice how these unusual remarks were made about Jesus' preaching ministry.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were ASTONISHED AT HIS DOCTRINE

(Matthew 7:28).

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and MANY HEARING HIM WERE ASTONISHED, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

(Mark 6:2).

And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because ALL THE PEOPLE WAS ASTONISHED AT HIS DOCTRINE

(Mark 11:18).

And all that heard him were ASTONISHED AT HIS UNDERSTANDING AND ANSWERS

(Luke 2:47).

And they were ASTONISHED at his doctrine: for HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER

(Luke 4:32).

3. heALing is A sign ThAT you ARe AnoinTeD.

You can raise your voice when preaching to stir up the congregation. You can also crack many jokes to make people happy with your sermons. All sorts of human elements can be used to enhance preaching. However, you cannot conjure up genuine miracles. People are either healed or they are not. Healing is definitely a sign of the presence of the anointing.

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; for God was with him

(Acts 10:38).

4. MinisTeRing To pooR peopLe is A sign oF The AnoinTing.

The sign of an anointed person is that he ministers to poor people. Most people minister in easily accessible cities and to people who can pay for good preaching. However, preaching to the poor for whom the gospel is ordained is a different matter. Most preachers are guided

by financial realities and the absence of danger. Ministers know how good it feels to receive a fat honorarium and they love to go back to such appreciative and rich congregations over and over again. It takes a really anointed person to be guided by the Holy Spirit to minister amongst the poor.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor

(Luke 4:18).

5. evAngeLisM is A sign oF The AnoinTing.

Jesus specifically said that the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit (the anointing) would be power to witness and evangelize.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth

(Acts 1:8).

The absence of evangelism in many churches and ministers is a sign of the lack of the Holy Spirit (the anointing). The money-loving spirit of the world has replaced the Holy Spirit in the Church!

6. Missions To The enDs oF The WoRLD is A sign oF The AnoinTing (The hoLy spiRiT).

You will notice how the Holy Spirit (the anointing) drives you to the ends of the world with the gospel. The failure of the Church to move out of its comfort zone into the remote corners of this world is surely a sign of the absence of the anointing (the Holy Spirit).

7. TRAveLLing To MinisTeR is A sign oF The AnoinTing.

The Bible says that Jesus went about doing good and healing people. He did not stay in one place. He traveled to where the souls were. He went to many towns and villages doing the work of God. He did all these because He was anointed to travel and bring deliverance and salvation to many.

8. vARious gooD WoRks ARe A sign oF The AnoinTing.

There are many non-specific good works that emanate from the anointing. The Bible teaches how Jesus went about DOING GOOD and healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). The anointing is the Holy Spirit who is God. You cannot limit Him to doing particular things. Many people do different things because the anointing is on their lives.

a. The anointing can make you like someone (Mark 1:18)

b. The anointing can make you desire certain things. (Philemon 2:13, 1Tim 2:1).

c. The anointing can make you lose interest in earthly things (Colossians 3:1-2).

d. The anointing can make you a helper (Exodus 31:2).

e. The anointing can make you a builder (Exodus 31:2).

f. The anointing can make you have ideas and wisdom (Isaiah 11:1)

g. The anointing gives you various abilities for various things (Exodus 31:3)

FuLFiL youR MinisTRy

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth

(Matthew 25:24-30).

Once you have received the anointing, it is important to fulfill your ministry. The anointing is not for picnics, games and other pleasures. It is for the serious work of winning this world to Christ. Unfortunately, some people who receive the anointing do not fulfill their ministries and do not use the gift that they are given.

seven ReAsons Why soMe peopLe Do noT FuLFiL TheiR MinisTRies

1. noT WAnTing To Lose AnyThing

They do not want to do anything through which they will suffer loss. Unfortunately, the ministry is all about losing your life so that you can gain.

2. noT WAnTing AnoTheR peRson To beneFiT WiThouT chARge

The man with one talent did not want his hard master to benefit when he had not suffered. This attitude keeps many out of the ministry. The ministry is all about doing things for people who have not paid for it. It is all about ministering to the poor, who receive expensive blessings at no charge.

3. FeAR

Fear is a demon which keeps people away from fulfilling their ministry.

4. hiDing TALenTs

Hiding the talents and gifts is a reason why people do not fulfill their ministries. When gifts are hidden, no one sees them and no one encourages them.

5. WickeDness

It is wickedness to withhold something that can benefit someone. Many people have no love for people who are suffering and it is this wickedness which prevents them from giving to the needy.

6. LAziness

Sheer laziness keeps many people away from fulfilling the ministry. Ministry involves hard work. Lazy people have no place in the vineyard. Jesus told us to pray for laborers not holiday makers!

7. unpRoFiTAbLe

This servant was a person who was not useful for anything in the church. He was not helpful, he did not contribute to anything, he did not help to build anything. He was totally useless! Useless people are dangerous people. If you are not faithful with little things, how will you be faithful with the anointing? May the words in this textbook help you to find the anointing!

SECTION VII

Biblical Doctrine on Women

Scriptural Beauty 46

chARAcTeRisTics oF spiRiTuAL beAuTy

God is very concerned about whom you marry. And I'm not only referring to your marital happiness, but also to how your partner will influence you in the future. You see, life is very long and marriage is a very long road. There are many years ahead of the bride and groom after they say, 'I do.' Many things are going to happen and much water is going to pass under the bridge. Will your marriage make you or break you? This is what God is concerned about. When God was instructing the Israelites, He was very concerned about whom they would marry, because He did not want anyone to turn their hearts away from Him. God knew that the wife would influence the husband and the husband would influence the wife. I am a married man. I influence my wife and my wife influences me. It's as simple as that. Sometimes men think that as the head of the home they will always lead the way. But you must realize that if you are married your wife will influence you.

Solomon was a great man. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred 'official' girlfriends. Imagine how many outdoorings–baby dedications he probably had to attend! Solomon was a wise man. One day, Solomon prayed to God in a way that really touched God's heart. He didn't ask for money or a new car; he rather asked God to give him wisdom to be a good pastor. God was so touched that He decided to give Solomon more wisdom as well as all the riches he did not ask for. My brother, can you see that Solomon really loved God? Can you see that he was really called of God? And yet, in his latter years Solomon began to backslide. He became a fetish worshipper. He became an idol seeker. He left the ministry and resigned from his church.

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father

(1 Kings 11:4).

He started well, but ended badly. How could this happen to Solomon? The answer is simple. Solomon married the wrong women! First of all, some of his wives were not Christians. Secondly, although some of them were Christians, they were lukewarm. Some of his girlfriends did not love the ministry as much as he did. Remember, Solomon had the purest of motives. No one ever prayed like Solomon did. Some of the ladies just loved the glamour of being married to King Solomon. They didn't mind being the 21st or 75th wife. All they wanted was the position (many women are position-minded).

After many years, the effect of the wrong marriages and wrong relationships began to tell. Solomon was not as strong as he was before. He could not continue quarrelling with his wives over church. Solomon was tired of arguing about where to go for fellowship. Solomon wanted peace in his old

age. So he just ‘flowed’ with his backslidden wives. My dear friend, if this is what happened to Solomon whose name is in the Bible, what do you think will happen to you? If you make the mistake of marrying for the wrong reason you will live to regret it.

This section is also about choosing a wife. When a young man goes out to find a wife, he often looks for certain qualities. The spiritual brothers will say, ‘Oh, I love her, because she’s so spiritual.’ The aristocratic brothers will say, ‘Oh, I love her, because she’s so educated.’ The Goobley-Gob tribe will say, ‘I love her because she speaks my language fluently.’ But there is one thing that all men look for—whether they admit it or not; and that is BEAUTY. Every man wants to marry a beautiful girl. As I said before, God wants you to marry a beautiful person. But His primary concern for you is whether or not the person you marry will one day turn your heart away from Him.

The person you marry is not only a matter of life here on Earth, but also a matter of Heaven or Hell. Marriage is something you must not take lightly or wantonly, but soberly and in the fear of the Lord, duly considering the causes for which marriage was ordained. Since one of the cardinal things most men and women look for is physical beauty, it is important for every Christian to understand the subject of beauty. I want to share with you, ten important attributes of beauty that every Christian should know about.

Ten iMpoRTAnT ATTRibuTes oF beAuTy

1. beAuTy is iMpoRTAnT.

Beauty is vain:...

(Proverbs 31: 30).

From this verse, you might conclude that when the Bible says beauty is vain, it means beauty is not important. But that isn't true. Beauty is vain, but very important. Why then is beauty vain? Beauty is vain because it will fade. An elderly lady once came to my church to minister. She took out a photograph of a very beautiful young girl and asked the congregation who it was. Everyone said the photograph was a picture of her daughter. Her reply was a big surprise. She revealed that she was actually the one in the photograph. This elderly lady had changed so much with the passage of time. Her beauty had virtually faded away. The old lady said, 'Look how ugly my face has become.' She went on to make the point that life was like a vapor, appearing for a short while and then disappearing. I realized from that day that beauty was really something that was temporary.

Beauty is vain because it will fade. If all you look for in a marriage partner is beauty, then when the beauty begins to decrease with the years, you will look for another beautiful face. Although beauty fades away, it is still important, because whoever you marry must look nice to you! After all, you will look upon her until you die. This is the secret every woman must know. Your beauty is important in getting and keeping your husband's attention. If you had to look good to get him, then you will have to look good to keep him!! Some Christians who feel they are spiritual, make the mistake of closing their eyes in the choice of a partner. They think that when they refuse to use their physical senses in the choice of a partner, they are being led by the Spirit. Some people will never admit that the beauty and attractiveness of the young lady were crucial in making their decision. They think such an admission means that they are carnally minded. But the Bible tells us,

she[or he] is at liberty to be married to whom she will

(1 Corinthians 7:39).

You must marry somebody whom you want to marry! Do not marry somebody just because she was recommended to you. You must be satisfied and happy with what you see. You are going to live with that person. Marriage is not something you must endure but something you must enjoy. You must marry somebody who looks nice to you! When I first met my wife I thought she was the most beautiful person I had ever seen, and I still think she is. Her physical beauty has always been important in my attraction to her. Beauty will count in your happiness and satisfaction in marriage.

2. eveRyone is beAuTiFuL.

Everyone is beautiful. There is nobody who is not beautiful in one way or the other. I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made

(Psalm 139:14).

Everyone has some beauty about him or her. You should never think that you are not beautiful. God took time to design you, to create your nose just the way it is. Perhaps He made your ears small, and your lips as full as they are. God has not made you a disappointment or a disaster. He does not make such things. If you are short, being short is beautiful. If you are black, being black is beautiful, and if you are white, being white is equally beautiful.

I am black, but comely

(Songs of Solomon 1:5).

I do not know what you are, but God made you that way. Look at yourself in the mirror, and admire yourself. There is no need to change any part of your body. There are women who have undergone surgery to enlarge their breasts. The irony is that there are other women who are also having surgery to reduce the size of theirs! Accept what you are, and believe that you are beautiful because God made you. Some ladies think of themselves as ugly because someone teased them when they were young. Maybe in school they gave you names. So although you have grown into a beautiful young lady, you still believe you look like a sparrow. Do not listen to those lies; they are just jealous of you. When people tease you, they are probably jealous of you because you have something they do not have and they envy you.

You must begin to appreciate beauty in everything that God has made. Some people are not happy with what they have. But there is beauty in every man and in every woman. Look at yourself in the mirror, and admire yourself. There is no need to change any part of your body. It is funny that those who are short want to be tall, so they constantly wear high-heeled shoes. And those who are tall think they are too tall and wish they could be a little shorter! You must know that you are beautiful the way you are. Look at yourself in the mirror again and say, ‘Lord, I thank you because I’m beautifully and wonderfully made!’

3. beAuTy Lies in The eyes oF The beholDeR.

In other words, beauty depends on who is looking. As an African, I have often wondered about how identical the Chinese look. Many times, I have not been able to tell the difference between two Chinese women. To me, they are all alike—they have the same eyes, same face, and same skin color.

This is my perception. However, a Chinese man will be able to see the difference. To him some of the Chinese ladies are strikingly beautiful and some are even ugly; but to me they are all the same.

In the same way, a Korean may not be able to tell the difference between two Africans. So we judge beauty by what we have been taught by our society. Our environment affects our perception. The typical African will be looking for certain physical features before concluding that a woman is beautiful. He may be looking at how plump she is, how big her backside is and how fat her legs are! The European might be looking at almost the opposite. He may be looking for what is thin and tall! I chose my wife because, to me, she is beautiful. Beauty therefore depends on who is looking. Be confident about your choice, since it depends on you.

In Europe, some Africans are noted for using passports belonging to others when they want to dodge immigration officers. Sometimes, they go unapprehended, because the European immigration officers cannot even tell the difference between two Ghanaians, for example. Some Africans have realized that if they frown, the immigration officers cannot tell from the passport pictures who they really are! A friend wanted my opinion about the lady he was contemplating on marrying. He thought the lady was not really beautiful. I was totally surprised, because to me she was pretty. Everyone has a different judgment concerning beauty. Beauty depends on who is looking. So be confident about your choice.

4. eAch Age hAs iTs beAuTy.

There is the beauty of a sixteen-year-old girl that a thirty-year-old woman does not have. There is the beauty of a thirty-year-old woman which is different from that of a sixteen-year old. There is a beauty of the forty-two-year-old lady, and another beauty of a fifty-six-year-old. At each age, a person possesses a particular beauty. Therefore, there is no need to wish that your wife or husband would be sixteen years old again. There are men who are married to beautiful thirty-year-old women, and yet when left alone their eyes hover all over for teenagers. At a point they begin to think that their wives are not beautiful. They do not realize that each age has its own type of beauty, which cannot be repeated.

You cannot become young again! The beauty of each age was created by God. You can never rewind to the beauty of a past age. You cannot go backward and you cannot go forward. You are what you are. Some people think that you can only be beautiful when you are very young. But that is not true. I know some beautiful fifty-year-old ladies. And I know some beautiful sixty-year old ladies. I have even seen beautiful seventy-year- old women. Exploit that beauty, corresponding to whatever age you are.

5. beAuTy is Like A FLoWeR.

If she pass the FLOWER of her age, and need so require,...let them marry

(1 Corinthians 7:36).

Beauty has a point at which it blossoms like a beautiful flower. Most plants have a flowering stage. And the plant which flowers is the one that is attractive to both insects and humans. The same can be said about a woman. There is that age in a woman's life we call the flower of her age, or the flower of her beauty. That is when you are most noticeable. That is when you are most beautiful, and when men propose to you. For some women, this stage comes for a short while, but for others the period is longer.

Unfortunately, the development of the mind and maturity of most Christian sisters do not correspond to the development of their beauty. This leads many of them to reject the right partner. When they are at this stage, a brother may propose to marry them. They would laugh it off because at that time others may have already proposed. So many brothers come their way during this period. Just because you are in the flower of your age should not make you laugh at people who want to marry you. You keep tossing the suitors away. You make jokes about them. You show others the letters they wrote to you. But what you do not know is that this period does not last forever.

You must not only use your emotions. You need to use your mind. rely on the Spirit of God and wise counsel to know when to marry and whom to marry. Remember that the peak of your beauty is indeed like a flower—it is temporary. A Christian once said, "When a brother proposes to you, don't just throw him off." You must marry somebody with bright eyes for the future. I have counseled ladies who wept because they were single at an age when they could have been married. This is very common! When I asked, "Why did you 'bounce' that brother?" They replied, "Pastor, I don't even know why I did that!" You must not only use your emotions; you must use your mind. You must think logically! You must use the Spirit of God and wise counsel in deciding when and whom to marry. When a Christian brother proposes to you, don't just laugh him off because he doesn't have a car. I look at some of Ghana's presidents and leaders.

Some years ago, some of them were probably hustlers. Who would want to marry a nobody? However, when they became leaders, their wives were probably glad they married them. I want you to realize that your beauty is not going to last forever. A time will come when you will want to marry anything that is wearing trousers. Dear sister, be wise and receive counsel before it is too late!

6. youR beAuTy DepenDs on MAny FAcToRs.

Everyone God has made is beautiful. But this beauty can be enhanced by several factors. Beauty depends on your hair, your dressing, your make-up, and even the time of day.

But if a woman have long hair, it is a GLORY to her:...

(1 Corinthians 11:15).

As a brother looking for a beautiful wife, you must remember that the beauty you see in that lady can increase or decrease depending on certain things. A lady's dress today may make her look outstanding. Her hair style tomorrow may make her lose marks. Even the entire happiness of the lady affects her looks! Pimples are often caused by emotional disturbance. I tell my wife how I like her hair. To me she looks nicer in certain hair styles. I tell my wife how to do her hair. When she does it the wrong way I tell her, 'No, I don't like it this way.' After all, who is she looking beautiful for? Since I am her husband, she desires to please me and no one else.

If you are a wise husband, invest in your wife's clothes. Do whatever you have to do to make her look even more beautiful. You will reap what you sow. If you sow into your wife's clothes, you will reap great dividends. Beauty depends on many factors, so invest in those factors. Years after the wedding, Christian wives and husbands must still look attractive. The Christian wife should not use pregnancy and babies as an excuse for being careless about her looks. Some of you husbands do not even care what your wives look like! But you admire other people's wives on television. What a shame! As a good husband, you must also be concerned about which dress your wife wears because her beauty also depends on her dressing.

I want to tell all women to make every attempt to dress nicely. Some dresses just do not look good on certain women! The fact that you see somebody wearing that dress does not mean that if you also wear it, it will look nice on you. beauty is very variable. Many young men become confused about the looks of their fiancée/beloved. They wonder, 'Is this girl beautiful?' They oscillate in their feelings towards her. What is happening here is that they are confused by the apparent variations in beauty. If all that you are looking for in a woman is physical beauty, you are likely to be confused. Beauty also depends on money. The more money you have, the more you can invest in making your wife beautiful. So Christian husband, here is another reason why you should prosper—beauty!

7. exTeRnAL beAuTy is DepenDenT on inTeRnAL beAuTy.

Outward beauty depends on the inward beauty. If you are beautiful inside it shows on the outside. Sometimes I see people and I know that spiritually they are not doing well. I saw two pictures of a lady who had converted from witchcraft to Christ. One photograph showed her when she was practicing witchcraft, and the other when she had accepted Christ. They were two different people. When you are doing well spiritually, the beauty of it shows outwardly. Proverbs 7:11- 27 describes a

strange woman who is very attractive on the outside, but very stubborn and loud. Such a person is beautiful outside but ugly in character and emotions.

Some people, especially unbelievers, try to polish their outside whilst they are so nasty on the inside. Young men, look for the inner beauty. The Bible calls it 'a meek and quiet spirit.' A beautiful wife once threatened to slap her husband in public. She was definitely a beauty on the outside but a tigress on the inside. Look at what is inside in addition to the outward appearance, because it is the two things together that make a person truly beautiful. Young men, do not be impressed by what you see on the outside. Look out for the inner beauty. In spite of the fact that my wife is physically beautiful to me, I saw something inside her that attracted me—the inner beauty. When a person has a good spirit, and a good heart, it adds to the person's beauty.

8. beAuTy is given in poRTions.

Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity,...for that is thy portion

(Ecclesiastes 9:9).

You need to realize that beauty comes in portions. Everyone has a portion, but nobody has it all. Your portion is what you are entitled to. Your portion will include some things, while excluding others. You cannot have a black and a white wife in one person. Your wife may be an excellent cook, but she could have problems with being a hostess when your friends come home. That is your portion, and God expects you to be content with her. You may know a friend's wife who is very good when visitors come home. You may admire the way she receives, chats and talks with the guests. You may appreciate her confidence and range of knowledge on political issues. But you may find that she is not able to cook very well. Her stews may be like soups, and her soups like stews! But then God expects you to be content with your wife, including her weaker points. Be content! No matter how hard you look, you will find out that your portion has its strong points and its weak points. Now the Bible says, enjoy life with your portion. You can't have it all. So accept your portion and enjoy it because that is the way God intended it to be.

9. eveRyone hAs onLy one poRTion

Do not reach out for somebody's portion because everyone is entitled to only one portion. One man, one woman. remember the Genesis story:

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

(Genesis 2:18).

Adam had only one portion—Eve, and not Eves. Adam was not given Rose, Rosemond, Rosalyn, Rosemary, or Roseanne. He was given only Eve. In this age of promiscuity, the Christian must truly stand fast in God's Word by staying forever faithful to his portion. You are not allowed to have two portions. When you go to a party and you have been served with some food, you may realize that your portion of rice is larger than your neighbor's. But if you look closely, you will find that your neighbor's piece of chicken is larger than yours. You dare not stretch out your hand to take your neighbor's portion of chicken, because you have your own portion. If you take someone's portion, you are a 'bush man!' That is exactly how God sees you when you are not satisfied with your portion of wife or husband. He sees you as a 'bush person!'You must learn to be satisfied with the portion that God has given you.

10. spiRiTuALiTy is pReFeRReD To beAuTy.

Beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised

(Proverbs 31:30).

The Bible compares beauty with someone who fears God. If you ever have to choose between beauty and spirituality, choose the latter. Your portion may not be so beautiful, but very spiritual. This is to be preferred. She may have certain godly characteristics. Choose that! If ever you are faced with such a decision do not hesitate to choose the godly woman, because it is the woman who fears the Lord who will be praised. When you have to make a choice, it may look as though the person's beauty is more important, but when you enter into marriage, you will come to see that beauty is always secondary to godliness.

The spiritual person who knows and fears God will become more and more attractive to you as the years go by. Beauty has very little to offer, apart from what you see. But the spiritual person has her faithfulness, her character, and godliness to offer to you. You may not believe it, but just ask those who have gone a bit further down the road in life,

Which one is more important?

Beauty or character?

Beauty or spirituality?

Beauty or integrity?

If your wife does not pray, you are in trouble. Find a woman who prays. Find a woman who is deep into the things of God. If you marry a greedy, selfish and lazy woman, you will find yourself living in

hell. You will suffer, not because she is not outwardly beautiful, but because she is ugly inwardly. A person who is ugly inside but beautiful outside can be compared to a cemetery. A cemetery is well decorated with flowers, but as you go a little closer and go deeper, you will see dead men's bones and teeth sticking out.

This can be related to the woman without character; from the outside, she looks nice but go a little further and you will find an angry, lazy, and devilish person. Be careful, my brother. Go for the spiritual person. Godliness is indeed to be preferred to beauty! Be careful, my brother. Go for the spiritual person. Godliness is indeed to be preferred to beauty!

The Ungodly Woman 47

The sTRAngeness oF An ungoDLy WoMAn

And why wilt thou ... be ravished with a strange woman, .To keep thee from the evil woman,... strange woman. That they may keep thee from the strange woman

(Proverbs 5:20, 6:24, 7:5).

Although our topic is 'The Strange Woman', it also recognizes that a man can be 'strange'. I am only using the female gender because the story in Proverbs 7, depicts a woman who is strange. This is a very important topic, because it is necessary for every Christian to go to Heaven with the testimony that he or she was never involved in fornication. A condition which predisposes to fornication and adultery is 'strangeness.' Strange people are those whose behavior in a certain sense sows the seed of fornication in others. An innocent brother or sister, or even a man of God who has otherwise lived a pure life, can easily fall prey to these strange people because they are not only in the world, but they also abound in the church, even the charismatic church.

The Bible calls her 'the strange woman.' Some people call her 'the prostitute', but I prefer to call her 'the strange woman.' A lot of people have had sex, even though they never planned to do it. Some even hate the other person for making them do it. There are some men who hate certain women, because when they looked back after the experience, they realized that there had been a master plan to get them! There are some ladies who lost their virginity when perhaps, they were too young to even know what was happening to them! Later on after the sex act, they realized that somebody had taken advantage of them and had slept with them! There are even some young girls who became pregnant without knowing what had happened. Some of these people's predicament was caused by those the Bible calls 'strange' people. As Christians, we do not fight against flesh and blood. The Bible has described these strange people in graphic detail. God wants us to know who they are, and to recognize this attitude in ourselves if perchance, we have any of this 'strange' behavior.

Fornication is not an easy sin to deal with. Often those who get involved in fornication have a hard time overcoming it psychologically. Sometimes they are unable to ever overcome it. This therefore makes it a favorite area of attack by the devil. Fornication is not only present in the world, but also in the charismatic churches. A man of God said, 'Out of a church of 500 people there are at least 20 ladies who are ready and willing to immediately go to bed with their pastor if he says so. 'Recently, in a charismatic church in Accra, a visiting preacher made an altar call; he asked for ladies who had come to the church with the intention of enticing and tempting the head pastor, to come forward to the altar. The response was amazing! Many ladies came and were prayed for. All these were strange women, hunting for the precious life of the pastor.

Types oF sTRAngeness

There are four types of strange women and men.

1. The conscious Type

This type of strange women are the ones who know exactly what they are doing. They are conscious of what they are and what they want to achieve. Their aim is to entice men, and to lead people into sexual affairs. There are also men like that, who intentionally cause others to commit immoral sins.

2. The unconscious Type

This group is not aware of the fact that they behave like strange women, even though they actually behave 'strangely'

3. The secuLAR Type

The people in this group are known all over the world as prostitutes. Prostitution is one of the oldest professions in the world. Prostitutes are usually seen on dark streets and corners trying to entice people.

4. The chuRch Type

They are in the church, known as believers and yet they behave 'strangely.' Charismatic churches are full of strange women. The Bible says 'she hunts for precious lives.' (Proverbs 6:26). There are many precious souls in church, from good Christians to good pastors. They are the ones these strange women in the church are looking for!

signs oF The sTRAnge WoMAn

It is important for every Christian to be delivered from the snares and traps of strange people. In the Bible, particularly in the book of Proverbs, God has given us some of the signs by which we can identify a strange person and avoid her. I want to show you twenty signs of the strange woman.

1. she Moves in A pARTicuLAR gRoup.

A young man...Passing through the street near her corner...

(Proverbs 7:7,8).

This story in Proverbs tells us that the naive young man went to her corner. The strange woman had a corner. Strange people have their special corners. They also have special groups of friends who congregate with them at these special places. Everybody has a friend. There is basically nobody without a friend. I have my friends, who are mostly pastors. We know the proverbs, 'Birds of the same feather flock together,' and 'Show me your friend and will show you your character.' These sayings are not in the Bible, but they are true. People flow together in groups, the likeminded with the like-minded, friends with friends. The secular strange women have their special corners.

The Red Light District is a popular corner for strange people in any country. These are places where you are sure to find them. My wife told me about a group of strange girls she knew when she was in school. This particular group of girls were all involved with married men, and they frequently met to compare notes. Sometimes one of them would be heard asking, 'Have you asked him for the shoes?' Another would also say, 'I have told him to buy me the plane ticket.' They had something in common, therefore they stuck together and influenced each other. Strange people always move in special groups.

2. she opeRATes AT speciAL TiMes.

Proverbs 7:9 says she operates 'in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:'

The secular strange women operate in the dark and black night. The evenings are times when evil can flourish. It is rare to find them at their corners in the afternoon, but in the night they abound. If you are a young man, you must not be in the company of certain people at certain times. If you are in a relationship, there are certain times that you should not be with your beloved—(fiancée). If you are a married man, you are not supposed to be at certain places with certain people at certain times. A married lady should never have a twilight dinner with her boss. Never!

In the church situation, strange people usually do not attend evening Bible teaching meetings. They are more regular at Sunday services, because that is when a lot more people come to church, and they can show off their best clothes. You will never see such people at prayer and fasting meetings, especially

if it is going to last all night, or several hours. They will however be the first to get ready if the church is going to the beach or some place to have a good time. Some of these people are bold enough to say they only go to church to trap a Christian man or lady!

3. she hAs speciAL DResses.

There met him a woman with the attire of an harlot

(Proverbs 7:10).

The Bible did not say she was a harlot, but that, she came with the dress of a harlot. If you are a Christian there are certain dresses that you are not supposed to wear. A believer ought to dress decently. If you are not a prostitute but you often dress like one, then you have one of the characteristics of a strange woman. Strange women often dress in suggestive and revealing ways. It is not only the dress that speaks, but their pose also says volumes. You can immediately see they are after something. If you dare come to church with such a dress, then there is no doubt that you are strange. Some of the dresses expose half of the breasts, but a woman's breasts are not meant for public display.

I know of only two reasons why breasts were made:

a. For breastfeeding, and

b. For husbands to enjoy!

Ladies, always dress decently—do not dress in suggestive or revealing ways! Make-up helps to enhance the beauty of women, but there is a limit. At a point the make-up becomes too much and other messages are loudly sent across. Every Christian should look beautiful, but we should be careful not to cross the line into 'strangeness.' The Bible says temptation shall surely come, but woe to him through whom the temptation comes.

4. she hAs A hisToRy.

Many strong men have been slain by her

(Proverbs 7:26).

As Christians, we should not just set eyes on people, fall in love and marry. No! There is more to Christian marriage than love at first sight! During a pastoral visit to New Jersey, I became acquainted with an elderly African- American woman. In her house, she pointed out photographs of her children to me. She said she was blessed with sons who were all preachers. However, she said she had lost one of her sons recently. She said her son, a pastor in New York had gotten married to this beautiful

lady. Before the marriage they had done the AIDS tests, but both were negative. So he went ahead and married her. However, some months into the marriage the lady developed full-blown AIDS, with terrible diarrhea, weight loss and all the usual symptoms. This old lady told me how she tried to make her son break up the marriage. He refused, and died a few months after his wife.

Dear friend, this pastor married someone who probably had a bad history—a strange woman! And he did not even know it! He paid for it with his life. Another Christian brother had a beautiful wedding, but later when he was alone at home with his wife, the Spirit of God revealed horrible things about his wife to him. He suddenly realized that she was not what he thought she was. He was shocked to find out that she had slept with many pastors and mighty men. I am not saying that you should not marry somebody who has a history per se, but you must know about her past life in order to guard yourself. You should remember that a strange person can display that character even in marriage.

5. she is LouD.

She is loud..

(Proverbs 7:11).

Some strange women are loud, which makes them easily noticeable. There are various ways of being loud. It could be verbally or in appearance. You notice such people either through their loud dressing or loud laughter and giggling. There is a type of dressing that literally shouts, making all eyes turn to look at you. In the church, there are those you just cannot help but notice. They probably want you to notice them anyway. Do remember, 'She who strikes you has already been struck!' When I was in Achimota School (a secondary school in my country), there were times when we had to walk from the eastern compound to the western compound.

On some occasions I had to walk behind a group of girls. I often walked faster and overtook them, but as I walked a few meters ahead of them I would hear them giggling. I had no idea what they were laughing about. I would often change the way I walked, but the giggling and laughter would only grow louder. After a few of such experiences, any time I saw these girls on the way, I would make no effort to overtake this loud and strange group. On the contrary, a woman with a meek and quiet spirit is considered precious in the sight of God.

6. she is sTubboRn.

She is...stubborn

(Proverbs 7:11).

One of the characteristics of the strange woman is stubbornness. She will not obey instructions, and does not take advice. The Bible says the wife should submit to her husband. The word 'submit' means 'to yield, bend, agree, or to obey.' A good wife is supposed to yield, but if she is a strange woman, she will be stubborn. God's order is for the husband to lead, and the woman to follow. However, in these days of women's liberation and the Beijing Conference, you have all sorts of women rising up to fight every established authority!

Dear women, you are not wiser than God. No matter what you think and know, and no matter the theories you come up with, there can be only one head in a home. Any animal with two heads is abnormal and a freak. A strange woman is a dangerous person to marry. She is stubborn in the church, stubborn at home and stubborn at work. She always has a reason or an excuse for not doing what she ought to do. Pharaoh was so stubborn that God had to speak to him through flies, frogs, deaths, tragedies and disasters! You do not need to go through similar experiences. Do not be too hard and do not be too stubborn. These are traits of a strange woman.

7. she is noT hoMeLy.

Her feet abide not in her house

(Proverbs 7:11).

Strange people do not like staying at home. A woman is supposed to be 'homely,' to be able to take care of and manage the home,

...that the younger women marry,...guide the house

(1 Timothy 5:14).

This also means the wife must know how to cook and supervise people in the house. There are some Christian sisters who do not know how to cook, because they are always in church, and are never at home. They are always on the loose. In fact, it is a tragedy to marry a woman who cannot cook! When your stew is set before you, you will not be able to tell the difference between that and soup! This is often the fate of the men who marry strange women. They are condemned to a life of eating in misery everyday. To me, part of the attraction of going home after a hard day's work is my wife's food.

8. she WAnTs A MAn.

Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner

(Proverbs 7:12).

When a woman wants a man she is always outside in the streets, lying in wait at every corner for an opportune time to strike. Such women can only be satisfied when they are with one man or another. In the Proverbs 7 story, the strange woman acts as if she was lying in wait for this particular man. However, if the naive young man refuses her, she will lie in wait for the next man and tell him the same story—as if she was waiting particularly for him.

9. she geTs physicAL.

So she caught him, and kissed him

(Proverbs 7:13).

Strange people like to touch others. They often hug, kiss and press some part of their body against the people they are after. When you are walking with them, they never want to leave you. They always want to hold or hug you. The strange woman knows that generally, a man can be sexually aroused by sight. She is also aware that a man will find it difficult to resist a woman's touch. In order to conquer her victim totally she will cause him to yield by touching him. Some Christian brothers also have the habit of holding sisters. After shaking their hands, you have no business hanging on to people's hand. She is bold and unlawfully familiar.

10. she is boLD AnD unLAWFuLLy FAMiLiAR.

Kissed him,...with an impudent face

(Proverbs 7:13).

The strange woman is very bold and unlawfully familiar with the man she wants to have an affair with. Why do you talk to somebody about intimate things, when you are just an acquaintance? Strange people try to get close—in fact too close for comfort. Unless you are at a certain level of closeness with the person, you do not even have the right to comment about their hair or body. As soon as you become unlawfully familiar with somebody, you have crossed borders. You are out of your territory. And this is the speciality of strange people.

11. she is noT AshAMeD.

Now is she without, now in the streets

(Proverbs 7:12).

She comes out in the open, into the street to solicit, and is not shy or ashamed of her behavior. I was in Geneva once with one of my associate ministers, and we were talking seriously with a brother in a restaurant. This happened to be near a place where prostitutes lurk, and there was this prostitute who

was such a nuisance, we had to usher her out. Initially, she did not want to go out, so we called the police, and eventually she was driven away. Later on we were busy talking, when one of the other prostitutes came along in a coat. She stood right in front of the whole restaurant, and opened up her coat to reveal her body. Believe it or not, she was stark naked under her coat! She had no shame.

Unknown to us, when the first one went out, she told all the other prostitutes that we had sacked her and so this other strange woman had come to defy us. Strange women have no shame. If you are a woman, and you do not mind exposing your body, your breasts, your thighs, or any part of your body, then you are strange! You may think you are being fashionable, but in reality, you are just what the Bible calls strange. Unfortunately, there are born-again Christians who are not ashamed to expose themselves this way.

12. she is FuLL oF FLATTeRy AnD Lies.

With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him

(Proverbs 7:21).

There are many young ladies who would never have fornicated, but for the words of a man. Words can put pressure on you and force you to act. He may have said, 'I love you. You are everything to me. Look, I'm going to marry you anyway, so if you love me, show it! I love you that's why I want to sleep with you. I just want to express my love for you.' So with these and other such lies, the man talked his way through. A pastor in a church I used to attend, often said that if any man tells you he loves you and he wants to express his love to you, tell him to buy you chocolates! On the other hand there are women who also flatter men, especially powerful men. Some are very experienced in praising pastors. She will tell you that you are such an anointed man of God. With such seemingly harmless words, a strange woman can work her way into an unsuspecting man of God's heart. Faith comes by hearing, so when you continue to hear such words, you will eventually believe and yield.

13. she AppeALs To you ThRough FooD.

l have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry,...

(Proverbs 7:16).

The word 'bed' in the Hebrew is 'arsi', which refers to a dining couch, and not a sleeping bed. She was saying that she had laid the table. So this strange woman was appealing to the young man through food. Such strange people will often invite those they target to eat with them. If you are a young single brother, you may be exposing yourself to such strange people if you just go about eating all over the

place. A pastor visiting his members, must remember that his business with them concerns the salvation of their souls.

You are not supposed to go around eating from home to home. To some extent the saying is true that, 'The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.' Food is good, but it can be used to trap you.

Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye,

(Proverbs 23:6).

Sometimes your stomach can contribute to your fall. As a Christian, a pastor, and a husband, I do not go out to lunch with just anybody. Once, I saw a Christian brother who already had a fiancée, sitting with another lady over a candle- light dinner. I was very surprised, because he was inviting trouble for himself. I really did wonder about his fiancée. Was she safe?

14. she AppeALs To hiM ThRough pRepAReDness FoR sex.

Come, let us TAKE OUR FILL OF LOVE UNTIL THE MORNING

(Proverbs 7:18).

Many wives are not prepared for sex—or do not want it. So it is an exciting thing for a man to meet a woman who wants to have sex with him. If a woman comes to a man and indicates that she wants to have him, it appeals to him greatly. Many husbands pray that their wives would come up to them and say, 'Honey, I want you now!' Some Christian wives could learn a lesson or two from this strange woman!

15. she AppeALs by MeAns oF heR MARRiAge.

The good man is not at home, he is gone on a long journey

(Proverbs 7:19).

There are some men and women who are married and yet the marriage makes no difference to them. This strange woman said that her husband was not at home, and showed her readiness to sleep with another man in his absence. This was a really strange woman. Friend, the fact that you are married does not protect you from having an affair. Often people 'lose guard' because the person trying to be familiar is already married. This is one of the avenues the devil uses to ensnare people. I know people who are married, and yet in spite of this, they sleep around with any lady they meet.

The fact that you are a Christian does not mean you cannot fornicate or commit adultery. Being born again does not insulate you from falling to strange people. Never make that mistake—greater people, more religious than you and I have fallen! Wives and husbands should be particularly conscious of

these traps, because as we continue to live in this world, we are constantly exposed to these temptations. If a man is satisfied at home, he will not have to go out somewhere else to look for satisfaction. Lack of satisfaction at home is a major cause of adultery.

16. she AppeALs ThRough ReLigion.

I have peace offerings with me;...have I payed my vows

(Proverbs 7:14).

She said, 'I am also a believer.' She was using every means to convince him that she was also a believer—just like him. There are many strange believers in the churches, even the charismatic ones. She said she had paid her tithes. This was a very cunning strange woman who knew that her victim was a religious person. She knew that she could never come near him unless she behaved like a spiritual person. So she presented herself as someone who was obedient to God's commands: She had already paid her vows and made her peace with God.

17. she cApTivATes WiTh heR beAuTy AnD eyes.

Lust not after her beauty...neither let her take thee with her eyelids

(Proverbs 6:25).

She is beautiful, and she knows it. Beauty is a very variable thing, it can be up or down, more or less depending on what you do. She enhances her beauty in a striking way. You must not allow yourself to be taken in by her eyelids. When you make eye contact with somebody, you can speak to the person. It is a form of communication. That is why I look at peoples' faces when I am preaching. I am communicating with them. The strange woman with practice over the years knows how to effectively communicate her carnal intentions to a man. The Bible warns us not to lust after her. So if you notice that she is beautiful, that should be the end of the story. Do not lust after her beauty! The dictionary defines lust as animal desire for sexual indulgence.

18. she is noT sTRAighT FoRWARD.

The lips of a strange woman...smoother than oil: ...her ways are moveable

(Proverbs 5:3,6).

A strange woman is not straightforward, all her ways are movable and shaky. Ecclesiastes 7:26 says, I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets... There was a certain strange lady I knew, who always sat at the back of the church. I remember coming to church one day to find her sitting all alone at the back, praying in tongues loudly. As a pastor if you cannot identify the

strange women you can easily fall prey to them. These are the ones who will always come to the pastor with their numerous problems. They are also easily given to tears. If you are not experienced, you will take out your handkerchief and try to comfort her, only to find your comforting turning into something else! The Bible says her heart is full of ideas and traps. When you are a young man you sometimes do not know when you are walking in the midst of them. Some ladies come to church and in no time at all, a young man proposes to them. Sadly, many young men are looking for the most beautiful face. A young man can easily fall into these traps, and end up marrying a strange woman. In the same way, Christian ladies are impressed by the outward appearance of strange men, and accept their proposal, only to be taken on a strange tour!

19. she is ATTRAcTeD To gReAT Men.

Many strong men have been slain by her

(Proverbs 7:26).

Years ago my pastor friend told me to be careful not to be enticed by women who would be attracted to me. I was then an instrumentalist in a musical group we both belonged to. When you play musical instruments, stand on stage, or are a leader, you are likely to be an attraction to strange women. Over the years, I have come to realize how true his advice was. Each classification of great people—pastors, singers, businessmen, heads of state, and so on have their own kind of strange women who are attracted to them. Therefore, if God is raising you up, you must beware of these strange people. It is my prayer that God will deliver you from the snares of strange people!

The DiFFeRences beTWeen WoMen AnD DAughTeRs

This is a section I am writing to women. It is a message for women everywhere. Women were created differently from men and I believe they deserve a special message. Jesus referred to ladies in two different ways. He would either call them women or daughters. There is a difference between a daughter and a woman. If I were a lady, I would prefer it if Jesus called me ‘daughter.’ I think a daughter is generally more receptive, more open and more humble. In the natural, an adult woman is not as easy to influence as a daughter is. There are marked differences between ‘women’ and ‘daughters.’

. chARAcTeRisTics oF WoMen

1. MAny WoMen ARe eMbiTTeReD by TheiR Lives' expeRiences.

They are hardened, unforgiving and unmerciful. The painful experiences of life have washed away the beauty of faith and trust. 'Never trust a man', they say. They say to themselves, 'Never trust another woman.' I notice how many women live in solitude. They are loners with almost no friends. Notice how Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria. He was trying to get this woman to believe the things he was saying,

WOMAN, BELIEVE ME, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father

(John 4:21).

Notice how Jesus spoke to the woman caught in adultery. This was a woman who had almost lost her life at the hands of unforgiving men. He wanted her to believe in love again.[1]

WOMAN, WHERE ARE THOSE THINE ACCUSERS? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more

(John 8:10,11).

Notice also how Jesus spoke to this woman who had suffered from scoliosis for eighteen years. This woman had been through many things. She had been in bitterness and pain for a long time. This woman needed a miracle. Notice how Jesus addressed her in church:

WOMAN, THOU ART LOOSED from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God

(Luke 13:12,13).

2. MAny WoMen ARe WARy oF Men

Sometimes, a background of sinful experiences with different men makes it difficult for a woman to trust any man. She has little confidence in her father, her pastor or any man of God. She simply cannot believe in the existence of goodness and purity. Sometimes, just by growing up in a culture of suspicion and gossip, the seeds of mistrust are sown forever. Such women tend to be perpetually doubtful, unbelieving, skeptical and suspicious. Typically, a woman who is unable to trust is unable to love. She is full of fear. Perfect love casts out fear. The Bible says,

...love……believeth all things…

(1 Corinthians 13:7).

The DAughTeRs

1. DAughTeRs ARe chARAcTeRizeD by sWeeTness AnD innocence.

Naturally speaking, daughters are not full of bitterness and unforgiveness. There is some sweetness and innocence that characterizes a daughter.

2. TheRe is A speciAL TRusT AnD conFiDence DAughTeRs hAve FoR TheiR FATheRs.

Above all, there is a special trust and confidence that a daughter has for her father. Unfortunately, the faith, the hope and the love of daughters fade away as they mature into adult women. Jesus did refer to some women as daughters. I believe it was because of the faith that they had in Him. He noticed the pure love that they had toward him. Let's look at this group of women whom Jesus ministered to. This time, we notice how He addresses them differently. In one of the greatest miracles that Jesus ever did, the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, we see Jesus referring to her as a daughter! This woman had been able to tap into the anointing even though others around could not feel anything,

...and she felt in her body that she was healed…

(Mark 5:29).

And Jesus said, SOMEBODY HATH TOUCHED me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me

(Luke 8:46).

There is something I want you to notice about this daughter. First of all, she had great trust in Jesus' ability. In her sickness and weakness, she pressed through the crowd until she touched the hem of his garment. It must have taken great faith for this woman to press through the teeming crowds. That is precisely what made her a great daughter: faith and trust. Her twelve years of bitter experiences with different people were not enough to quench a heart of faith.

3. DAughTeRs Receive The AnoinTing oF TheiR FATheRs.

The other outstanding mark about this daughter, (the woman with the issue of blood), was the fact that she received the anointing of Jesus. This is the only record in the Bible of the anointing flowing from one person to another in which both parties literally felt it. Jesus felt the anointing leaving Him and the daughter felt the anointing coming into her body. You see, it is children who receive the most precious gifts from their parents. It is children and not equals or colleagues who receive an inheritance from their fathers. [2]

There comes a time in the life of a woman where she tends to challenge the authority of a man. I do not blame her because many men are irresponsible and untrustworthy. However, fighting against men and campaigning against their authority may easily keep you from the anointing. You will have a

perpetually resistant attitude towards God's gift. You see, many of the vessels that God uses are men. When you receive someone as a father, you open yourself up to receive the ultimate gift from him. Perhaps, that is why Jesus referred to her as daughter[3]

…DAUGHTER, THY FAITH HATH MADE THEE WHOLE; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague

(Mark 5:34)

4. DAughTeRs ARe FoReveR

On another occasion, when Jesus was on His way to the cross, a large crowd of people followed him. In this crowd, there were women who were unhappy about the injustice that was being done to him. They supported him openly and publicly identified with Him. In the hour when all the men and apostles deserted the Lord, the women stood strong. Jesus turned to them and ministered words of prophecy from His heart. He did not refer to these supportive ladies as women, but as daughters,

….DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children

(Luke 23:28).

Decide to be a woman whom Jesus would see as a daughter. Someone who is open to the anointing! Someone who is supportive of the man of God! Someone who is prepared to identify openly and passionately with the vision!

coveRing FoR WoMen

1. WoMen neeD A coveRing FoR TheiR Lives.

This covering serves as a shield of protection. Unfortunately, there are many women who do not acknowledge this reality. They see themselves as equal to men and as good as any one else.

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head…

(1 Corinthians 11:5).

It is only with a spirit of humility that you can accept these realities. The Kingdom of God can be pursued best with the attitude of a little child,

Except ye be converted, and BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, ye shall not enter into the kingdom

(Matthew 18:30.

2. iT is iMpoRTAnT FoR A WoMAn To be coveReD spiRiTuALLy.

This covering comes through a head. Whether a woman is married or not, she can have the covering she needs,

…the head of the woman is the man…

(1 Corinthians 11:3).

This covering is provided sometimes by husbands, pastors or spiritual fathers. A woman ministering without this spiritual covering is out of place. Obviously, if you are married to an unbeliever, he cannot be your spiritual covering. If you are married to a spiritually dull husband, he is not your covering. Someone who is above you spiritually must provide the covering. That is why it is called a covering. Dear sister, do you have a spiritual covering? Are you open to the counsel of the men that God has given for your covering? Who is your spiritual covering? Are you a rebel? Do not forget that none of us is above the Word of God.

The honouR oF DAughTeRs

And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest SHALL NOT BE FOR THINE HONOUR; FOR THE LORD SHALL SELL SISERA INTO THE HAND OF A WOMAN. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh

(Judges 4:8,9).

In this story, a woman was given the opportunity to take the honor from a man. A man's job fell into the hands of a woman! Instead of a man rising up to his God-given role of leadership, a woman had to take up the challenge and do his work. This is what is happening in the church today.

1. TheRe ARe MAny Men Who hAve shiRkeD TheiR ResponsibiLiTies As LeADeRs AnD spiRiTuAL heADs.

Women are doing the things men are supposed to do. And I am happy to say women are doing these jobs very well. There are Deborah's who are ready to take the honor and win battles for the Lord. I suggest to every pastor, to release the Deborah's into the harvest fields. What the Barak's cannot do, God has raised up Deborah's to do. In my own experience, I have found that women are very good pastors and shepherds. When they get their hands to the plough, things really get moving.

I have found women to be more receptive to the anointing and more open to spiritual leadership. Perhaps the original plan was that men should occupy these great leadership positions. Perhaps in the original plan men should have borne all the fruit. Unfortunately, there are always men like Barak, who for various reasons do not do what they are called to do. This is why God has to fall on people like Deborah to accomplish His will. Dear friend, the will of God is fixed, settled and unchangeable.

2. goD hAs DeciDeD To sAve This WoRLD AnD he WiLL use Any AvAiLAbLe vesseL FoR his puRpose.

Jesus trained twelve disciples (men). I believe that the divine plan is that men should be used to lead the church into victory. However, the reality is that there are men like Barak with us. There must be Deborah's who are going to fill the vacuum created by unfruitful, fearful and indecisive men. The Scripture tells us that once God's plan is established, He does not turn back His hand. Once He is determined to build His church, He will do it whatever it takes. He has threatened to use stones in the past. If stones can be used, how much more human beings? That's why I believe that women can also be used! Once, a donkey was used to send an important message to a stubborn pastor.

Dear friend, if donkeys can be used to preach, so can anyone; and so can women. If you were drowning and someone threw you a line, you would not ask whether it was a man or a woman who

had thrown you the line. Of course, if a man throws you a line, he is more likely to have the strength to pull you out. But when the man does not throw the line, you would be grateful for a line that comes from even a child. Perhaps this explains why there are so many women in the ministry. There is no need to fight what is already happening. It is better to flow with the reality than to hide your face in the sand and deny it. Daughter, it is your honor!

The TuRn oF DAughTeRs

1. i beLieve iT is The TuRn oF WoMen To Rise up.

It is the turn of women to come to the front of the battle. Woman, it is your turn to be a leader![4] Men have dominated the field of ministry for many years. Too often, women have been seen as people who cause men of God to fall. But there is far more to a woman than her physical body. It is the turn of women to influence the human race with their spirituality and their anointing. Daughter, it's your turn to be spiritual!

2. AFTeR cenTuRies oF being gooD ReceiveRs, iT's TiMe FoR WoMen To give soMeThing.

Kathryn Kuhlman introduced the world to the Holy Spirit in a special way. I know of no one who has operated in the healing anointing as Kathryn Kuhlman did! That is a signal to all women that it is their turn to be anointed. Just like the woman with the issue of blood who received the healing anointing, many women are going to receive the anointing to minister in power. Daughter, it's your turn to be anointed! I read a prophecy which declared that it is the era of the lioness. God is going to use the woman to bruise the head of the Serpent (Satan) in the last battle.

When we get to Heaven there will be no marriage. There will be no husbands, wives or children. All these things will not matter anymore. What will count is whether you fulfilled your ministry or not! Perhaps you have been seen as an object of a man's pleasure. Today, it's your turn to do something for God in the ministry. Daughter, it is time to rise up in the ministry. Perhaps you have been kept under by the problems that arise from marriage and childbearing. But this is your hour to emerge in full glory. When a woman takes up a mantle and walks in the wisdom of God she is indestructible!

Daughter, it's your turn. Daughter, it is your honor! This means that it is an opportunity for you to bear fruit for God. It is an opportunity for you to do great things. You can stand side by side with every man, call upon the grace of God and you will do just as well. This does not mean you are ‘as good as’ in a proud sense. All it means is that you are another Deborah whom God has raised up because the Barak’s are too scared, doubtful, uninterested, uncommitted, unwilling and cynical. ‘To be cynical’, means ‘to be disinclined to recognize or believe in goodness or selflessness.’

Daughter, it's your honor! It is your turn! This is a prophetic message to all women. It is the season for women to be fruitful in the ministry. Be humble, be a daughter! The anointing will come upon your life.

The TeMpTATions oF The DAughTeRs

There are many types of women in the world. Some of them have done great things for God and others have brought many problems to this world. A ‘woman with direction’, is a woman who has discovered her real reason for being in this world. The real reason for every woman to be in this world is not to find a husband. Neither is it to bring forth children, per se. Your purpose in this world is to serve the Lord and to do his perfect will. I see you as a woman with direction! A woman with direction learns from the past. The Bible teaches us that there is nothing new under the sun. Whatever has been in the past is what will happen in the future. No one reading this book should see herself above the mistakes of the past. Your life is just a repetition of someone who has gone on before you.[1]

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.

(Ecclesiastes 1:9,10).

The FiRsT WoMAn WAs TeMpTeD

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat

(Genesis 3:6).

Many things can be said about Eve. She was the one who was tempted. Today many women are tempted. Eve was tempted and so will you be tempted. A woman with direction is someone who overcomes temptations. Did you know that a set of distinct temptations exist for women? Every woman must know that there are temptations that are peculiar to women. You see, the temptations of men are different from that of women. When I became a minister, I was told that ministers are tempted in three main areas: money, sex and fame. Somebody put it this way, 'The gold, the girls and the glory.' Tailors are often tempted with the spirit of lying. Doctors are often tempted to have affairs with nurses. Lawyers are often tempted to be immoral. Daughter, you must understand that there are temptations that are peculiar to you because you are a woman. A woman with wisdom is someone who knows about these temptations. You must be determined to overcome them.

The TeMpTATions

1. The TeMpTATion To MARRy unbeLieveRs

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

(2 Corinthians 6:14).

Many ladies are tempted to marry unbelievers. There are many non-Christian men who come knocking at the doors of young ladies. When no Christian brother is in sight, you are tempted to marry an unbeliever. This is very common. A woman with direction is able to resist this temptation and keep herself. Many women are tempted to sleep with men. Often ladies sleep with half a dozen or more different men before they eventually settle down. Woman, you will be tempted to do this in order to secure the love of a man. When you go looking for tenderness and love you may receive it, but at a high price. Are you a woman with direction? Then keep yourself pure. Be a woman who overcomes her temptations.

2. The TeMpTATion To TRusT in youR beAuTy

Daughter, do not be taken in by the lies of the devil. Did you think that the devil had stopped whispering lies to women? Certainly not! Demons whisper lies and deception to women all the time. Many women believe that their beauty will last forever. This is why they say ‘no’ to prospective young men when they propose to them.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised

(Proverbs 31:30).

Many women are deceived into thinking that their beauty will charm a man forever. A woman with direction knows that beauty is vain. She may be beautiful but she is also spiritual. I have seen a young beautiful girl move in to replace the wife of an older person. If you have seen this before you will know how it usually ends. The younger and more beautiful replacement is also thrown out after a while. One lady told me that she was going to get somebody's husband. I said to her, ‘The man is already married.’ She smiled and said to me, I am more beautiful than his wife. Woman, your charm and beauty have an expiration date. They will not last forever. Seek for spiritual things.[2] It is the inner spiritual commitment of the man that makes him faithful to you and not your beauty. Do not believe that beauty is everything.

3. The TeMpTATion To sLeep WiTh MAny peopLe beFoRe MARRiAge

Some women are deceived into thinking that if they sleep with a man, he will marry them.3 Woman, be not deceived! Woman, the man you are currently sleeping with has slept with dozens of other ladies whom he did not marry! I once read an interesting scientific report about AIDS in Africa. Some people wonder why AIDS is spreading so rapidly in Africa. While AIDS is primarily transmitted through homosexual and bisexual activity in North America and Europe, in Africa, Asia and South America it is primarily transmitted through heterosexual activity (normal male-female relations). Doctors in the Third World countries confirm that the average sexually active adult in these countries will have between twenty-five and one hundred different sexual partners every year. This level of promiscuity has produced a tragic and widespread epidemic of AIDS. Think about that! Twenty-five to one hundred different partners in one year! Woman, be not deceived. When a man sleeps with you it means almost nothing. If he can sleep with twenty-five to one hundred people in a year, then you are just an insignificant addition to his list. Woman with direction, do not believe these lies. Do not believe that sex can keep a man attached to you.

4. The TeMpTATion To FoLLoW MATeRiAL Things

Some women have their confidence in material things. This is also a deception. They believe their happiness hinges on having nice carpets, chairs, furniture, cars, clothes, etc. remember the Word of God! A woman's happiness does not come from the things she possesses.

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth

(Luke 12:15).

5. The TeMpTATion To be FeARFuL

Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement

(1 Peter 3:6).

Perhaps the commonest temptation of women is the temptation to be fearful. The scripture above teaches that the daughters will do well if they are not afraid.

The Common Fears Of Women

a) The fear of not getting married

b) The fear of not having a child

c) The fear of marrying the wrong person

d) The fear of poverty and financial difficulties[4]

e) The fear of your husband becoming interested in someone else

f) The fear of your children not doing well

g) The fear of your husband not loving you anymore

h) The fear of becoming a widow

i) The fear of in-laws

j) The fear of not being liked by others

k) The fear of being mistreated in the future

l) The fear of giving your everything and losing it all

m) The fear of experiencing what you've seen happen to others

n) The fear of investing your everything into marriage and then losing it all.

Fear is the opposite of faith. Fear influences many women to do the things they do. Humbly analyze your thoughts. See if you are doing what you are doing because of fear. Remember that fear is a demon.

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).

Fear is not a good reason for marriage. Fear is a demon. A demon should never make you do anything. Fear should never make you criticize and accuse your husband. Do things for the right reasons and God will bless you.

6. The TeMpTATion To be eMoTionAL

Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement

(1 Peter 3:6)

'Amazement', speaks of the emotional nature of women. The Scripture teaches that women will do well if they are not amazed (emotional). When the emotions of a woman dominate her, she loses her focus.[5] Emotions can make a woman forget all the Scriptures and principles she knows. Do not allow emotions of sorrow, fear, jealousy, hatred, and insecurity to overwhelm you. Remember, you will do well when you are not dominated by your emotions.

7. The TeMpTATion To be pRouD

Because women have suffered greatly from discrimination, they tend to be reactionary. Many women display the pride of a 'no-nonsense' person. 'I will not take this from any man', they say. 'I will not allow a man to disturb my life. You can't keep me in a cage! Why must I do what you say? I am as good as any man, I can do the job any man can do.' One wife repeatedly told her husband, 'I am more intelligent than you are.' There is no need to be proud, there is no need to be reactionary. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up![6] God can promote you better than you can with your words.

8. The TeMpTATion To be unFoRgiving

I often say that women have fish-hook hearts. This is a deep, narrow and retentive heart which stores up all the hurts and experiences of this life. Even non-Christians sing songs that say, 'Forgive and forget.' God will not hear your prayers when you do not forgive others. Your life will change dramatically when you learn forgiveness. Woman, remember that your sins are numerous. It is in your interest to walk in love and to forgive those who have hurt you.[7] This will make you a daughter that pleases the Lord. Daughter, you can make it. In spite of all these temptations, I see you making it! His grace will see you through.

The sins oF The DAughTeRs

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat

(Genesis 3:6)

1. The sin oF DisobeDience

Many women fall into ugly sins. These are often difficult to talk about or even mention. Woman, you are loosed from the effect of your past mistakes! When you look around you, you may think that you are the only one. The devil's plan is to isolate you and make you depressed.

2. The sin oF coveTousness

Many women fall prey to the sins of jealousy and covetousness.[8] Woman, accept the blessings that God has given to your neighbor. Do not fight it because you cannot win! Gladly attend the wedding of your friend. As you rejoice with her today, people will rejoice with you one day. Do not be covetous or think that you must have what everybody else has. Women commonly compare lifestyles and clothes. They want their children to attend certain schools because their neighbor's child does. Woman, be content with your position! When you force yourself to possess things that are not yours you will only turn into a 'Jezebel.'

3. The sin oF being unequALLy yokeD

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

(2 Corinthians 6:14).

Some women disobey God and marry unbelievers.[9] But to marry an unbeliever is not the unpardonable sin. The Church must not drive away people who are married to unbelievers. It does not mean that you must not come to church anymore. The fact that you are married to an unbeliever, does not mean you are not a Christian. You are welcome in the church! The pastor is not the one married to the unbeliever, you are! So don't be worried. If you have any problems, see your pastor and he will counsel you and pray with you. Woman, the fact that you have made a mistake does not mean you should stay away!

4. The sin oF inFLuencing oTheRs To Do eviL

Woman, thou shall not make thy husband sin. Some women prevent their husbands from going to church. The man is the head, but the woman is surely the neck. Woman, you have a lot of influence. Use it wisely! Do not use your influence to make your husband stay away from God.[10]

The Woman Who Made Her Husband Sin

I remember a woman whose husband was willing to donate some money to the church for some instruments. When the man raised up his hand, the woman pulled it down. She stopped him from giving to the Lord. She came up later to lie to the pastors about how stingy the husband was. Woman, do not make your husband sin. Eve was the woman who made her husband fall into sin.

And gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat

(Genesis 3:6).

Abraham knew how important it was for his son to have the right woman. He knew that she would influence him all the days of his life. He was very specific about whom Isaac could marry.

And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac

(Genesis 24:1-4).

Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to look for a wife for his son Isaac. He knew how important it was to have the right kind of wife. So he went the extra mile to get a good wife for his son. Your role in your husband's life is crucial to the fulfilling of his ministry. You are a very important element in his life. Even if your husband is not saved, you influence him spiritually.[11] Perhaps you are married to an unbeliever, remember what the Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 7:14.

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy

(1 Corinthians 7:14).

The Bible teaches that the believer sanctifies the unbeliever. Whatever that means, we know that the believing person has a spiritual influence on the unbeliever. This is the reason why Abraham went so far to get a wife for his son.

5. The sin oF DesTRoying goD's cReATion

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?

(Genesis 3:13).

Through a woman, God's creation was destroyed. God's lovely creation was greatly deformed and destroyed through the pressure created by a wife. In the end, both she and her husband dwelt in the world that she had destroyed. That is why God asked her, 'What is this that thou hast done?' Woman, do not bring a curse on yourself or your loved ones. Please do not do it! If you hunt for somebody else's husband, his wife and children may curse you. If you have a child with someone's husband, you may disrupt a family and even break it up. Woman, do not attract curses into your life.

6. The sin oF iDLe chATTing

Woman, do not gossip and spread bad stories about God's servants. Do not let your gossip and idle chatting destroy people's faith in God's servants. Many women speak about things that they shouldn't speak about.

They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not

(1 Timothy 5:13).

7. The sin oF The sTRAnge WoMAn

Woman, do anything you can to prevent yourself from becoming a curse. Do not become a strange woman[12]. A strange woman is someone who deliberately goes after men. She hunts them down and has sexual affairs with them. She is a destroyer of churches. She comes with an agenda and carries with her a curse! Are you a stalker? Are you a predator of precious lives? A strange woman brings down many mighty men of God. There are some ladies who specialize in sleeping with pastors.

For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her

(Proverbs 7:26).

One of my pastors spoke in fear of a lady who had slept with all the pastors in his town. Woman, please do not be a strange woman. Allow God to use you for a good thing and not for evil. Decide never to be a Delilah to anyone! Woman, please do not bring a curse home with you. Daughter, you can make it. In spite of all these sins, I see you making it! His grace will see you through.

Successful Keys for Women 50

1. DAughTeR, be beAuTiFuL.

And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up

(Genesis 24:16).

Rebekah was a beautiful woman. There is no woman on this Earth who has not been created in beauty and glory.[1] ' Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder' , they say. As you read this book, I wish to inform you that you are beautiful! If you believe this, then it will help you to know how powerful you are. But Rebekah did not allow her beauty to lead her into sin. A virtuous woman may be beautiful but will not yield to the many overtures that are made by men. The virtuous woman is a beautiful virgin. She is a beauty and at the same time she is holy. Can you be beautiful and wait for your marriage? Notice what the Bible says in Genesis 24:16. 'She was beautiful, yet no man had had anything to do with her.'

2 DAughTeR, be hoMeLy.

And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up

(Genesis 24:16).

Rebekah was involved in practical housework. Many beautiful women are just concerned about their hair, their nails and their dresses. Because of this, they are of no practical use in their homes. They cannot cook nor do homely things. Are you just a beautiful woman? Did you know that the power of physical beauty does not last very long? [2] Rebekah was a woman who was kind. She was a virtuous woman. [3] She spoke respectfully to the servant Eliezer.

And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink

(Genesis 24:18).

Notice how Rebekah refers to Eliezer as lord. The virtuous woman is someone who has good manners and is respectful. [4] Daughter, there is no need to be angry at your servants everyday. There is no need to rave and rant around the house. Treat your servants with respect and God will bless you for that. Always remember that you could have been that servant. You could have been on the other side of the fence.[5]

3 DAughTeR, be hospiTAbLe.

Rebekah was very hospitable.

She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in

(Genesis 24:25).

She did not mind having guests. In fact, she welcomed guests. A virtuous woman is someone who welcomes guests and treats them nicely. Think of how you would like to be treated if you were a guest in somebody's home.[6]

4. DAughTeR, you MusT DeciDe.

And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go

(Genesis 24:58)

Many women cannot make decisions. They are ruled by their emotions and their feelings. Because of this, they are left out of the blessings of God. Daughter, God did not give you only feelings. He did not only give you a heart. He gave you a mind. Rebekah was asked whether she would marry Isaac. She had not even seen him before. Some people think that she had no part in the decision that was taken. But as you see in the Scripture above, she had to decide whether she would go or not! She based her decision on facts and wisdom. She married a good man and God blessed her.

Sometimes you must allow your mind to lead the way and let your heart follow later. Daughter, there are not always many suitors available. When God brings a blessing to you, do not discard it with flimsy reasons. It may be your one and only chance to be married. Seek good counsel. Use your mind and be a woman with direction. Daughter, make a decision and God will bless you.[7]

And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death

(Genesis 24:67).

When Rebekah eventually met with her husband, the Bible says she became his wife. She rose to the occasion and became a happy wife. She became a famous woman and a queen because she was a wise decision-maker. There are two types of women in this world: women who make wise decisions and women who make emotional decisions. When you are a woman who makes wise decisions you will become the envy of all other women.

5. DAughTeR, be MoDesT.

Therefore she took a vail, and covered herself

(Genesis 24:65).

When Rebekah met up with her future husband, she covered herself decently. She knew that she was not yet married. It was not yet time to expose herself. A virtuous woman covers herself decently with appropriate clothing. Woman, cover yourself when necessary. Do not expose what must not be exposed. Perhaps you think you are being fashionable by exposing your body. Much of the fashion of this world is designed by the devil himself. It is designed to promote a culture of immorality and licentiousness. If you follow what the world is doing, you will often end up in sin. Please read the following verse and see for yourself. The prince of the air is directing the course of the world.

Wherein time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

(Ephesians 2:2).

Daughter You Can Make It!

And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah

(Genesis 26:34, 35).

No woman is exempt from the host of family problems that arise. Rebekah had a son who caused her much grief. A virtuous woman will also have problems. God did not promise us a bed of roses. But he promised to help us and lift us up. Woman, do not be discouraged because you face problems. There is nothing new under the sun. You are not the first woman to be beaten by your husband, and you will not be the last. Woman, you are not the only woman whose husband is unfaithful.

Woman, you are not the only one whose husband is not saved. Woman, you are not the only one who is not married. rise up with the Word of God and use your spiritual weapons to overcome every attack of the enemy. Listen to tapes everyday and your faith will be built up. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Faith is the shield that quenches all darts thrown against your life. The more faith you have, the bigger your shield of defense will be,

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

(Ephesians 6:16).

6. DAughTeR, Don'T be biAseD.

And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me

savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.

Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death

(Genesis 27:5-10).

Rebekah obviously had her favorite; she preferred Jacob to Esau. When Isaac wanted to bless his firstborn son, Rebekah was not happy that her favorite was being left out. She manipulated events so that Jacob could have a greater blessing. The Bible teaches us that it is not wise to be partial or hypocritical. Many parents do not know that children can see through these things. Partiality stirs up much hatred.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy

(James 3:17).

Daughter be wise! Govern your home with fairness and equity.

7. DAughTeR, Do noT inTeRFeRe.

Rebekah interfered with the plan of God Almighty. God has laid down his Words with a special blessing for the firstborn. However, through the interference of Rebekah, God's plan concerning the firstborn did not materialize. There are women who interfere with the ministry of the Lord Jesus. I want you to know that this only brings a curse upon your life. Rebekah knew that she was inviting a curse upon her life and her son's life. That is why she told her son, ‘ Do not worry, I will receive the curse for you.’

And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them

(Genesis 27:13).

Perhaps your husband is destined to be a great man of God. Allow the plan of God to come to pass. Perhaps God is going to use you to do great things for him. Allow the plan of God to happen. Perhaps God wants you and your family to join a particular church, do not allow pride to keep you away. Do not interfere with God's plan for your life. Let your children be godly and spiritual.

8. DAughTeR, MAinTAin gooD ReLATionships.

Rebekah was no longer living with her family. She had a brother called Laban.

And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

(Genesis 24:29).

Even though she had not seen her brother for many years, she kept a good relationship with him. Even though there was great distance between them, she maintained a healthy relationship. Woman, do not disrupt the relationships that God has given to you. Some women tend to quarrel with people all the time. They are not able to keep relationships for a long time. But a virtuous woman is able to maintain every relationship that God gives to her. Several years later, Rebekah needed someone she could send her son to for protection. She remembered that she had a brother somewhere and she sent Jacob to him.

Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

(Genesis 27:43-45).

Perhaps one day you will need the help of an old friend. Perhaps one day you will need to come back to the same pastor for help. Be careful with the good relationships that God gives you. Be a woman who prevents quarrels and conflicts. A virtuous woman is someone who brings peace.

9. DAughTeR, Don'T kiLL youRseLF.

And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

(Genesis 27:46)

Woman, please do not kill yourself with your confessions.[8] There are many things that are happening that do not bring joy. Do not allow a spirit of depression to come over you. When you begin to say, ' I am weary of my life', you are inviting a spirit of death into your life. Do not allow depression to kill you. Many things can bring depression. Perhaps you have married a man who has been unfaithful. Perhaps you have discovered other illegitimate children that your husband has. Do not sink into a sea of despair and hopelessness. remember this, no man can satisfy you so do not expect fulfillment from a man. You must keep your eyes on the Lord. Do not kill yourself before your time with your own words.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof

(Proverbs 18:21).

Do not kill your marriage when it is not yet over. Many marriages are destroyed with the tongue. If you curse your marriage, it will be cursed. If you speak life into it, it will revive. Daughter, do not give up! Daughter, there is hope in God! Daughter, I promise you: joy cometh in the morning! After every night, there is day. Everything has an end. There is an expiry date for every problem. The Bible teaches that there is a time for everything. There is a time to start and a time to end. There is a time for trouble but there is also a time for peace. Your time of peace will surely come! Daughter, you can make it!

10. WiTh ALL youR geTTing, geT unDeRsTAnDing.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding

(Proverbs 4:7).

Getting understanding is not the same as getting a breakthrough. It is certainly not an instant solution. But understanding will lead you to the solution. Wisdom is most useful for direction. When you have wisdom and understanding, you will be a different kind of woman. Women who give themselves to reading are people of understanding. People who bother to go to university are people of understanding. In the natural, such people have an easier life. When you thoroughly understand the cause of a problem you are better able to solve it. That is why medical doctors spend so much time trying to diagnose problems.

Understanding the problem is often 80% of the solution.[9] Do you want an easier life? Then get understanding. Make the effort to understand the curse of the Garden of Eden. Understand the root cause of all frustration. In this section, you will learn about the frustrations of women. You will understand the things that hinder women. Through this understanding you will become a victorious woman. I cannot say anything greater than the Word of God. Get understanding! Get wisdom!

seven hinDRAnces oF WoMen

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee

(Genesis 3:13-16).

Women have often been treated as second-class human beings. They have been ridiculed and degraded and used as mere objects of pleasure.[1] I believe that a new day is dawning for the woman who knows God. A day of promotion and of betterment is coming! Women no longer have to occupy the second place or even the back seat. They must occupy their God-given positions.[2] There are many frustrations in this world and women are not exempted from them. Every woman will live to fight these battles. But there is a way out of the many frustrations that face women today. The frustrations of a woman are well described in the curse on Eve in the Garden of Eden. Understanding these problems is the first step to overcoming them.[3] Always remember that diagnoses solves 80% of your problems. These curses are the most plausible explanation of the state of women.

1. DecepTion

Women are more susceptible to 'deception'. Deception

is believing in something that is not true. Many quarrels come about through deception. The Apostle Paul used this point (of the woman often being deceived) to emphasize why they are not to be in leadership.

And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat

(Genesis 3:13)

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For (because) Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression

(1 Timothy 2:11-1)

The deception of Eve reveals much about the state of women. They more easily believe and they are more easily deceived. Every woman must in humility accept this fact of being more easily deceived. This reality can be confusing since they also easily believe in the right thing. It is truly amazing that those who more easily receive and believe are also more easily deceived. Many women are more spiritual than their husbands. They believe in God and flow with the Spirit much more quickly. It is difficult to see how such spiritual beings could also be open to deception. Accepting this reality in humility will attract the grace of God to your life. God will save you from deception and keep you on the path of righteousness.

2. sATAn's enMiTy FoR WoMen

Satan hates women. The devil is working to destroy the entire human race, but there is a special hatred he has for women. The Word of God shows us that women are special targets of Satan.[4]

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

(Genesis 3:15)

This reality explains why women seem to have more problems than men do. They are the special targets of evil spirits. It explains why the plight of women is often so pathetic. It explains the reason for countless women's groups and movements. There is indeed a special onslaught of the enemy on women. This is why women must be spiritual. Every wise woman will develop herself spiritually.[5] To do this, she must study the Bible, read Christian books and listen to tapes.[6]

3. The cuRse oF DesiRing husbAnDs Who WiLL DoMinATe TheM

Many of the problems that women have are related to finding husbands and keeping them. In the church, a large percentage of women's problems are related to this. Marriage, although celebrated in grand style is actually described as a kind of curse in the book of Genesis, chapter three.

And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee

(Genesis 3:16)

The desire for husbands is one of the most devastating curses and frustrations unleashed on women. Even the most independent women come to the place where they want a man. Older women, who are unable to give birth anymore, still want to be married. Indeed, a close analysis of the situation will only show the workings of a curse. This curse is circumvented by the power and the wisdom of God.

4. MuLTipLieD soRRoW

I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children

(Genesis 3:16)

Women have brought forth the children of this world in sorrow. The huge gynecological blocks in most hospitals testify to the sorrows of women. The sorrows begin as they try to get pregnant. The sorrows continue through the pregnancy. Some women lose their health during pregnancy and others lose their beauty. Some die through pregnancy while others permanently lose their attractiveness or even their husbands. The price is high but they pay it over and over, again. After the pregnancy, the struggles and sorrows continue in the bringing up of children. 7 Through wisdom you will overcome these challenges. The wisdom of medical science has made it possible to have children without so many problems.

5. The sinFuL nATuRe

The flesh is the carnal nature within every human being. To be carnally minded is death. And he that soweth to the flesh reaps corruption. Many women's lives have been corrupted because they have followed the flesh and the mind. This reality compounds the problems of every woman. You will never follow your flesh when you understand the Word of God.[8] The power of God will help you overcome the weakness that is in your flesh.

To be carnally minded is death

(Romans 8:6)

6. The WeAkness

Women are described as the weaker vessels.

Giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel

(1 Peter 3:7)

A weaker fishing trawler cannot be compared to the might of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The weaker ship is more easily tossed about by every storm or situation. This weakness is the cause of many unplanned emotional excursions by women. The world of women is characterized by detours of swirling, twirling, weaving and spinning currents of emotions, quarrels and instability. The varied mood swings and temperamental nature of women usually makes them unsuitable for steady leadership.[9] This is why the Bible is so clear about who is the head in the family and in the church. The Apostle Paul was stronger on this issue than on any other. Paul asserted that if anyone was spiritual, he would acknowledge this reality about women.

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

7. The unkinDness oF Men

Generally speaking, men are stronger and more domineering than women. Most men operating from a heart of flesh do not treat women kindly. The wickedness of men operating with the nature of Satan is like the last nail on the coffin. The need for women's groups which champion women's rights is obvious. Ultimately, it is the Lord who will be the lifter of your head if you are a woman.

vicToRy keys FoR WoMen

Women do not have to live a life of unhappiness, depression and misery just because of the curse. It is not true that women are hopelessly condemned to a state of unhappiness because of the Adamic curse. Yes, it is true that the curse explains a lot to us. But there is hope! The good news is that a woman with direction can gain the mastery over the frustrations she finds in this world.

The Keys

There are two keys that make a woman gain the mastery over these difficulties--the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God

(1 Corinthians 1:26)

These two ingredients (power and wisdom) are available to every Christian woman. A woman with direction employs both the power and the wisdom to overcome every arrow that is thrown at her.

1. The key oF WisDoM

You need wisdom to be a woman with direction. The Bible teaches that wisdom is profitable to direct.

...but wisdom is profitable to direct

(Ecclesiastes 10:10)

Many of the problems that confront women cannot be overcome with brute strength. They must be surmounted by the use of wisdom. Unless God intervenes, many of the conditions that face women have no natural solutions. However, the Bible teaches us that wisdom is the key to solving impossible situations. We can overcome every hopeless situation by the wisdom of God. read this part carefully!

The Impossible War

The Bible teaches about a city, which faced an impossible war. This was a small town with a few people in it. The town was surrounded by an enemy who set up a great array of armored vehicles and artillery. Everyone knew that it was just a matter of time before they would all be killed. But a solution came from an unexpected source. There was a poor wise man who came up with some ideas that delivered the entire city. He did not deliver the city by strength or by any military skills. He delivered the city by wisdom.

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city

(Ecclesiastics 9:14-15)

Many women's lives are like that desperate city that faced a hopeless battle. I say this because I am a pastor and I see it all the time. I know that many ladies' lives are like this little town which had no way forward. Many women are married to men who mistreat them, mishandle them and are unfaithful to them! They live a life of constant quarrelling and unhappiness. It looks as if there is no way forward in their situation. They often have only two options: divorce or a life of misery. Many women just exist in their marriages until they die! On the other hand, there are many women who desire to marry.

Their birthdays are almost like days of mourning. As they grow older, their hope of getting married diminishes. There are also many women who seek to have children. They try everything, but still there is no child. As the days go by, they become gloomier and gloomier. What can be done about these intractable problems? Today I present you with a fresh ray of hope for your situation. Wisdom is the way forward. Wisdom is profitable for direction.

But wisdom is profitable to direct

(Ecclesiastics 10:10)

I want you to be a woman with direction. How can you be a woman with direction? The Bible says wisdom is profitable for direction. God will direct you out of every difficult situation. Just as that man delivered the city from destruction, your entire life is going to be rescued by the wisdom of the Lord.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her

(Proverbs 4:7, 8)

The Scripture we have just read says that we should exalt and embrace wisdom in our lives. 'To embrace', means 'to hold tightly'. I want you to hold tight onto this book until you finish reading it. Then I want you to read it again. I want you to read it until the wisdom that is contained in these pages is transferred into your heart. The solutions to the multitude of intractable problems that face women are dealt with in the Word of God. A woman with direction is a woman who gets hold of wisdom and doesn't put it down.

How To Get Wisdom

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)

In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The closer you get to God, the more wisdom you will have.[10]

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

(Colossians 2:3)

2. The key oF poWeR

The power of God is the grace of God.[11] God's grace is sufficient for every situation.[12] God will lift you up by His power. There are some things that God wants to do for you. How can you get this grace that you need? The answer is humility. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

For God...giveth grace to the humble

(1 Peter 5:5)

hoW To Receive The bLessing

And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the Lord had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat

(1 Samuel 1:3-7)

What does one do while waiting for a miracle? What should you do while you wait for God's answer? Hannah was the woman who kept going to church (Shiloh) in spite of her problems.[1] Hannah is the one from whom we learn what to do while we wait for our miracle! There are many problems that women face today.[2] A woman with direction is someone who cannot be turned away from her church in spite of her problems. Dear woman, your help comes from God. The devil would like to keep you from the source of your help. Hannah was suffering from barrenness, and could have stayed at home in her depression. She could have worked all day and night. She could have resorted to witchcraft and all sorts of things to help her. But she kept going to Shiloh. Shiloh is the place where prayers and sacrifices are made to the Lord.

1. WhiLe you WAiT, noTice goD's bLessings ARounD you.

But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the Lord had shut up her womb. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

(1 Samuel 1:5, 8)

Hannah's husband really loved her. The Bible tells us how he gave a worthy portion to her and describes his deep love for her. But Hannah did not notice her husband's love.[3] Hannah wept and wept and did not notice that she had a good husband. A woman with direction must learn to see beyond her problem. Some women are so taken up with the problems that they cannot see the goodness of God around them.[4] Perhaps there is one fault with your husband. Do not be so taken up with that fault that you don't see how God has blessed you. The grass always seems to be greener on the other side. At one point, Hannah's husband asked her, ‘Am I not worth more than ten sons to you?’ Perhaps your difficulties have blinded your eyes to the blessings of God. Please do not allow a dark cloud to brood over everything because of the one problem that you have.

Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

(1 Samuel 1:8).

Hannah could not see that she had a good husband. She could not notice that her husband was very generous and kind. Hannah did not think of the fact that even if she had children they would grow up and leave the home one day. Then she would be all alone with her husband again. Perhaps you are looking for a husband or perhaps you want your husband to be saved. A woman with direction does not allow her problem to overshadow the blessings that she already has. Daughter, while you wait, notice God's blessings! Be thankful for what you have, more is on the way.

2. WhiLe you WAiT, use youR spiRiTuAL WeApons.

And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore

(1 Samuel 1:10)

In this verse, you see how Hannah lifted up her eyes to the Lord and prayed with strong cries and tears (Hebrews 5:7). She was a prayer warrior. Daughter, your weapons are not carnal, they are mighty through God. Perhaps you need a baby. Perhaps you need a husband. Do not resort to physical or human methods to get what you need. Many problems have spiritual roots and a daughter of destiny knows this! If you are seeking for a baby, it is good to find the appropriate medical care. But a woman with direction knows that prayer is the solution. Keep praying, there is power in prayer. [5] As you study the Bible, you will realize that many people received blessings and breakthroughs through prayer.

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

(Mark 11:24)

Before Hannah could do anything about it, her husband had married someone else in order to have children. This is a very common practice in Africa, since some see the state of not having a child as a curse. Many husbands are pressurized into finding someone who can have a baby with them. Perhaps, being a second wife is not easy. Even being the only wife is a great challenge. Before Hannah could do anything about it, she was in a bad situation. Woman, I want you to know that God sees everything you are going through. He is on your side. He will deliver you. He will keep you. I see you being raised out of that impossible situation! As you read this book, a new light is beginning to shine in your life. The days of reproach and humiliation are over. I declare it to be so, in the name of Jesus!

3. WhiLe you WAiT, MAke A voW!

And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head

(1 Samuel 1:11)

Hannah was a woman with direction. She went a step further than many others would. She made a promise to God. If He were to give her a child she would give him back to the Lord. She promised to give away what was most precious to her, even before he was born.[6] Perhaps God is waiting for you to make such a promise to Him. Can you make a vow and keep it?

4. WhiLe you WAiT, keep youR voWs. hannah kept her vow

But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young.

And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there

(1 Samuel 1:22-28)

She gave unto the Lord and the Lord gave back to her. Is money a problem to you? Do you find it difficult to give to Jesus? Loose that money and let it go now! Become a ‘tither’ and a giver of offerings. A woman with direction is someone who pays her first and best fruits or tithes to the Lord. She makes a vow that she is going to support the ministry and she sticks to her word. There are many women who have a problem with money. Woman, do not let the god of this world have any control of your life.

There are many blessings that are released when you pay your vows. Do you know that when Abraham gave tithes to the Lord, the blessing he received was a child? The Bible teaches us that Abraham was very rich, he didn't need anymore money. God knows what you need. As you give to

him, God will give you what you need. Principles are things that happen whether you want them to or not! There is a principle about giving. The more you give the more you receive.

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)

Hannah gave one son to the Lord- -the principle worked! God gave her five more children in return.

5. heLp youR son To becoMe A pAsToR!

Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice

(1 Samuel 2:19)

In this Scripture, you will notice how Hannah gave her son for the ministry. She knew that his life was going to be different from other little children. It was a great sacrifice for her to bring her only child to the temple. She knew his life was going to be difficult. Nevertheless, she kept her promise and gave up what was valuable to her.

6. MAke A pReAcheR's coAT FoR youR son

Then she made him a little coat to help him in the ministry. That little coat represents her contribution to his ministry. She was giving him clothes that he could use in church. A woman with direction is somebody who would like her child to serve the Lord. Some people do not want their husbands or children to go anywhere near the ministry. They have a subtle way of opposing the thought of becoming ministers. A woman with direction will release her husband or her child to the ministry. Daughter, help your husband to fulfill his calling.[7]

7. DAughTeR, keep on singing.

Hannah was a woman who wrote and sang songs after she had children. Many Christians today leave the music ministry after they have had children. They no longer praise the Lord as they used to. Hannah composed beautiful songs. She composed 'There is none holy as the Lord.' After her promotion, she was found in the house of the Lord praying. She could still be found singing.[8] Many women desire a breakthrough from the Lord, but when they receive it, they complain about how busy they are with their children.

They explain how they are suffering from morning sickness. They can no longer be in church because of backaches. Thank God for spiritual daughters! A woman with direction stays with the Lord even after the blessing has come. A woman with direction becomes even more zealous after the promotion of God.

8. WoMAn, cAn you be sepARATeD FRoM youR chiLD?

Some women are so attached to their children that they are of no use to anyone! Their husbands suffer because a child has come. The church suffers because a child has come. Sometimes their work suffers as well. A woman with direction is not overwhelmed because of a child. She does not allow her child to separate her from the will of God. She is able to leave her child for a few hours so that she can fulfill her ministry. Woman, do not be overwhelmed by the blessing of childbirth.

9. WoMAn, go beyonD youR eMoTions.

And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

(1 Samuel 1:7,8)

Hannah was an emotional person. You can see in the Scriptures that she wept and cried like any other woman. She had feelings and emotional problems. But she went beyond her emotions and became a spiritual person. In fact, she became more spiritual after her problem. Daughter, allow God to draw you deeper into the things of the Spirit. Through your problems, you will get to know God better. Indeed, all things will work out for your good. Woman, there is a breakthrough waiting for you. Go beyond your emotions and become a spiritual person.

DAughTeR, you MusT cATch The AnoinTing

And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague

(Mark 5:30- 31)

1. DAughTeRs ARe RecepTive.

I am a firm believer in the ability of women to catch the anointing. Many people brand women as being emotional. With the passage of years, I think I can say that women are more receptive to the Holy Spirit than men. This receptivity is often misunderstood. Dear sister, the anointing is yours for the taking. You must reach out with your spirit and take what God has for you.[9] Do not be intimidated any longer by the brothers who are stiff and unyielding to the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between a man and a woman. I have noticed that difference when it comes to the things of the Lord. If you look closely at the story of the woman with the issue of blood, you will learn certain things about women catching the anointing.

Jesus was surrounded by his disciples. On that day in particular, the anointing was flowing at a very high level. A few hours earlier, Jesus had cast out six thousand demons from a mad man in Gadara. He had crossed the river and was on his way to raise the dead. The twelve disciples were very close to the anointing but did not have what it took to connect to the power. A certain smelly, nameless

woman (unnamed up till today) came up to Jesus. She had what it took to connect to the anointing that was on Jesus. As soon as she touched the hem of Jesus' garment, something happened to her. The anointing passed into her. Jesus felt it and she did as well.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

(Mark 5:30).

When Jesus asked his disciples who had tapped into the anointing, they were very surprised. They asked the Lord, 'What are you talking about?' They stuttered, 'Which power is flowing where?' They were confused and they asked one another, 'What is he talking about? I don't feel anything, do you?' They turned on Jesus, defending their insensitivity to the things of the Spirit. They said to him, 'Can't you see that the masses are jostling you? What you felt was not the anointing. You were just feeling the pressure of the crowds surrounding us. It seems that you are becoming emotional.' Merzee!*

But Jesus knew that the anointing was flowing. He also knew that somebody had received it. The nameless woman in the crowd had already begun to rejoice because she had received the power.

And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague

(Mark 5:29).

Is it not amazing that the disciples did not recognize or feel the flow of the Spirit in the service? An unidentified person from nowhere came up and received it all. This is a common pattern I have noticed. Sometimes, when I pray for people at the altar, I notice that the women are more receptive. They feel the power of God. They sense the Spirit moving. Sometimes, the men are like marble statues covered with plaster of Paris. Some people cannot receive anything. You see, the power of God can be felt. [10]Jesus felt it going out of him.

The woman with the issue of blood also felt the power coming into her. You may see all these things as emotionalism. I can assure you that there is more to it than the emotions of a woman. Daughter you are receptive. Sometimes women become intimidated by the people around them. They feel that they are being hysterical. Daughter, you are not hysterical. You are just receptive to the Spirit of God! However, you will notice that there seem to be more men actively involved in ministry. Why is this? There are a few reasons why more men come into ministry. You will notice that this woman with the issue of blood never became a minister. If she did, it is not mentioned in the Bible.

However, we see the disciples becoming successful apostles, prophets, and teachers. In the second chapter of Acts, we see the disciples receiving the anointing and speaking in tongues. It took them longer to receive the anointing. But when they did, the results were dramatic. We watched them become ministers in the book of Acts. I believe that women receive the anointing far quicker than men do, but the cares of this world choke the Word and it becomes unfruitful.

And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful

(Mark 4:19)

There are three areas where women are particularly affected. First of all, in the area of finding husbands. Secondly, ensuring that their marriages are successful and peaceful. And thirdly, the bearing and raising of children. I have watched women with great anointing lose their ministry as they succumbed to these realities. Woman, through no fault of yours, you will have to grapple with these realities. It is only if you are determined that you will remain in ministry. In my church, I have found that women are very good shepherds and pastors. Some of my best pastors are women. When they are able to overcome these three challenges, they become extremely useful. Daughter, you received the anointing. You must prevail with the anointing.

2. DAughTeR, TAke These sTeps.

Daughter, it is important to study the steps that this unnamed woman took as she came to the anointing. You must study closely what this unnamed woman did in order to receive from God.[11] God has many things in store for you. Notice the four steps that this woman took to receive the anointing. I learnt these steps from Kenneth Hagin.

a) Step number one: she heard it.

b) Step number two: she believed it.

c) Step number three: she said it.

d) Step number four :she did it.

1. She Heard It!

When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment

(Mark 5:27)

A daughter of destiny must expose herself to the Word of God so that she will hear the right things. [12] The more you hear, the more you believe. The more you believe, the more you are open to the

blessings of God. Woman with direction, are you someone who listens to tapes? Do you watch videos? Do you read books? Or are you just seeking after blessings?

2. She Believed It!

This woman did certain things that brought her a certain blessing. She believed. The more you hear, the more you will believe. I want you to believe that God has answered your prayers. I want you to believe that you will prosper. It is more beneficial for you to believe than to doubt. Believe that God has given you a good husband and a good marriage. Do not doubt it, no matter your age.

3. She Said It!

Thirdly, this woman said it. I want you to say positive things from today. Speak positively. You are anointed. Speak positively. With the heart you believe and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. You must make positive confessions about your life. For practical help on making positive confessions, see Bishop Heward-Mills' book, 'Name It! Claim It! and Take It.'

4. She Did It!

The fourth and final step is to do something. Stretch out your heart and hand and receive from the Lord. If you want a husband, do something about it. After hearing and believing that God is going to bless you, dress nicely, look smart and be friendly. Everybody wants to marry someone who is warm and has feelings. Daughter, never forget these four steps to your blessing. Hear it, believe it, say it and do it!

The nATuRe oF The cuRse

So that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear

(Hebrews 11:3)

Everything you see in the physical or natural world is a reflection of a spiritual reality. It is the spiritual that gives rise to the physical. To understand the way forward you need to know where you are spiritually. If you do not know where you are, you don't even know whether to turn left or right. Perhaps you are in the north or the south. Which way do you turn? You will only know which way to turn by knowing where you are. In order to understand the state of women, you have to understand where women are, spiritually speaking.[1] The main thing that defines the spiritual state of women is the curse that took place in the Garden of Eden.[2]

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee

(Genesis 3:16)

Every woman falls squarely under the influence of this curse. When you study this curse thoughtfully, you will realize that no woman is exempted.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee

(Genesis 3:15,16).

If for instance you lived in a place that was prone to earthquakes and severe thunderstorms, you would build your house a little differently. If women understood these curses properly, they would build their houses with a little more wisdom and thereby save themselves.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman

(Genesis 3:15).

Why WoMen MusT be spiRiTuAL

1. The FiRsT coMponenT oF The cuRse is The enMiTy beTWeen The WoMAn AnD The DeviL.

Most of us know that the serpent was Satan. In Revelation 12:9, Satan is described as 'that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world.' Right here is the explanation to many of the conditions we see in the world. Satan is the enemy of all men and of anybody who serves the Lord. However, the fact that the Lord God particularly mentioned that there would be enmity between the woman and the serpent is very significant. You will notice that this does not apply to men. If Satan is particularly against all women, this could explain why women have been targeted and destroyed all these years.[3]

Although Satan is the enemy of all men, he is particularly the enemy of all women. This is what the Bible tells us. Satan's attacks come in different forms. This should make every woman more alert. If the devil is particularly against women, what must women do? Every woman must take God seriously. Women must be very spiritual people who know their God.[4] Do you think that you can fight that old serpent with your own strength? Woman, please do not deceive yourself.

2. WoMen MusT be spiRiTuAL FoR TheiR oWn gooD.

Every woman with direction must rise up and employ the weapons of spiritual warfare that God has placed in her hands through Christ.[5] What folly it is when women do not take God seriously. How unfortunate when they only look to their husbands and their marriages for hope and survival. Dear woman, except the Lord helps you, you can never defeat the devil. But with the help of God and in the name of Jesus, you can give Satan a sound thrashing! Perhaps this is the reason why the devil keeps many women from serving the Lord. Many ladies realize that their strength for survival comes from God.

Because of this there are many women who are spiritual and gravitate towards the Lord. Yet, through marriage and related issues many of these women are cut off from effectively serving the Lord. Through one excuse or the other, many women do not amount to much in the house of the Lord. Daughters, remember that the devil knows that he will win the fight against you once he can keep you down spiritually. Daughters, you are special targets of the devil.[6] I didn't say it! God said it! It is his Word. But there is good news for every woman! rise up and break through every barrier that keeps you from being the spiritual woman with direction that you were born to be.

And I will put enmity… between thy seed and her seed

(Genesis 3:15)

Satan has his eye on the woman. He fears and does not understand what the seed of the woman will be and how it will affect him.[7] Whatever that seed is, it is connected to the woman. If you were the

devil, you would attack the woman so that that seed which is intended to bruise your head would never come forth. This is what is happening in the world. There is a concerted attack by Satan on all types of women. That is why women must be spiritual. The attacks are multifaceted and multidimensional. Women almost seem to be at a disadvantage for being born into the body of a female. By the time you finish reading this book you will no longer be at a disadvantage. You will find yourself coming out of every negative situation by the wisdom of God. You will be a spiritual woman with direction!

unDeRsTAnDing The nATuRAL AnD spiRiTuAL seeD oF The WoMAn

Every woman will produce two types of seed or fruit. The 'natural seed' and 'the spiritual seed'.[8] The ‘natural seed’ of the woman speaks of the natural children that she brings forth. The ‘spiritual seed’ speaks of the spiritual fruit and spiritual impact of a woman's life and ministry. Every woman can have some spiritual fruit. Since the enemy knows that the seed of the woman is what will bruise the head of the serpent, he attacks that seed all the time.[9]

1. sATAn ATTAcks The nATuRAL seeD

The seed of the woman is a special target of Satan. The enemy does not want the woman to bring forth a child. This explains why childbearing is fraught with so many problems. Satan wants to prevent that son or daughter from coming forth from your loins. A close look at the Bible will show you that many great men were born to women who were initially barren. Sarah, the mother of Isaac was initially barren.[10]

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

(Genesis 16:2)

Rachel who is seen as the mother of Israel, was initially barren.[11]

And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die

(Genesis 30:1)

The mother of Samson was also initially barren.

And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not

(Judges 13:2)

Samuel's mother is another example of someone whose seed was under attack.

but Hannah had no children

(1 Samuel 1:2)

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, is a New Testament example of someone whose seed was blocked for many years.

And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years

(Luke 1:7)

Woman with direction, somebody great will come out from your womb. That is why the enemy will try to hinder you from marrying or having children. If you believe in this part of the Scripture, then you will understand why demons are particularly interested in harassing women.

2. sATAn ALso ATTAcks The spiRiTuAL seeD.

Women are prophetically destined to make a significant spiritual impact. I have observed that the role of spiritual women has increased. More and more women are making a difference in lay ministry and full-time ministry. You cannot rule them out. Their seed is significantly impacting the work of ministry. Women are preaching, singing, teaching and having visions. This is a role that God has carved out for all who care for spiritual things.

The Three Marys

When Mary, the sister of Martha, was seated at Jesus' feet listening to his words, He declared that she was doing the one thing needful (Luke 10:42)! When Mary Magdalene saw the risen Christ even before the apostles, the whole Church received an important message. Women are treasured by the Lord! Women are loved by the Lord! Women are special to the Saviour! When Mary, the mother of Jesus, received her salutation from the angel, she received perhaps the most treasured words ever spoken to a woman. For the angel declared,

Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women…for thou hast found favour with God

(Luke 1:28)

These three Marys left an indelible spiritual mark that has lasted forever. That is why the name ‘Mary’, is one of the most positive and meaningful names to be given to a woman. Their example must be followed by all who desire to bring forth spiritual seed.12 A woman with direction must rise up in the realm of the spirit and refuse to be defeated. Daughter, you cannot prevent the devil from hating you. He is against your spiritual seed but it shall surely come forth![13]

unDeRsTAnDing The cuRse oF chiLDbeARing

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children

(Genesis 3:16)

These words you read above are the reason for the creation of the obstetric and gynecological professions. As a medical doctor, it has always amazed me how a large profession could be created because of the female reproductive organs. We do not have large departments for treating intestines or livers. But we do have massive blocks for treating the diseases associated with the female reproductive organs.

1. chiLDbeARing is FRAughT WiTh MAny pRobLeMs in The MeDicAL FieLD.

There is such a need for a specialized department of obstetrics and gynecology. At the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra, Ghana, where I was trained, there are four main blocks as well as many smaller departments. One of the main blocks has to do with obstetrics and the other large department has to do with children (pediatric block). So you can see that there are many problems associated with conception and bringing forth of children.

The female reproductive system has received much attention because of this curse. When we are born again we are not delivered from this curse. That is an obvious reality. Women who are born again still undergo pain and sorrow in childbearing. Christ did not come to release us from the curse of Adam. All men, including Christian men still earn money by the sweat of their brows. That curse has not been lifted; you and I are still laboring under the sentence.

2. ThRough The WisDoM oF MeDicAL science, WoMen cAn ciRcuMvenT The eFFecTs oF The cuRse oF chiLDbeARing.

Some people teach that Christ has redeemed us from the curse so that when they are in labor they would have no pain or difficulty. Dear sister, do not deceive yourself and do not kill yourself. Through the wisdom of medical science, which is God-given, you can circumvent the effects of the curse. It is not a spiritual fight. It is a battle in which wisdom is a key player. Dear woman with direction, apply the wisdom that God has made available and you will find yourself sailing through this life and having children without the curse working against you. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. There are many curses in the Bible. There are the curses of Adam and Eve, the curse of Ham, the curse on Jericho, the curse of the Law and the list goes on. Christ Jesus delivered us from the curse of the Law and not from the curse of Adam and Eve.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree

(Galatians 3:13)

The curse of the Law can be found in Deuteronomy 28 where Moses outlines the curses that come upon those that do not keep the Law.

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee

(Deuteronomy 28:15)

Please do not make the mistake of equating the curse of the Law with the curse of Adam and Eve. I will now share with you the key to overcoming this curse.

oveRcoMing The cuRse oF chiLDbeARing

1. WisDoM is The key FoR oveRcoMing iMpossibLe siTuATions.

Wisdom is the principal thing. Wisdom is what we need. Every female problem will be solved with the wisdom of God.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her

(Proverbs 4:7-8)

Once again, the wisdom of God is the key to overcoming impossible situations. Medical science is God's blessing to humanity. Medical knowledge is God-given wisdom. The curse associated with childbearing can be overcome by the use of medical science. Medical science is the application of God-given wisdom. In advanced countries, the maternal mortality rate, which is the number of deaths of women from childbearing, is less than 0.1 per 1000 total births. This means that a woman rarely dies from childbearing. In the nineteenth century, the number of deaths of women from childbearing was alarming! It was caused mainly by things like sepsis (infections), eclampsia (high blood pressure in pregnant women), complications of labor and hemorrhage (excessive bleeding).

These complications of childbearing have been there from time immemorial. In recent times, the application of medical wisdom has changed the story of childbearing. This has largely been due to an improvement in the health and nutrition of the population. It has also been due to the control of infection, blood transfusion, advances in the fields of surgery, anesthesia and resuscitation. When I was a student in obstetrics and gynecology, my professor told me that when a woman has a shoe size less than size five, she is likely to have difficulties in labor. You see, the shoe size gives an indication of the dimensions of the pelvic bones. There must have been a whole lot of women with small shoe sizes who suffered terribly and even died in labor.

2. WiTh The AppLicATion oF WisDoM AnD MoDeRn science, WoMen hARDLy neeD To FeAR chiLDbiRTh.

This is the principle I want you to understand. It is the same principle applied by the poor wise man who delivered the city by wisdom. The curse of Adam presents itself as a hopeless and impossible sentence. Whenever you are faced with difficult and impossible situations never forget that wisdom can deliver you. Wisdom is the principal thing. With all your getting, get wisdom. It will promote you and help you greatly in your life. This curse is not circumvented by using spiritual methods.

unDeRsTAnDing The cuRse oF MARRiAge

And thy desire shall be to thy husband

(Genesis 3:16)

This is an unusual curse but we see it everyday. It is not wrong for a man to desire a woman or for a woman to desire a man. However, the desire for a husband has been made into a curse because it was part of the woman's punishment for disobeying. From then on, desiring a man would be part of God's punishment for all women. In other words, the desire of women for husbands has taken on an added negative dimension. This curse governs the lives of many women in the world.

1. MARRiAge pResenTs MAny FRusTRATions To WoMen AcRoss The gLobe.

It is an open secret that many married women are not happy. We can all see the troubles that married people go through. In Europe, people simply don't marry any more, they just live together. We constantly see married couples being prayed for and counseled. Many married women are frustrated and disillusioned with the concept of marriage. There are many women who would be happier without husbands to rule over them.

2. WheReAs eveRyone nATuRALLy FeeLs ThAT They WouLD be hAppieR WiTh inDepenDence, WoMen seek To be RuLeD AnD DoMinATeD by Men.

Many of the nations of this world have fought for independence from foreign rule. Nobody wants to be ruled and dominated by another. ‘Freedom’ is the reason why many wars have been fought. People feel that they would be happier if they were free from an oppressor's rule. Yet, women do not fight for independence from men but rather fight to come under the domination of a husband! Mercy! There are many women who know that they would be more fulfilled if they remained single.[14] Yet, there is an invisible force that makes them desire husbands. There must be a curse somewhere! Sometimes women are unable to get these husbands. Instead of living happy and fulfilled lives, they plod through life like disappointed and disillusioned travelers.

and he shall rule over thee

(Genesis 3:16)

The Scripture makes it clear that the husband will rule over the woman. This means that the woman will be dominated and governed by the man. This is also a curse. The last line of the national anthem of my country declares: ‘And help us to resist oppressor's rule with all our will and might forever more.’ Think about it; if a whole nation is taught to ‘resist oppressor's rule’, then it must be a bad thing to be ruled by an oppressor. Yet many women see oppressive men and desire to be ruled by

them. Where does this irresistible desire come from? The answer is found in the curse pronounced in the Garden of Eden. There are many married women who have wise ideas and take good decisions. But they are ruled and dominated by foolish husbands.

There are many men who do not exhibit the wisdom of a ruler, yet, they occupy the place of a governor in the marriage. It is very difficult to live with someone who does not lead in the right direction. It is distressing to follow a leader who is unreasonable. Yet this is the lot of many women. This also is a curse! Accepting that there is a curse is a first step to your victory. Understanding how this curse plays out is key to getting your victory. Let us now learn how to overcome this curse.

oveRcoMing The cuRse oF MARRiAge

How does a woman come out of this apparently hopeless state of affairs? By wisdom! It is possible to overcome the desire for a husband by applying the wisdom in the Word of God. When a woman of direction applies the wisdom of God, she will perceive marriage in the right context. I want you to see and understand what marriage can and cannot do for you. You will have a blind desire for a husband when you don't understand what God is trying to do for you. You can be single and very happy. All women whether married or unmarried need to get this right. This is not a teaching for single people. It is a teaching for women with direction. A woman must ask herself, 'What is my purpose in life?'

1. unDeRsTAnDing A WoMAn's puRpose

God has ordained great works for every woman. When an unmarried woman discovers that her main purpose is to accomplish the will of God, she will be content.[15] When a married woman discovers that her main purpose in this life is to do the will of the Father, she will become a fulfilled woman.[16]

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

(Ephesians 2:10)

2. Don'T Look FoR hAppiness in A MAn

If you look to your husband (even Christian husbands) for fulfillment, you will not be a happy person. If you look to God for fulfillment you will be satisfied. Many married women, who have discovered this concept no longer look to their husbands for fulfilment.[17] I have talked with numerous single and married women. The secret to happiness for both of them is the same. Serve the Lord, give yourself to God, live for him and thereby walk in fulfillment.

3. Look FoR hAppiness in goD

Have you ever wondered why Jesus never considered getting married? Marriage is an arrangement that adds another dimension to life on this Earth. Jesus didn't need that dimension to be fulfilled. Jesus did not need to be married in order to be happy in this life. Jesus gave the secret to his happiness upon this Earth.

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work

(John 4:34)

Meat is the nice part of food that we all enjoy. Jesus pointed out that his enjoyment came by doing and finishing the will of God. Let's face it! How long will you live on this Earth? How many more years

do you have to go before you leave this Earth? When we get to Heaven there will be no husbands and wives.

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven

(Matthew 22:30)

Will having a husband affect your future happiness in Heaven? When a woman concentrates on her real purpose for this life, she becomes a happy person. The story of Kathryn Kuhlman exemplifies this principle. When Kathryn Kuhlman walked away from her controversial marriage that had brought much pain and disillusionment, she was able to concentrate on her ministry. By concentrating on her ministry, as a divorced and single woman, she accomplished what many men have not been able to do. I believe she's in glory today. Do you think her being married or not matters now?

4. husbAnDs cAn quench youR cALL

Many women cannot fulfill their ministries because of their husbands. One day, they will have to give an account of their ministries that never materialized. I know female pastors who have been banned by their husbands from even going to church. Many husbands are not comfortable with their wives being so active in the ministry. Married women may seem to be elevated socially by their marital status. But one day it is women who have fulfilled their ministries who will be proud and joyful in Heaven.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness

(2 Timothy 4:7,8)

This crown is laid up for women with direction! Women with direction fight a good fight and finish their course. This crown is not laid up for women because they have husbands! This crown is not given to women because they have had children! It is laid up for women who have kept the faith! Does your marriage allow you to keep the faith? Does your marriage allow you to be a Christian? Does your marriage allow you to be in the ministry, as you would love to? Does your marriage allow you to fight and finish your course?

Will you finish your course of ministry? Come out of the curse by renewing your mind.[18] Set your eyes on things above.[19] Women with direction, no man (even Christian men) can give you the fulfillment I am talking about. From today let this mind be in you. The curse of desiring a man to

dominate you will disappear in the name of Jesus. When this wisdom is in you, you will be a different kind of woman. It is only by renewing your mind that you can overcome the curse.

Promises for Women 54

1. DAughTeR, you hAve TenDeR eyes.

Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured

(Genesis 29:17)

Apart from striking external beauty, there are many other things women are endowed with. It is not all about physical beauty, it is about the tenderness in the eyes. God endows every woman with beauty or with tender eyes. God has designed some women to be tender beings. No one wants to marry a wooden pole. A man is looking for something that is warm and friendly. Daughter, you are endowed with many other gifts. Ask any married man. 'Beauty is vain', they will tell you. There are many other things that make people happy. Decide to learn the things that will make you attractive.

Because I am a pastor, I have attended many weddings. Certainly, it is not the most beautiful women who get married every Saturday! There are many beautiful girls who are sitting on the pews waiting for their turn. If it were just beauty, they would all be married by now! God may give you beauty or He may simply give you tender eyes. Most definitely, He will give you something! Daughter, you must have something. Use what you have!

Different Kinds Of Tender Eyes

Tender eyes come in many different forms. Rachel was beautiful, but Leah had tender eyes.[1] Perhaps your tender eyes will come in the form of a friendly disposition. Perhaps your tender eyes will come as a gift of cooking and homemaking. Perhaps your tender eyes will be in the form of enchanting sexual energy. Yet still, your tender eyes may be in the form of your financial input to the marriage. Your tender eyes may also be in the form of your exciting sanguine personality. Your tender eyes may be in the form of your cool, calm phlegmatic temperament. Yet still, your tender eyes may come in the form of your strong leader's choleric personality. Again, your melancholic neatness and loyal nature may be the tender eyes that God has given you![2] Daughter, thou hast tender eyes. God gave you something. Do not be filled with self-pity. You have tender eyes. Use them and be blessed!

2. DAughTeR, goD WiLL give you A husbAnD.

Uncle Laban had two daughters; both of them were eligible for marriage. When Jacob arrived in town, he was immediately attracted to the younger one, Rachel. But God ensured that Leah got married before Rachel did.[3]

And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for a handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn

(Genesis 29:23-26)

My sister, perhaps no one has proposed marriage to you. You are just like our sister Leah. While other people received proposals, you were left out. But the Lord is working on your case. God has a plan for you. Just as God gave Leah a husband, God will give you a husband! Leah married before the other so called beautiful girls. I see you getting married before many others. Marriage is a spiritual thing. It is God who opens and closes the door of marriage.

And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for a handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

(Genesis 29:23- 25)

There is a door of marriage. When it is opened to you, no one can close it! God had determined that Leah should be married. He had even determined that Leah should be married before Rachel. No one could change that blessing. Dear daughter, if God has opened the door of marriage, there is nothing that anyone can do about it. Rachel, by popular opinion was more beautiful than her sister, and yet she did not get married before her sister. Dear daughter, you are not going to marry because of any natural reason. You are going to get married because God is holding a door open for you. Believe it and receive it in the name of Jesus!

3. DAughTeR, goD WiLL give you A chiLD.

And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren

(Genesis 29:31).

My dear friend, have you ever watched a soccer match without knowing who was really playing? As you watched for a while you began to notice the side that was losing. Most of the time, we tend to instinctively support the losing team. As they say, 'People support the underdogs.' That support you have for the underdogs is a God-given instinct to support the disadvantaged. Today, if you are in a disadvantaged situation, be it known unto you that God is on your side. Woman, the Lord is helping you right now! It may seem as though you are disfavored, but that is what provokes God. The Bible says very clearly that when God saw that Leah was not liked, he compensated for it by showing divine favor.

And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

(Genesis 29:31)

God opened the womb of Leah and made her have children. Suddenly, Leah was a favored person. She was the only one who could bring children into the family.[4] Dear sister, perhaps you are not Miss Ghana or Miss Universe. That is the reason why Jesus is giving you extra favor. Today, as you hold this book, remember these words, THE LORD'S FAVOUR IS UPON YOUR LIFE!! He is going to change your misfortunes. You don't have to be discouraged. Daughter, you have tender eyes! Daughter, you shall surely have a child.

4. DAughTeR, keep on seRving The LoRD.

And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing

(Genesis 29:35).

A tender-eyed daughter is someone who continues to serve the Lord, even after God has blessed and elevated her. Leah had several children.[5] Many people stop serving the Lord when they have children. Leah gave birth to Reuben, Simeon, Levi and then Judah. By this time, many Christian women would have retired from their Christian activities. But not so with Leah. She said, 'Now will I praise the Lord.' Daughter, this is a good example to follow. You must serve the Lord with all your heart.

Children are only blessings from the Lord. My mother-in-law says that, 'Children are guests in the house. They will soon be gone.' If all your life is just focused on your children, you will be disappointed. Leah determined to serve the Lord in spite of her many children.

And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing

(Genesis 29:31-35)

In the midst of Leah's initial disappointment, she received four meaningful miracles. The first blessing was Reuben. 'Reuben', means 'behold'. She was saying to everyone, 'See, I am blessed.' She was showing everyone that God had blessed her in other ways. Count the blessings in your life.[6] Perhaps you are not married, but you may be blessed in many other ways. You must also say, 'Reuben,' which means 'behold.' Behold my good job. Behold my nice brothers and sisters. Behold my nice car. There are many things to behold.

After this, Leah had another son called Simeon. ‘Simeon’, means ‘bearing’. In other words, ‘God is sustaining me.’ She was telling everyone that she could see the continued hand of God in her affairs. Daughter of tender eyes, perhaps you do not have certain things in this life. Today, I want you to see that God is sustaining you. He is working in your life despite what you lack. You can also have a Simeon and say, ‘God is sustaining me.’ Then Leah had a third child and called him ‘Levi’. Levi means ‘joined’.’

By this time, Leah was convinced that God was a permanent part of her affairs. God was joined to her life. She could only say thank you to the Lord for this third blessing. By naming her child Levi, she was telling everyone that God was a permanent part of her life. Woman with direction, do you have at least three blessings in your life? Perhaps things are not as perfect as you desire. But count your blessings and name them one by one: the blessings of life, the blessings of education, the blessings of health, parents, promotion and the list goes on. Woman with direction, if you have at least three blessings in your life you can also say, ‘Levi.’ Which means God is joined to your life.

Finally, Leah had a fourth child and she called him Judah. 'Judah', means 'praise'. By naming her child Judah she was sending a message to the entire community. She was saying, ‘I am a happy woman.’ I may not be the most beautiful person. I may not be Jacob's first choice. But I can praise the Lord today. Tender-eyed daughter, there is a miracle in your house. There is a blessing in the house. Surely you can say, ‘Behold God has blessed me.’ Surely you can say, ‘God is sustaining me.’ You must be able to say that, ‘God is joined to my life.’ Finally, you must be able to say, ‘Praise the Lord.’ Daughter, you have tender eyes!

5. DAughTeR, Don'T be TiReD oF Doing youR DuTies.

When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife

(Genesis 30:9)

Leah gave another woman to Jacob. She told her maid, ‘Go into his room and sleep with him.’[7] Zilpah was very willing to have an opportunity to replace her mistress. Someone may wonder at this strange practice. However, it continues in other ways today. Many women are welcoming a third party into their homes by their character and attitude. The Bible teaches that it is better to dwell on the rooftop than in a large house with a ferocious woman.

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house

(Proverbs 21:9)

There are also many women who are not interested in sexual happiness in a Christian context. By doing this, they open the door to the numerous other women who are more than willing to be a replacement. Daughter, you may not say openly, ‘I want another woman to be with my husband,’ but by your attitude and constant accusations you are saying the same thing. **Regain Your Husband's Attention**

And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night

(Genesis 30:14-16)

Many years after Leah had her children, her husband was no longer interested in her. This is a common experience in many marriages. But it is possible to regain your husband's attention. Woman, you are beautiful. Woman, you have tender eyes! Daughter, there was a time you enchanted your man. If you did it in those days you can do it again. Do not think you have lost your ability to be a wife because you are older. Do not think that you are no longer beautiful. Do not think that your tender eyes are no more. In fact, with the passing of many years, your tender eyes can be even more tender. Leah regained her husband's attention by using her son's mandrakes.[8] She was a determined woman and nothing was going to stop her from regaining her husband's attention.

Woman, I have good news for you. There is no younger girl who can replace you. Your age and experience make you a more suitable person for your husband. The changes in your physical features over the years have only made you a more suitable wife. rise up into your place and do not allow any young whippersnapper to intimidate you. Take your place! Pay the price! Stop accusing, stop criticizing, and stop opposing. Be warm, energetic, youthful and interesting! Your husband will be forever charmed with your love!

Support Your Husband

And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled. And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is our's, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, Do

(Genesis 31:5-10,14-16)

One day, there was a crisis in Jacob's life and he had to flee from his uncle. He could no longer work for his uncle's company. When it was time to leave, he told his wives about his new vision to relocate. His wives supported him. A woman with direction supports her husband when he has a new vision.[9] Daughter, try not to be the greatest opponent of your husband. It is true that you are the best person to correct him when he's wrong. This does not mean that you must lose your divine position as the one who supports and encourages your husband.

You must learn to balance your role as a corrector and your role as a supporter. When it is time to bring your husband into line, you must certainly do so! When it is time to support him, you must also do so wholeheartedly. Some wives are always correcting their husbands so much that they see no good in them anymore. They can no longer receive or be led by them. Leah had lived with her husband for many years, but when he came up with a new idea, she said unto him, ‘Whatever the Lord is telling you, please do it. We are with you.’ Daughter you have tender eyes. Seek the wisdom of God and he will help you to do whatever you have to do! Daughter, you have tender eyes!

Wisdom for Women 55

The WisDoM key oF *AbigAilism*

And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb

(1 Samuel 25:2, 3)

Abigail was a beautiful woman who was known for her role in curbing her husband's foolishness. ‘Abigailism’, is the art of practicing what Abigail did in order to prevent tragedy from coming to the family. Abigail's husband was a man called Nabal. Nabal comes from the Hebrew word ‘qasheh’, which means ‘foolishness or churlishness.’ It is translated into different words in different parts of the Bible. Some of these are: roughly, hard, cruel, stiff-necked, stubborn, grievous, obstinate, trouble, hard-hearted and impudent.

Many married women have husbands who fit this description. A woman with direction must use wisdom to co-exist peacefully. She must use the art of Abigailism to have a successful marriage and combine it with a good relationship with God. Abigailism has six goals. A woman without Abigailism usually achieves one or two of these goals. When you develop the art of Abigailism you will be able to achieve all six goals simultaneously.

six goals of Abigailism

1. To prevent your husband from doing wrong or committing sin.

2. To prevent your entire family from being destroyed.

3. To preserve your marriage.

4. To preserve your relationship with God and the church.

5. To preserve your ministry.

6. To prevent a confrontation between your husband and the church.

And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword.

And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff. But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them. Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid. And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand

(1 Samuel 25:4- 33)

In this passage, you see Abigail's attempt to preserve both her husband and her relationship with God's servant. It was clear that her husband was doing something wrong. You do not have to be very intelligent to see that her husband was hard-hearted and insensitive to the things of God. Yet, she was married to him and there was no way they were going to break up. It was not the will of God for her to break up! A daughter of destiny wants to preserve her marriage. A woman with direction also wants to preserve her ministry. Her relationship with God is very important and she is not prepared to give it up for anything.[1]

How do you balance these two when you are married to a carnal Christian or an unbeliever? As you read these few lines, please imbibe the wisdom that comes from above and learn the strategy that Abigail adopted for the ministry. The Bible says that there is nothing new under the sun. The types of husbands that existed in times past are the same types of husbands that you find today. Churlishness is as prevalent today as it was in Abigail's time. That is why every woman needs the art of Abigailism today. There is another reason why many women need the art of Abigailism. This is because women are more sensitive to the things of God. They often pick up the move of the Spirit before the men do. Abigail had heard that Samuel anointed David. She accepted immediately that he was going to be the next king.

And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid

(1 Samuel 25:30,31)

Perhaps there were many other people who had heard of David's anointing. Obviously, Nabal did not believe in such absurdities. He had decided to stamp out all foolish young men. He described David as a rebel. He branded him as a young, uneducated, self-appointed pastor who was chasing after people's wives. He would not allow any members of his family to attend a church that was younger than he. Does this sound familiar to you?

And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

(1 Samuel 25:10-12)

What exactly did Abigail do? Let us take it step by step.

sTeps To AbigAiLisM

In medical science, when you are able to make out the diagnosis of the disease you are often far advanced in curing it. If you are not able to put your finger on the exact problem, it is often difficult to solve it.[2] You will ask yourself, 'Which of these one thousand different medications should I administer to the patient?' You are still very far from the problem when you have not identified it.

1. The FiRsT sTep To soLving MAny pRobLeMs is DiAgnosis.

First, Abigail recognized and acknowledged truthfully that she was married to a churlish personality. Acknowledging that your husband has the character and the tendencies of Nabal is the first step in the art of Abigailism. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send

(1 Samuel 25: 25)

2. The seconD sTep is To sTop pReTenDing ThAT The pRobLeM is noT TheRe.

Many people practice what we call denial. They pretend that the problem is not there.[3] They say that black is white and white is black. Daughter, pretending that a problem is not there does not make it go away. Calling a white thing black does not make it black.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

(Isaiah 5:20)

There are many women who want to hide their problems. They feel that they are disgracing their husbands. There is a fine balance between denigrating your marriage, humiliating your husband and talking frankly about a problem that exists. To denigrate your husband means to blacken his reputation. This is wrong and a woman with direction does not do that! A daughter of destiny is not so secretive that no one can help her. A certain amount of openness allows you to be helped. Dear woman, the problems that you have are not new. Read the Bible and you will realize that the problems you have are not peculiar. Speaking about your problem is not wrong if it is done in the proper context and for the right reason.

3. The ThiRD sTep oF AbigAiLisM is To Ask FoR heLp.

And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid

(1 Samuel 25:24)

Many people need help but not everybody wants it. My experience in the ministry has taught me to give help to those who ask for it and not just to those who need it. There are many needs everywhere. If you try to help some needy people, they may attack you to show their gratitude. We once experienced this when our church built a facility for a community. Abigail asked David politely to listen to her and understand what she was going through.

4. The nexT sTep is To ReALize ThAT goD is The one Who gAve you youR husband

. When you are conscious of the fact that God is the one who established you in marriage, it will help you to realize that it is God who preserves the marriage. A woman who is conscious of the fact that God brought her to where she is, never wants to be separated from the Lord. She needs the help of the Lord in everything that she does. It is God who will keep you going.[4] When you have this conviction, you immediately work from God's point of view and from God's side of the fence. A woman practicing Abigailism is on the side of the Word of God.

5. The nexT sTep is To speAk WiseLy To youR husbAnD.

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light

(1 Samuel 25:36)

The Bible says here that she told him 'nothing, less or more'. She did two things. First of all, she said nothing to him. It is not wise to say some things. If she had told of her donations to King David, she may have been executed that very night. Secondly, 'less or more' means in other words, she did not say anything unusual to him. Her conversation with him did not centre on the controversial issues. She told him only what he needed to know.

A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards

(Proverbs 29:11)

If you learn how to speak wisely, you will be successful at Abigailism.[5] Some women quarrel with their husbands constantly. They fight about every issue and argue about every point. Men do not like arguments. Men do not like to be shouted at. Men do not like to feel they have lost an argument. No man likes to be put down. Be wise when dealing with men. Abigailism is the key you need. Abigailism means that you speak wisely to your husband.

6. The nexT sTep is To give soFT AnsWeRs.

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger

(Proverbs 15:1)

A woman practicing Abigailism employs the weapon of soft answers. A man gravitates towards a woman with soft answers. A man yields unknowingly to a woman with soft answers. Be a woman with soft answers and you will successfully combine your marriage with your ministry.

7. The FinAL sTep is To AcT WiseLy.

In a hopelessly difficult marriage, Abigailism prevails. A woman with direction is able to act so wisely that she preserves her marriage and her ministry. In the book of Ecclesiastes, God reveals the master plan for winning in hopeless situations.

A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him? The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city. Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning

(Ecclesiastes 10:14-16)

This story applies to any circumstance. It applies to a hopeless marriage, business or church. It applies to your case, in which your husband is unyielding and insensitive to the things of God. You will win in this fight because God's wisdom is the master key to overcoming impossible situations. A wise wife does not stir up controversy with her husband. As you provide your husband with his daily requirements he will be at peace with you. If he feels that he is deprived in any way he will look for the culprit. Many Christian women unknowingly cause the church to look like the destroyer of their marriages.

Their husbands see the church and its pastors as rivals. They perceive the ministry as their enemy. Soon, the only feeling that he has for the pastor is resentment. It is sad that many husbands hate the church. It is the duty of a woman with direction to act wisely. Do not deprive your husband of food, sex or peace at home. In fact, load it on him until he is suffocating with your love. He will be charmed by your sweetness and will have nothing to complain about.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation (behavior) of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear

. (1 Peter 3:1,2)

Are you married to a Nabal or to an Apostle Peter? Coming to church must be done with great wisdom and circumspection. If you are married to someone like Nabal, you cannot afford to behave like someone who is married to Apostle Peter. Your circumstances are entirely different! What is the result of Abigailism? When the art of Abigailism is practiced, there is peace at home and peace in the Kingdom of God. Abigail prevented David's men from killing and destroying her entire household.

Many women do not realize that when their husbands are destroyed they will be destroyed as well. The mystery of marriage is that if your husband goes down, you go with him. The entire family of Abigail and Nabal would have been destroyed by David's army. Abigail would have died with her husband and children. Abigailism saved their lives. Abigailism also preserved Abigail's relationship with the man of God. She was still connected to the move of God that was taking place through David.

You will recall that Abigail believed in the prophecy that David was to be the next king. She was flowing with the things of the Spirit and nothing would cut her off. Abigailism is the key you need. Notice David's response to Abigail. It was peaceful and there were no curses or proclamations made against her family.

And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand

(1 Samuel 25:32,33)

Nabal, on the other hand, continued in his life of foolishness and drank himself to death a few days later. You will see from the Scripture below that Abigail did not do anything to make him angry. In fact, he was so happy that he had a party. Abigailism does not bring about confusion and quarrels. It makes the husband so happy that he has parties!

And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light

(1 Samuel 25:36)

Apply the wisdom of God to your life and you will effectively combine your love for God with the love for your dear husband!

Warnings for Women 56

WisDoM key To MAinTAin youR posiTion

There is a principle at work in the Earth today. It is the principle of divine displacement and replacement. This principle simply states that a person can be dislodged from a place of relative security and substituted by another unexpectedly. You see this principle at work throughout the Bible. You see it in the life of King Saul when he was swapped for King David. You notice it in the life of Elijah the prophet. When Elijah complained about the ministry, God immediately replaced him with Elisha. In the fifth chapter of the book of Daniel, when Belshazzar desecrated the holy vessels of the temple, a hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the king's palace. The message was simple:

Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians

(Daniel 5:26-28)

If you do not understand biblical language, then let me explain this to you. It means that you have been substituted! These things happen before you even see them. In soccer language, you have received a red card. You are going off the pitch! In the next match, someone else will take your place. That is exactly what happened to Belshazzar. He was killed the very night on which the handwriting appeared. He was replaced by a man called Darius. This happened overnight.

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old

(Daniel 5:30,31)

Daughter, this section is all about displacement and replacement. If God has exalted you and placed you in a good place, please respect it and know that you could lose your position if you do not take the Word of God seriously. I once had to tell someone's proud wife that she should be humble because there were several people who were ready to replace her. A man of God once said, ‘In a congregation of five hundred there are at least twenty people who are ready to sleep with the pastor at short notice.’ Wherever God has placed you, be it a political, spiritual or marital position, please be conscious of the fact that it is by the grace of God. There was a woman who was displaced and replaced swiftly in a move that shocked many observers. She was called Vashti.

obeDience To youR husbAnD

That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him: When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him

(Esther 1:2-4,10-12)

Vashti was the wife of the king. She had a privileged position as the queen. Her husband asked her to do something. Perhaps the instruction was a little controversial, but I wish to use what happened to illustrate an important point. The Bible teaches that wives should submit to their own husbands.[1]

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord

(Ephesians 5:22)

Because Vashti did not obey her husband, one thing led to another and she was eventually removed. Her disobedience led to a divorce. Someone may argue that her husband gave a questionable instruction that couldn't be obeyed. I agree with you. But in this case you will have to compare two bad options:

1. Humble yourself, obey this instruction and preserve your marriage, or

2. Stand up for your rights, refuse to be bullied and lose your marriage.[2]

Which of these is a better option? Daughter, I suggest to you that it would be wise to retain your God-given position. Do not stand up for your rights all the time. I am not saying that you should allow yourself to be maltreated. In some cases, fighting for your human rights may be more expensive than enduring moments of indignity. Follow these principles to maintain your given position.

1. Do noT oppose youR husbAnD pubLicLy.

A daughter of destiny does not oppose her husband publicly. Husband and wife may not always agree on everything. If they did, it would be a miracle. A woman may not agree with something that her husband is doing, but she will support him publicly. When they are in private she will bring up the issues and discuss her point of view. There is always a time and place to argue or discuss the issues. The Bible teaches that the virtuous woman's husband is respected in the city. He is respected partly because of how his wife treats him.3

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land

(Proverbs 31:23)

2. Do noT DisgRAce youR husbAnD.

How will your husband be respected in the city if you are rude to him in public? People will think that he cannot control his own household. People will also think that he made a mistake and married an ‘Ama Tarzan’, ‘Ekua Rambo’ or ‘Adjoa Terminator!’ Woman with direction, I submit to you that when your husband is disgraced, you are disgraced as well. That is one of the mysteries of the marriage covenant. When your husband goes up you go up with him. When his face is dragged in the mud, so is yours.

There are some wives who go around saying all sorts of bad things about their husbands. They have one complaint after the other. It is all right to seek help from your counselors or pastors. But it is not all right to denigrate your husband. ‘To denigrate someone’, means ‘to blacken his reputation.’ Wives must not blacken the reputation of their husbands. A fine balance must be achieved between openness for obtaining advice and humiliating your husband.

Why Some Women Are Never Listened To

Wisdom is justified of her children. You can choose to oppose your husband publicly but I tell you what will happen. He will never listen to you and he will never consider your opinion in any important decision! What you do not realize is that no one takes advice from his enemy. When you constantly oppose your husband, you occupy the position of an enemy. You are the opposition party to the man. In my observation of politics, I have noticed that the ruling party never listens to the suggestions of the opposition group.

This is because the opposition group is seen as an enemy who does not have the goodwill of the ruling party at heart. I do not listen to my enemies either. But I pay very careful attention to what my friends tell me. Have you noticed that your husband hardly listens to your antagonistic outbursts? Watch closely and notice the people he listens to. They are people he perceives as friends and genuine supporters. Wisdom is different from human rights. It is by wisdom that hopeless marriages and difficult husbands can be turned around. God is trying to teach you wisdom and not legal rights. You have rights and claims that you can make. Please feel free to do what you want. But wisdom is justified of her children.

3. Do noT ALLoW AnoTheR To TAke youR pLAce.

Vashti was suddenly removed from her high position.…give her royal estate unto another that is better than she

(Esther 1:19)

Where has God established you? Has He made you a wife or a queen? If you do not respect what God has given you, you may lose it. I often tell people that there are two hundred people who are ready to replace them. No one needs to be proud or feel indispensable. We are all where we are by the grace of God. Some women do not mind if their husbands are having affairs. They say, 'Just do not let me know about it.' Decide that you will not allow anything or anyone to take your place. A woman with direction understands the principle of divine displacement and replacement.

To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on

(Esther 1:11).

Vashti made a tragic mistake. She had one great asset that God had given to her, that was her physical beauty. 4 Every woman has been given her beauty as a gift from God. You used your beauty to get the man. You must use it to keep him. You used your beauty to attract the man. You must use it to keep your place. Some wives do not care anymore about how they look. Christian women are supposed to take care of themselves so that they look beautiful. Do not think for one moment that your husband does not notice beautiful women in town. Every Christian man is fully aware of all the beautiful women around him.

4. Do noT be Like A pRouD queen Who cAnnoT pLeAse heR husbAnD WiTh heR boDy.

When Vashti was called upon to display her beauty, she did not! She refused to do so. Many wives do not allow their husbands to gaze upon their beautifully formed bodies. In the name of bashfulness and modesty, many Christian husbands are deprived. Many years ago, my pastor in London told a story of a mother who was giving her daughter away in marriage. She gave her daughter one piece of advice. She said to her, 'Daughter, one thing that I am proud of is that my husband, your father, has never seen my nakedness. Keep it that way!' she encouraged her daughter.

Woman, use your beauty to captivate your husband.[5] Do not think that he is not interested in sexual things.[6] The fact that he lies in the bed like a piece of dead timber does not mean that there is no sexual power within him. Unknown to you, his mind may be captivated by other women. Love is something that needs stirring and awakening.

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please

. (Song of Solomon 8:4)

Christian ladies should stir up their husbands' interest with their physical beauty. I realize that many women do not believe this advice is necessary. However, as cases of adultery and divorce occur, people will take these things seriously. The human body is wonderfully created by God. The power of the flesh is so strong that it must never be underestimated. In 1983, I met an old man in a little village in the north of England. This man told me that he had lost his dog. He was perturbed and mumbled on about the power of sex.

Initially, I did not understand him. He was an old man whose only friend was his dog. Eventually, I understood that his dog had deserted him and run after a female dog in the village. Being his only friend, the old man was surprised that the power of sex had been able to separate his dog from him. All that I am saying is that sex is powerful. A daughter of destiny understands this reality. Why quarrel with

someone you can charm?[7] Do not say that your husband is not interested; he is! Perhaps you are a proud queen like Vashti, who is not prepared to do certain things.

A proud queen will not satisfy her husband's sexual desire. A proud queen will not be prepared to have sex for any reason other than pregnancy. A proud queen will refuse all forms of sexual variations other than the basics. A proud queen will be too dignified to do anything unusual to excite her husband. A proud queen behaves like a cadaver in bed. Like a huge anaconda, she rarely moves her coiled body. She is too noble to make any movements. Years ago,

I remember a young man who gave his life to Jesus. This young man had been involved in pornography and all forms of licentiousness. His room was always covered with photographs and posters of naked women. After he got saved, he put away all these things and began to live a straight life. He got married and was faithful to his wife for many years. When his wife became pregnant she banned him from coming near her until after she had delivered. Mind you, this was not due to medical advice. She just did not want to have sex. After years of staying faithful, this husband turned once again to a life of lewdness and fornication.

Five months into the pregnancy, he began to have affairs with other girls in his community. His proud queen would still not hear of him coming near her until the pregnancy was over. From that time onwards, their marriage deteriorated into a cat and dog fight in which the husband had numerous extramarital affairs. Secondary school girls took over from this twentieth century Queen Vashti. Daughter, thou hast a body, please use it, otherwise you will be replaced!

poWeRFuL keys FoR A DAughTeR oF DesTiny

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

(Romans 8:28).

All things work together for good for a daughter of destiny. Esther had neither father nor mother. She was an orphan in the care of her cousin Mordecai. Many people would have given up on life after becoming an orphan at an early age. She could have moaned and whined that she was not receiving motherly and fatherly care at the hands of Mordecai. Please notice the second part of the Scripture. It says that all things work together for good to them that love God. Do you love the Lord?

A woman with direction has her heart set upon the Lord. Perhaps today you are asking yourself, 'Why did I marry this man?' Perhaps your life has taken many different twists and turns. You ask yourself, 'Shouldn't I have married the other brother?' Your mind races as you think of missed opportunities. I want you to know that all things work together for good. Perhaps you are well advanced in years and are not yet married. Perhaps you have been married for years and do not have a child. Perhaps you are married to a beastly husband.8 I tell you that all things are going to work together for good!

Daughter of destiny, it is going to be well with you.9 Esther had neither father, mother nor beloved. She only had a cousin. If God could raise Esther from nowhere, then God can raise you up. Daughter, I predict that it shall be well with you. He is doing it right now as you read this book.

1. DAughTeR, you cAn RecoveR.

The word 'salvation', also means 'to rescue'. Christ has rescued us from deep waters. A daughter of destiny is someone who can recover from a bad situation.10 All things work together for good for a daughter of destiny.

And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter

(Esther 2:7)

Esther's plight was pathetic; she had neither mother nor father. That is a serious handicap with which to begin life. But Esther recovered beautifully and rose to the highest of heights. Woman, you can recover! Some of you have been involved in all kinds of sin. Some of you have been around with countless different people. Your womb has been scraped numerous times to get rid of unwanted babies. Perhaps you were even a prostitute.

I remember speaking to some church members one day when a lady came up to me. She said, 'Pastor, I don't want to ever go back to my past.'[11] As I looked at her I heard the voice of the Holy Spirit say to me, 'This woman was a prostitute.' So I asked her, 'What work did you do?' As she looked at me, tears welled up in her eyes and she said, 'I was a prostitute.' I said to her, 'Daughter, you can recover! You will not go back to that life anymore.'

Daughter of destiny, there is an anointing to recover. Perhaps you have been used and discarded by many men. Your heart and emotions are deeply scarred from your experiences.[13] You no longer have confidence in yourself and no longer believe in people. As he raised up Esther, he will surely raise you up. Anyone who looked at Esther's background would never have predicted that she could be queen. She was an orphan and a refugee. How could she amount to anything? But our God is a God who specializes in making something out of nothing. Are you nothing today? Are you a discarded rag today? Have you been disappointed and broken in this life? Let your heart be healed today because Jesus will make you a different woman. I see you recovering now!![14]

2. WoMAn, LisTen To ADvice.

If Esther had not submitted herself to her cousin's suggestion to enter the beauty contest, history would have turned out differently.

…Esther was brought also unto the king's house…

(Esther 2:8)

A daughter of destiny submits to parental authority and to the authority of her husband. I assure you that there are no blessings outside of God's plan. If you want to be blessed, follow God's plan and you will be healed. I have often thought that a woman's physical

development outstrips her maturity. In other words, her body develops faster than her mind does. I remember a young lady who received several proposals from several Christian brothers. She had no one to advise her. Whenever someone offered to marry her, she would laugh about it with her giggly school friends.

As the years went by, she passed the flower of her age. Suitors stopped coming and soon she realized that she had missed the opportunities of her lifetime. Many young ladies do not listen to advice at this stage of their lives. Oh, what a difference it would make if people listened to advice. Once, such a lady came to her senses many years after the best suitors had gone by. She said to her best friend, 'I have really made a big mistake. I wish I had married so-and-so.'

I can remember advising this young lady in particular. She got so angry with me that she would not have anything to do with me after that. Up until this day, I can hardly maintain a conversation with her. She was so averse to my suggestions and advice in her younger days. As this lady approaches her menopause, she is still unmarried. Zimbo*! A little wisdom makes a lot of difference to a woman's life. I sometimes look at the brother who would have married her and say to myself, 'My stubborn friend missed a good chance.'

wisdom is profitable to direct

(Ecclesiastes 10:10)

Daughter of destiny, be submissive and listen to advice. Do not become an old and lonely woman before you admit that you were wrong. Do not wait for your marriage to break up before you believe the advice you have received. I personally think that some people want bad things to happen before they submit to the Word of God.

Woman, Nothing Happens By Chance!

And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

(Esther 4:14)

3. A DAughTeR MusT heLp heR FATheR.

The years went by and Esther was established as the queen of the land. But trouble brewed and soon Esther was called upon to help. Her cousin reminded her of how she was in a privileged position. He told her, 'Perhaps there is a reason why you are here. Perhaps this is why God allowed you to be elevated to this lofty position.' A daughter of destiny will not quickly forget where she came from. She is prepared to help her father. Esther helped Mordecai. A daughter of destiny will remember her father and help him.

Esther may never have known what it cost Mordecai to care for her. Daughter, help your fathers in the natural! Daughter, help your spiritual father! remember him and remember all that he has done for you. Don't forget what he has done for you. Perhaps, you will never know the price he paid to care for you. This is a wonderful poem from a daughter to her father. Perhaps you could write these words to your father.

I am sometimes amazed that people who have lived with others and at the expense of relatives all their lives, would not like to help anyone in later years. They close the doors to other needy people. They forget what someone did for them.[15] A virtuous woman has a kind heart.[16] She is generous and helps many people, even those who do not deserve it.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy

(Proverbs 31:20)

Perhaps you are the wife of some important personality today. Perhaps you are living in a rich western nation. Nothing happens by chance. Esther was not a beautiful woman by chance. Her parents did not die by chance. If her parents had been alive, they might not have put her up for the beauty contest. Perhaps you are occupying a position in which you can employ many Christians. Please note that it is for a reason. God is the one who established you wherever you are. He will come knocking at your door to ask you for your help. Will you help the cause of the gospel when it is your turn to do so, or will you find an excuse?

4. DAughTeR, goD coMes beFoRe MARRiAge!

Esther sent an important message back to Mordecai. She explained that it would not be possible for her to walk into the king's parlor without being invited. She explained that she would lose her life if she did so.

Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish

(Esther 4:16)

But Esther put God before her marriage. She obeyed the Word of God. She was prepared to sacrifice her life if that was what it meant. She remembered where she came from. How many women would be prepared to make such a sacrifice for a religious cause? Esther risked everything! If you put God first you will invoke a blessing upon your life.

5. DAughTeR, FAsT AnD pRAy!

Esther asked the people to fast and pray. She believed that prayer and fasting would bring solutions. Daughter of destiny, in all your getting, get prayer and fasting. Perhaps, no one can change your husband's mind. But I know one thing that can help to break every barrier down--prayer and fasting.[17]

Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish

(Esther 4:15,16)

Esther did not just ask her followers to fast, she told them that she would fast herself. If you want to be a daughter of destiny, learn these principles today. Your destiny is determined more by prayer than anything else. Jesus determined his destiny by prayer. Three hours of prayer in the garden of Gethsemane ensured that everything would go as planned. Become a daughter of destiny. Shape your marriage through prayer. Carve out your future with hours of prayer. Pray in the day, pray in the night. Pray all the time. Daughter of destiny, pray without ceasing!

SECTION IX

Pastoral Ethics

Ethics for the Head 57

iMpoRTAnce oF eThics in The chuRch

That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God

(1 Timothy 3:15).

At no time in the history of Christianity has the conduct and lifestyle of the clergy come under such scrutiny! The onus therefore falls on us who are called into this ministry to live up to certain standards. The challenges and realities of modern-day ministry are fraught with all sorts of pressures. The pressures of finances, the pressures of family and the pressures of human expectations are just a few of the many demands of ministry. These pressures in the Lord's work, are often the causes of improper behavior in a minister's relations with others. In the ministry, an oversight can lead to improper conduct and create an unfortunate misrepresentation of what we stand for.

….the little foxes, that spoil the vines

(Song of Solomon 2:15).

When God calls a man, He calls him first to follow Him, and then to learn of Him. We are never to stop learning. The ministry is a long road of continuous education. One of the things that Paul instructed us to learn of him was his manner of life. In other words, we are to follow the ethical principles that influenced his professional conduct as a minister.

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life

(2 Timothy 3:10).

So what are ministerial ethics? These are the standards, principles and broad guidelines we must observe in the ministry. Ethical practices are upright, sound, honorable, moral, lawful, above-board, and full of integrity. Unethical behavior on the other hand, is that which is indecent, unfair, improper, dishonorable, shady, unscrupulous and maybe even crooked. I am not projecting this book as the only word on Ministerial Ethics. Neither am I resenting these guidelines as absolute laws. I am just presenting these biblical guidelines to help ministers live and minister with wisdom. I have also tried to maintain a simple style that will minister to Bible students as well as aspiring and practicing ministers. It is my prayer that you will find within these pages, guidelines which are profitable for instruction in righteousness, that you -- the man of God -

May be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works

(2 Timothy 3:17).

eThicAL pRAcTices FoR senioR MinisTeRs

In any church, only one person can be the head or senior minister. The head is not only the visionary, but assumes full responsibility for any actions and decisions taken for and on behalf of the church. In order to bear much fruit, the head must accept that he cannot work alone. He has to work with a team of people. It is the existence of this team that makes him the head. The art of being a head is the art of leading a team. To develop an effective team and efficiently run it, the head must establish a close-working relationship with associates and junior ministers. Share the burden of the ministry with others and you will be a greater and more productive person.

Being a successful head involves trusting people enough to share the great responsibility that is on you. Heads of churches do many unethical things in their capacity as leaders of the team. These unethical actions lead to the disintegration of the teams and churches. A team that breaks up every few years is never going to grow very large. The break up of pastoral teams is one of the scourges of modern ministry. I think about 40% of the causes of rebellion can be attributed to the heads, 40% to the assistants, and 20% to both of them. The team consists of the different people you work with.

They may be associate pastors, choir directors, worship leaders, editors, administrators, and so on. I will now outline a few ethical practices that senior ministers will do well to follow:

a) Let everyone know that you are the head, and that you know that you are the head. People tend to take advantage of weak leaders. Your assistants will dominate you and capitalize on your lack of decisiveness and confidence. Take charge! Apostle Paul introduced himself very confidently and always emphasized who he was.

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ

(Galatians 1:1)

b) Let your associates be aware that in as much as they are important to you, they are not indispensable. They must know that you are not afraid of them. They are privileged to stand by your side, and must keep their rank or else… Your associate should not feel that he is the one holding the ministry together. Any person you cannot control, instruct or direct should not be your associate. He probably sees himself as more of an equal, but there can be only one head. Anything with two heads is a freak. There can only be one head--and this must be clear to everyone.

c)Let all your associates and assistants know and understand what you are trying to achieve. If you are trying to build a large church, let them understand what it means to do so. If you are trying to win souls, let them understand the cost of evangelism. If three or four people try to move a huge object without clearly knowing exactly where they are moving it to, you only have an awkward and frustrated team. I often tell my people, 'Listen, I want to finish this project by the end of the month.' This helps them to adjust to the extra stresses and pressures that will arise.

d) Tell everyone in the team what exactly is expected of them. An undefined role leads to confusion and a feeling of worthlessness. This is not good for the morale of the team.

e) Each person must know his or her rank. The head is not respected when the order of ranking is unclear. People assume that everyone is equal, but that is a big mistake. Everyone cannot be the same.

f) Let every member of the ministry team know what the other members of the team are supposed to do. This helps each member to know what to expect from the others.

g) Each team member must have a section over which he has complete responsibility. Every team member has many duties. There must be a specific area for which everyone is accountable. Responsibility for an entire section provides the team member with a sense of importance.

h) Give praise and recognition to your assistants and team members in public. If you want your assistant to repeat a good thing he has done, remember to praise him specifically for that accomplishment. I guarantee you that he will repeat it. Public praise increases confidence, and motivates your associates to work harder. Public praise also stimulates a spirit of loyalty.

i) Rebuke and correct your assistants in private. It is difficult to lead people after you have been corrected like a little child before them. Though some of the leaders are still in training, the church needs to have confidence in them. Public criticism can be degrading, and will often generate thoughts about resignation. Criticism should be constructive, and not destructive. remember that you are trying to build up associates and not tear them down.

j) Accept 100% responsibility for anything that goes wrong. remember that Adam was blamed ultimately for the fall of mankind though it was the woman who directly brought about the fall. The fact is that as the Head, you are responsible for everything that goes on. If you

want the privileges, you must also accept the blame!

k) Do not complain about your associates. To complain about or to condemn a ministry team member is actually to blame yourself. Why did you accept them to work with you in the first place? Complaining provides a breeding ground for disunity and disloyalty. When the head complains, he demonstrates to all others that complaining is all right.

l) Do not suppress your assistants. Give advice on how to do it better. Be a teacher of your subordinates. See yourself as the coach of a team. Guide them into becoming better people. Do not try to keep people down. Because you cannot really keep a good man down. Be a 'way-maker' for the up and- coming minister.

m) Regard your associates as the most important people in the church. They are the people who will either make or break you.

n) Treat your assistants and associates as friends.

Henceforth I call you not servants… but I have called you friends

(John 15:15)

The senior minister must develop close relationships with those in his ministry team. Such close relationships will produce a stronger and more loyal team. Working closely with assistants in the ministry brings about valuable friendships that could last a lifetime. It is extremely important that you, as the senior minister (even if you are reserved or quiet by nature) make a conscious effort to build these important friendships. The following are ways by which you can build friendships in the ministry:

a. Accept one another.

Jesus accepted a variety of people from different backgrounds to be His friends and coworkers. The ministry brings people together from all walks of life. You may not, naturally speaking, have been friends but the work of the ministry can bring you close. Appreciate the good qualities in your other team members. Show them praise and admiration as often as possible.

He saw Levi… sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me

(Mark 2:14)

b. Eat together.

Jesus ate regularly with His disciples. He therefore developed very close relationships with His disciples.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread… and gave it to the disciples

(Matthew 26:26)

c. Move about together.

Jesus went from place to place with His disciples. Jesus even went to His hometown with His ministry colleagues!

And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him

(Mark 6:1)

d. Pray and minister together.

Jesus took His disciples for prayer meetings in gardens.

He went forth with his disciples over the brook… where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples

(John 18:1).

e. Travel together.

Jesus travelled with His friends.

And when they (Jesus and the disciples) came nigh to Jerusalem

(Mark 11:1)

f. Wait on the Lord together.

Jesus did that!

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up unto an high mountain apart by themselves

(Mark 9:2)

eThics FoR chuRch seRvices

When not ministering yourself, practice certain basic standards of behavior. If not, you may intimidate the preacher by your uninvolved attitude. You might also fall into the category of a 'know-it-all' person. You must therefore consciously and visibly avoid giving that impression. The following practices are strongly recommended:

a) Arrive on time for the church service or meeting.

Be dressed formally and appropriately for the occasion. Otherwise, the pastor ministering may think that you do not regard his ministration as important.

b) Be a participator in worship, and not a spectator.

Whenever appropriate, lift up your hands, clap or give a shout of approval.

c) Receive eagerly the message that is being delivered by someone else.

Visibly show interest and approval of all that is happening.

d) Come to church with your Bible.

It is important to turn to the passage that is being referred to --even if you know it already.

e) Take notes throughout the sermon even if you know the subject already.

f) Say 'Amen' and give other encouraging remarks during the sermon whenever appropriate.

g) Do not yawn, go to sleep or bow down your head during the sermon.

Do not close your eyes whilst listening to the sermon.

h) Unless it is absolutely important, do not get up and leave the service during the sermon only to come back after everything is over.

i) Avoid having a 'know-it-all' expression on your face.

During the preaching, smile and laugh whenever appropriate. Do not have an aloof appearance; showing that you are above all that is going on.

Notice in the following Scriptures how the looks on a face can interfere with the ministry of an anointed prophet.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord

(Jeremiah 1:8)

But they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock

(Jeremiah 5:3)

When YOU ARE ministering, it is important to honor certain standards expected of the minister.

j) You must keep to the purpose for which the meeting is being held.

If it is a worship and teaching service, do not try to introduce deliverance and healing.

k) You must keep to the time stipulated for the service.

If it is a two-hour service, stick to two hours. However, if it is intended to be a long service, do not minister for 30 minutes and then leave. This would be an anti-climax and disappointment to the congregation.

l) As a visiting minister, you must arrive on time to get a 'feel and flow' of the meeting.

This will help you to know how to minister. Listening to the choir will also tell you a lot about the church.

m) Should the Lord lead you during the service to pray for individuals in the congregation, do not push people down whilst ministering to them through the laying on of hands

Ethics for Relationships 58

eThics FoR inTeRAcTing WiTh chuRch MeMbeRs

The pastor must always be aware of the fact that he is a shepherd, and church members are sheep. There are many respects in which the sheep cannot and must not relate to the shepherd. This is because they are essentially different. A shepherd can best relate to other shepherds in certain social and private matters. The shepherd's interaction with the sheep must be limited to his professional role as a shepherd to the sheep. As such, the minister must restrict his interactions with church members to that which concerns the salvation of their souls and their establishment in Christ. resolve to 'know nothing' among your people save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2)

Observe the following standards therefore in your relationships with church members:

a) Your visit to church members' houses should relate to the salvation of their souls. Do not roam from house to house in order to wine and dine.

b) You should also respect your church members' privacy, and not venture into certain areas of their homes unless specifically invited to. In certain cases, you may be invited into a bedroom to pray for a sick person.

c) Be careful when paying impromptu visits. A surprise visit may catch someone unprepared. The home may be in disarray and the people may be inappropriately dressed. In such a case, excuse yourself immediately to allow them to get ready. Do not embarrass your church members.

And he (Noah) was uncovered within his tent. ...Shem and Japheth... ...went backward... and they saw not their father's nakedness

(Genesis 9:21,23)

d) If you invade your church members' privacy, they will also invade your privacy. If you go into their kitchens and bedrooms, they will also expect to come to yours. When they do, you will not be able to control them.

e) Do not give the impression that you like a lot of food. Do not give the impression that you are hungry, or that you would be happy if they would serve you some of their nice things.

f) Do not honor invitations to dinner on a completely empty stomach.

You may have to eat at home before the dinner so that you will not look like a hungry lion. Do not give the impression that all pastors are hungry and poverty-stricken. Although your host will encourage you to eat as much as you can, they will think, 'What a greedy man this is!' when you eat too much.

Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee

(Proverbs 23:7).

g) If you are in a situation where you are obliged to eat, do not lick your plate clean.

Do not chew all the bones, as you probably would at home. When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties

(Proverbs 23:1- 3).

h) Do not ask for additional food once you have finished eating.

Again, they will readily serve you but will think to themselves, 'This pastor is greedy!'

i) There are times you should even avoid eating in public.

Perhaps just nibbling a few pastries may be appropriate.

j) Do not insult or abuse a church member.

Do not shout at your church members or quarrel with them. Avoid gaining the reputation of a cantankerous person.

For a bishop must be blameless... not soon angry... no striker

(Titus 1:7)

k) Do not strike or slap your church members. You must never fight physically with your members even if they are insolent. Learn to commend people to God and time.

Not a hard drinker nor given to BLOWS

(1 Timothy 3:3) (Weymouth Translation)

l) Be very careful when settling disputes between church members. There is a tendency for one of them to think that you are siding with the other against him/her.

m) Do not become a debt collector on behalf of a church member. Things may turn nasty, and you may find yourself right in the middle of a squabble between members of your congregation!

Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure

(1 Timothy 5:22)

n) Take caution when settling disputes between husbands and wives. Often, the couple will settle their disputes anyway, without much interference. In other words, do not take sides or even appear to take

sides. Do not say bad things about one partner to the other. Later, they may jointly perceive you as an enemy of their marriage.

eThics FoR ReLATing WiTh The opposiTe sex

Historically, relationships with the opposite sex have been a problem area for ministers. It is of utmost importance that all ministers honor the standards of behavior outlined in the Word of God concerning opposite sex relations. Common sense also teaches us how to relate with the opposite sex. Samson had unethical interactions with the opposite sex; this eventually led to the demise of his ministry.

Observe therefore the following standards in your relationships with the opposite sex:

a) As far as possible, do not minister to the opposite sex when you are alone.

Have somebody with you all the time! remember that Jesus sent out His disciples in pairs. This will protect you from accusations and possible temptations.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient

(1 Corinthians 10:23).

b) As much as possible, do not counsel the opposite sex alone and behind closed doors.

Leave the doors to your office open if you are alone with the opposite sex. Again, this is for your own protection.

Abstain from all appearance of evil

(1 Thessalonians 5:22).

c) Do not have a habit or pattern of giving the opposite sex rides alone in your car. Do not habitually pick up young ladies from the roadside and offer them rides. This could lead to an extra-marital affair.

d) Do not discuss your personal life and marital problems with church members of the opposite sex. This will only lead to intimate relationships with people who should not be close to you.

e) Do not have the habit of going on social outings alone with a member of the opposite sex who is not your spouse. It will only raise questions about whether you are having an improper relationship with that person.

f) If you are a male minister, do not minister to a lady by laying hands on private parts of her body (e.g. breasts and buttocks). This is indecent and unacceptable.

Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

(Proverbs 6:27)

eThics FoR ReLATing WiTh exTeRnAL MinisTeRs

In the ministry, it is necessary to relate with other ministers who may not be in your church or denomination. God wants to expose you to other ministry gifts. The fact of the matter is, you may one-day need some other minister's help. As much as possible, try to have a good relationship with all ministers. A common syndrome in the ministry is isolation. Often, isolation occurs because one has been hurt, in the early stages of ministry. Many ministers run into a corner and hide in order to escape being despised.

Benefits Of Isolation In Ministry

Isolation can work together for your good in the ministry for the following reasons:

i. You will be able to concentrate on your ministry.

ii. You will avoid being despised, disregarded and discouraged all the time by other so-called successful ministers.

iii. You will be able to avoid the distractions of inter-church politics.

iv. You will be able to avoid the wholesale adoption of other ministers' mistakes.

v. You will be able to develop your unique identity and calling.

vi. You will be able to avoid being submerged under the banners of other domineering pastors who are trying to gain supremacy and lordship over God's heritage in the city.

vii. Isolation will force you to learn biblical rather than human standards for all aspects of life and ministry.

Disadvantages Of Isolation In Ministry

Isolation can also work against you in the ministry for the following reasons:

i. You will need the input, ideas and the gifts of other ministers.

ii. You may be able to learn a great deal from other successful pastors in your city.

I have learnt a lot from those directly ahead of me in my city. I have watched and learnt from their mistakes and successes. I do things in my church that I have learnt from other ministers.

iii. You may need the assistance of other ministers in times of political intimidation.

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee

(1 Corinthians 12:21)

Because of all these, you have to develop delicate but important relationships with external ministers. For these important relationships to exist, every minister must adopt an important set of standards of behavior ethics.

sTAnDARDs FoR ReLATing WiTh exTeRnAL MinisTeRs

Observe the following standards in your relationships with external ministers:

a) Do not speak evil of any minister or church, especially from the pulpit or in public.

If you have anything to say about a church or denomination, say something positive.

Speak evil of no man

(Titus 3:2)

b) If you are led to speak against an unscriptural practice of a church or ministry, try not to mention the name of that church.

Expose wrong practices with balanced biblical truths.

c) Do not criticize or ridicule other ministers in front of your church or other pastors.

Remember that as you do so, you also set the stage for others to criticize you in the future. Even when David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he did not. He demonstrated to his followers that kings must not be killed --even if they are wrong. Later, when David made a mistake of murdering Uriah, the other mighty men did not rise up and kill David, because they had learnt by example not to kill kings. David had earlier showed them an important principle: do not lift up your sword, finger or tongue against God's anointed servants.

Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm

(1 Chronicles 16:22).

d) Expose your church to other ministry gifts. Do not let the feeling of insecurity overwhelm you. As you open up your church to other gifts, the church is blessed and grows larger.

The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth… MAKETH INCREASE of the body.

(Ephesians 4:16).

e) If you are not absolutely certain of a minister in terms of what he will say or do, then you might as well not invite him to your church.

f) Do not invite ministers whom you know are just trying to gain popularity. They may use this exposure as a launching pad to start a church near you --and if possible with some of your members! A minister must not honor invitations because he wants to become popular, but because he wants to be a blessing.

g) Give honor to all external ministers. One very good way of showing respect to a minister is to invite him honorably. 'Honor to whom honor.'

Features Of An Honorable Invitation

a) Learn the features of an honorable invitation.

i. Invite the minister to an important and well-attended service or function.

Do not invite someone you want to honor to a minor function. For example, a youth service, or the morning session of a convention.

ii. Unless impossible, be present at the service for which you invited the person.

Try not to invite a minister if you know you will be absent (especially when building a new relationship).

iii. The Senior Pastor should introduce the visiting minister himself.

iv. During the introduction, refer to your guest by his official title,

i.e., the title he has accorded himself. Do not refer to him as Reverend Agegebodavari when he refers to himself as Chief Apostle Agegebodavari.

v. Find out his full name and pronounce it properly.

vi. Use the full and proper name of his church and ministry.

For instance, do not say he is the Pastor of The Light Church when he is the Pastor of Lighthouse Chapel International. There is a big difference between the two!

b) Do not be surprised if you are unable to establish relationships with some ministers.

Ministerial relationships are just like the relationships between friends. Some people can be your friends, and others simply will not flow with you.

c) Do not be surprised if some ministers shun you in spite of your success.

This could be because you intimidate them. They may be afraid of you. This is natural, and they express it by shunning you.

d) Show respect to pastors who are visiting your church but not ministering.

Acknowledge their presence in the service. You can do this by:

i. Inviting them on stage to say 'hello' to the church.

ii. Asking them to either stand or remain seated and wave to the church.

e) Show respect to all senior colleagues in the ministry by:

i. Acknowledging their presence in the service.

ii. Inviting them to minister, if the occasion permits.

iii. Do not use a senior colleague as an aid to demonstrate a point.

iv. Do not call a senior forward to lay hands on him or to pray for him.

The less is blessed of the better

(Hebrews 7:7).

v. Do not refer to him by an old nickname.

vi. Refer to him by his title and not by his first name.

f) Show respect to your colleagues in the ministry, using the same guidelines as above.

g) Show respect to junior ministers in the ministry.

i. refer to them in public by their titles.

ii. Do not refer to everybody as your son in the ministry.

Not every junior minister is your son in the ministry. Even if the junior minister is your son in the Lord, it is not always appropriate to refer to him as your son or daughter.

iii. Never correct or rebuke a junior minister in public.

iv. Correct them in private, out of the view of the congregation.

If you correct them in public you will undermine their authority and confidence.

v. Praise your junior ministers in public, this will bring out the best in them.

Render therefore to all their dues… honour to whom honour

(Romans 13:7).

eThics FoR hAnDLing visiTing MinisTeRs

One very important area is the handling of visiting ministers. The visiting minister is a very important person and must be treated as such. Unfortunately, many resident pastors do not know how to relate appropriately to visiting ministers. This is often because they have never been visiting preachers themselves. The wrong handling of a visiting minister often leads to offences and the destruction of already fragile ministerial relationships.

Observe therefore the following standards in your relationships with visiting ministers:

a) Invite ministers personally and follow it up with a letter. One without the other is not enough.

b) The visiting minister should be welcomed at his point of entry.

If the external minister is coming from another location, as much as possible a minister of his rank must receive him at the airport, station, etc.! For example, if he is a head pastor, then the senior minister of the inviting church must meet him. This also applies when the minister is departing.

c) When the minister arrives in church, a minister of corresponding rank must welcome him. If this is not possible, an important delegation must do so.

d) The visiting minister should sit next to the inviting minister.

e) Refer to the invited minister by the official designation he has accorded himself. If his title is General Overseer, do not refer to him as the General Superintendent. If he refers to himself as an Apostle, do not call him a Pastor.

f) Know the full name of your invited guest.

You must pronounce it correctly.

g) Identify and introduce the visiting minister's delegation.

It is important to acknowledge them as well. Do not disregard people's associates. You may be disregarding a future Elisha.

h) The visiting minister's wife should be welcomed nicely.

She is an important person.

i) Use the proper name of the invited minister's church. Not remembering the correct name gives the impression that you are dealing with an unimportant church with an unfortunately laborious name which you cannot bother to remember.

j) Give the external minister adequate time to minister.

For example, do not give a guest minister 10 minutes to minister, when he has travelled long distances to minister to your church.

k) Introduce your guest minister with excitement.

Let the church welcome the visitor with great expectation in their hearts.

l) Outline and explain specifically to the external minister any function or expectation you may have of him.

For example, if you want him to raise funds, make altar calls, ordain pastors, etc., discuss this with him in detail before he arrives. Do not surprise your guest.

m) All conditions of the external minister's visit should be clearly defined prior to his arrival/acceptance to minister. This includes financial, transportation, and accommodation arrangements. The minister must be given the option to decide whether he will come in spite of the conditions that you are offering him.

n) The honorarium and all expenses can and must be discussed in many cases before the minister accepts the invitation.

This is especially important if the minister is travelling a long distance. You may wrongly assume that the visiting minister will only incur the cost of his plane ticket. But you may not know that he had to, for example, travel in a rented car 300-km to the airport and sleep in a hotel overnight in order to be able to catch the plane in the morning. All of these are hidden expenses, which must be discussed. It is very sad for a minister to travel several miles, minister from his heart, only to return impoverished and in debt.

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel

(1 Corinthians 9:14).

The following guidelines will help you determine a good honorarium for the visiting minister:

Determiningg A Good Honorarium

The honorarium must bless and encourage the minister financially. A good honorarium should include expenses and blessings.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise

(Luke 6:31)

i. A visiting minister's rank also determines what a good honorarium is.

If the person is a very senior minister, the honorarium must be correspondingly substantial.

ii. A good honorarium is calculated by the number of days a person ministers.

iii. A good honorarium is also determined by the impact of the visiting minister's ministry.

iv. Honorariums should not be given to the visiting minister in full public view.

The minister should be given the honorarium in private and by the appropriate person.

v. The visiting minister may sign a voucher or receipt for the honorarium (for accounting purposes).

vi. The honorarium should be prepared before the meeting.

This is to avoid very long delays in paying the honorarium. Some churches even forget to pay any honorarium at all. It is often more difficult to pay the honorarium long after the minister has left than it is to pay immediately after the program. It is decent to present an accompanying thank you letter with the honorarium.

The visiting minister should be refreshed briefly and then politely escorted away.

eThics FoR ReLATing WiTh The TRAveLLing MinisTeR

As a host minister, you must accord the proper treatment to a visiting minister. When you are the travelling minister, you must conduct yourself in an ethical fashion. Be conscious of the fact that you are God's ambassador. As a visiting minister your ethical or non-ethical behavior can, and will affect the lives of the congregation. You must work closely with the host/resident pastor.

Do not be surprised if he is inexperienced in relating with, and handling visiting ministers. He may not have had the experience of being a travelling minister himself. Maintain therefore the following ethical standards when occupying the position of a travelling minister:

a) A good honorarium should include expenses and blessings.

b) Show respect to ministers and churches to which you have been invited:

i. When called to speak, find something nice to say about the host's church, the pastor and the choir. Praise them for all their efforts.

ii. Do not say things that make the host's church look inferior.

For example, do not say, ‘Our youth choir is larger than this entire church!’

iii. Do not call the host pastor to pray for him, unless the relationship or the spiritual order so dictates (e.g. if you are a father to the person in the ministry).

He may have a smaller church than you do but he may not see you as a father or someone who has the spiritual authority to lay hands on him.

c) Do not invite yourself to minister in other people's churches.

Avoid being pushy and forward, claiming that you want to be a blessing to them. Always wait for the 'door' to be opened, or the invitation to be given. Even after the 'door' is opened, ensure that you minister where the Spirit of the Lord directs you to.

d) Never allow the lure of generous honorariums to become your primary reason for ministering. Do not demand money. Jesus said,

Freely ye have received, freely give

(Matt. 10:8b).

Do not demand a certain sum of money as a precondition for you to minister! Although this is a common practice, be honest with yourself - it gives the impression that we are selling something.

e) Do not take an offering for yourself. This is very offensive and wrong, unless you have been specifically asked to do so.

f) In a diplomatic and polite manner, ensure that you will not be mistreated.

Because many pastors do not travel themselves, they often don't take into account the real costs that travelling ministers incur. It is good to clarify the conditions in an undemanding way before making a final commitment to participate in the program. This is especially important when you do not have a long-standing relationship with the minister in question. Sometimes you cannot be sure of how you will be treated. However, if you already have a cordial relationship with the inviting minister, these clarifications are often not necessary.

g) Do not promote yourself.

Show appreciation to the host pastor and to the church in which you are ministering. Remember that the pastor must have put in a lot of work to develop a congregation capable of hosting a travelling minister. The host pastor will have promoted and advertised you in a favorable way. You will most likely have a good reception as a visiting minister. People receive visiting ministers with more faith and expectation.

A prophet hath no honour in his own country.

(John 4:44)

In your presentation, do not try to outshine or make the host pastor look inferior.

h) Flow with the theme of the program to which you have been invited.

You must do this unless the host pastor specifically gives you a freehand to minister on anything you want to.

i) Flow with the specific purpose of the services.

There are teaching services, evangelistic meetings, anointing services, as well as miracle and healing services. These are all different types of meetings. For example, do not try to have a miracle service when a teaching seminar has been planned. If you have been asked just to make an altar call, do not hold an anointing service. This would be totally out of place, and will not be well received.

j) Find out any cultural differences you may have to respect in the city you are visiting.

For instance, in certain cities it is not safe to conduct services late into the night because of crime in the city. In other places, services can continue late into the night without any danger to the congregation.

k) Promote and lift up the ministry of your host. (Do not just use the pulpit to promote your own ministry.)

You must have the permission and blessing of your host for everything you do in his church remember that real promotion comes from the Lord and not from man.

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south

(Psalm 75:6)

l) Let your host clarify exactly what he expects of you in the service.

You may be asked to perform a specific function such as fund-raising. If you have been asked to raise funds, do not give a sermon in addition to that. Someone else may preach the sermon.

m) It is unethical to misuse the exposure given you by the invitation.

To have a hidden agenda of starting a church or ministry nearby with some of your host pastor's members is tantamount to striking your friend below the belt. The travelling minister must be grateful for the visibility and exposure granted him by all invitations. You must not repay the good done to you with evil.

Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his houses

(Proverbs 17:13)

n) At the end of the program, the church you are visiting should be edified and encouraged.

They must not feel despised or condemned. Your ministry should result in the church being uplifted and motivated. You can judge your ethical performance in a very simple way-- if the host pastor invites you back!

o) You must plan to give a corresponding invitation to the one who invites you. Do not think you are the only one who has something to offer!

eThics FoR hAnDLing Money

Money is a very sensitive subject. Many criticisms leveled against ministers are about finances. We cannot avoid criticism but we must minimize the opportunities that people have to speak against us. We therefore, need to adopt certain standards and ethics in the area of finances.

a) Pay your tithes and give offerings generously as a good pastor.

You are a hypocrite if you do not pay tithes and offerings yourself (teaching one thing, and doing another). This may sound obvious, but many pastors do not pay their tithes.

b) Do not receive money on behalf of the church. Ask the church members to put their tithes and offerings directly into the offering basket. Your pocket is not an offering bowl!

c) Do not personally count the offerings.

You will appear greedy and very interested in the money.

d) Do not allow money to be counted in the full view of everyone in church.

Some people may think the church has a lot of money, or others may be tempted to steal from the church.

e) Do not take Sunday's, or any other offering to your house.

It will seem as though all the offerings are being given to you personally. If the money were stolen from your home, you would have created for yourself a neat little scandal. There would be little anyone could say in your defense.

f) If you receive an unusually large gift, personally or in the offering (for instance, an expensive car) you must question the source of it.

The money could be from a dubious source. Receiving it could lead you into some serious problems.

g) Generally speaking, do not borrow money.

Try to manage with what you have. Do not borrow money from the church nor from the offerings. You may be accused of stealing from the church.

h) Never borrow money from church members.

Do not borrow cars, televisions, or other material items from church members. Church members will lend things to you with a smile, but they may lose their respect for you.

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender

(Proverbs 22:7)

i) Do not ask church members for material things or for money.

This is also offensive. E.g., Can I have one of your radios since you have two and I don't have any?

j) Do not receive money on behalf of church members.

Do not hold church members' money for safekeeping. You are not a bank. What will you say if the money gets lost?

k) Do not act as a surety or guarantor for your church members.

Do not bail someone just because he is your church member. This is very risky as all sorts of people find their way into churches. You may find yourself in prison for trying to help your church member (who may be a bona fide criminal).

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure

(Proverbs 11:15)

l) Do not lend money to church members.

If a church member asks you for money, give what you can without expecting any repayment. What you give may be a percentage of the original sum requested. This is better than lending money because when it is time to reclaim it, you may find all kinds of ugly situations developing. You may even lose your church member in the process of getting your money back!

m) Do not allow money and gifts to be the basis of relationships you have with people. Such relationships are very unstable. Therefore, do not give unusually special treatment to rich people.

n) Do not demand or charge a fee as a condition for praying for someone or for prophesying to him.

Freely ye have received, freely give

(Matthew 10:8)

Find a decent and honorable way of receiving free-will offerings to ensure that your motives are not misjudged.

o) Do not ask people directly how much they earn or have.

This could be offensive.

p) Do not announce your salary and assets publicly.

revealing your possessions may be dangerous in a culture of jealousy and poverty. People may not understand why you should have what you have, especially if they don't have some of the things you have.

And Hezekiah ... shewed them all the house of his precious things… and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah ... and said unto him… Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house... shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD

(2 Kings 20:13,14,17)

q) Your financial lack should not affect your preaching and speech. Your preaching should not include insinuations about your lack of money. Some pastors do this in order to gain sympathy and receive donations.

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me

(1 Corinthians 9:14,15).

r) If you make a large financial pledge do not announce it publicly. Again, people may not understand, and you may not have the opportunity to explain the source of all your blessings.

eThics FoR The giving AnD Receiving oF giFTs

The pastor stands as a minister representing God. It is traditional and very common for the pastor to receive gifts. The pastor must therefore, honor and respect certain standards of behavior in regards to giving and receiving of gifts.

a) Be a giver of gifts.

The pastor must be a giver of gifts and not a mean or stingy person.

It is more blessed to give than to receive

(Acts 20:35)

b) Do not give too many gifts, neither give gifts that are too expensive.

This is important because many people misinterpret your kindness as an indication of excessive wealth.

c) Acknowledge all gifts that you receive. If you do not, the church members will think that the gift meant nothing to you. They may also think that you did not receive the gift at all. If the gift comes from the church, you must thank the whole church. Notice how Paul acknowledged the gift he received from the Philippians.

But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God

(Philippians 4:18).

d) If you receive a gift that you do not particularly need or like, never give the impression that you do not appreciate it. Say, ‘thank you’ and be appreciative. If not, people will think that you are an ungrateful person.

The eThics oF pRivAcy

Privacy is very important in the ministry. Attention must be given to maintain and protect your privacy from being violated by anyone. This principle includes privacy from church members. Your house is your castle and should be your bastion of safety and privacy. Observe therefore the following standards in relation to maintaining your privacy:

a) Ministers must not allow just anyone to visit them in their homes.

restrict the stream of visitors to your home. Any minister who has lots of people coming to his home will discover that he is exposing himself to unnecessary attacks. It is common for church members to discuss what they did and saw in their pastor's house.

b) Official church business must be done at the office of the church.

c) Do not turn your home into another church office!

d) Those allowed to visit you at home must not be given access to any area of the house that you consider exclusive.

Examples of such places are bedrooms, etc.

e) Maintaining your privacy will help maintain your self-respect.

f) Privacy will help protect you from many of the long-standing enemies of ministers.

These include: the media, bitter critics, jealous friends, carnal church members and envious colleague pastors. You will also be shielded from constant analysis of your material possessions by outsiders. Notice what happened to Eglon the King of Moab when he allowed people to come into his private apartment- he lost his life!

And Ehud came unto him (Eglon, the king of Moab); and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone… And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly

(Judges 3:20,21).

g) Privacy guidelines should be observed as much as possible

Public Appearance and Politics 60

eThics FoR pubLic AppeARAnce

In this secular world, you will be assessed by your physical appearance --whether you like it or not. No one can see into the spirit realm. Even Christians do not see your spiritual depth. God looks on the heart. As for man, he has always looked on the outside, and will continue to look on the outside. Do not let your external appearance drive people away from Christ, or dissuade others from becoming ministers.

Develop certain high standards of behavior in relation to your physical and outward appearance:

a) Develop the art of dressing decently and formally, even when casual.

Thus, you will never be out of place when called on for official duty without notice.

Be instant in season, out of season

(2 Timothy 4:2)

b) Do not appear extravagant or ostentatious.

The hallmark of greatness is simplicity.

c) When preaching on Sundays, you should be formally dressed, and not casually.

The priest, whom he shall anoint… shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments

(Leviticus 16:32)

d) Believe God to own a decent car.

Acquire a safe car; your life is precious. If the shepherd goes, the sheep will scatter--and the devil knows it. People will criticize you even if you sit on a donkey.

e) Your car must not be extravagant.

Neither should it be the most fantastic, expensive or luxurious of all the cars in the city. If this happens, you may have problems with the usual enemies of the Church.

f) Acquire an appropriate car. Do not be afraid to treat yourself with respect.

It is your own mistake if you fail to treat yourself with respect. Whatever you do, people will criticize you, so do not be deterred by the fear of criticism. Please meditate on these verses and the Lord will give you understanding;

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth

(Ecclesiastes 10:5-7)

g) As much as possible, do not drive another person's car.

If you damage someone else's car, you may be unable to repair it. If you do not have a car, manage until you get one.

h) Do not acquire a car you cannot afford. Do not live above your income.

Cut your coat according to your size!

eThics FoR poLiTics

Secular Politics

As a church grows and becomes more influential, the government will take an interest in the church. There may even be spies sent to monitor what is going on in the church. Our religion has a way of making us political. This is because we have to speak against injustice and corruption. Be wise, and realize that you are a political force to reckon with. rise up and fulfill your calling. You are called to influence people!

a) Traditionally you should remain neutral. It may be wise to be neutral, especially in a developing democracy.

b) Do not tell your church members whom to vote for.

Preach the truth and leave them to decide for themselves.

c) Do not sit on clearly defined political platforms, even if you support them.

Do not display political paraphernalia. By wearing political party uniforms, you make yourself into a political activist rather than a preacher of the Gospel.

d) At times, it may be necessary to openly declare your stand.

However, this must be done in a way that does not resemble a political campaign. Again, avoid becoming a political activist. You are a preacher! Stay with your call!

e) Pray for the king.

It is our God-given duty to pray for the 'king' or leader of the nation. The Bible teaches us to pray for those who are in authority (not those who are seeking to come into the place of authority!).

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks , be made for all men; For kings

(1 Timothy 2:1,2)

Inter-Church Politics

This destructive but real phenomenon is prevalent in the Church today. It is something that all ministers must be aware of and keep themselves from. It consists of the following:

i. Lobbying for pre-eminence and lordship over God's heritage by ministers of large churches.

You must not let the desire for supremacy dictate your relationship with other ministers. It will hinder the development of real friendships.

Diotrephes… loveth to have the preeminence among them

(3 John 9)

ii. Forming of rival ministerial camps.

It also consists of aligning with one or other of these political church groupings. These camps are cliques of minister friends who get on well with each other. Those who do not ‘fit in’ are not accorded a certain level of respect and recognition

SECTION X

Basic Ceremonies

Dedication Ceremonies 61

The nAMing ceremony

The Naming Ceremony is a traditional event that takes place after the birth of a child. Some families are very traditional and abide by all customs relating to the date and time of the event. The pastor's role is basically to introduce a biblical and spiritual perspective to the occasion. This of course is only possible depending on what the family requests or allows.

1. opening pRAyeR AnD WoRship

a) He Is Lord

b) O Come Let Us Adore Him

2. ReAson FoR occAsion

We are gathered here today with our brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. ....(Last name of parents).... for two reasons:

i. To rejoice over what God has done for them and

ii. To give a name to their newly born baby.

The Bible is the basis for whatever we do, therefore, our Scripture reading for today is: ~Luke 1:57-64~

Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

As was done in those days, we want to call on the father of the child to give us the name(s) he desires to give to the child and the meaning(s) of the name(s).

3. giving oF nAMe by FATheR.

Father stands up and mentions the full name of the child and the meaning(s) of the name(s).

4. pRocLAMATion, sAncTiFicATion AnD AFFiRMATion oF nAMe on The chiLD by pRAyeR.

i. Minister takes the baby and asks all to stand and join in prayer for the baby.

ii. Minister prays laying hands on the baby, and anoints the baby with oil.

Prayer

Father, in the name of Jesus, thine only begotten Son, we thank you for the name(s) that has been given today. We sanctify this name(s) and we declare that this child shall be called ....[name(s) of child].... From today I pray that he shall live up to the meaning(s) of this name(s). (The Minister makes reference to the name(s) and prays for the child to fulfill the purpose of the name.

(e.g.) ….John means 'Jehovah is gracious', May Jehovah God be gracious unto this child always.)

I anoint this baby with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, that he may live under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit, all the days of his life. Amen.

5. songs

a) Showers of Blessing

b) Ebenezer

6. bLessing oF chiLD

Father, we thank you indeed for a good and perfect gift, the gift of a life. Thank you for blessing this family with this child. I cancel, I nullify, I reverse, and I reject every curse and every expectation of the enemy concerning the life of .... [name(s) of child] .... I bring down the walls of opposition, resistance, and frustration that are lifted up against the life of this child.

I superimpose the will of God over and against every plan, every projection and prediction of the enemy for your life. I speak the blessing of God over your life. May the goodness and the favor of God be your portion all the days of your life. May you live to be a blessing to your parents. May you live to be a blessing to your generation. May you become what God has destined you to be. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

7. chARge To pARenTs

Minister: (To the parents.)

Do you promise to bring up this child in the ways of the Lord that he may not depart from them when he grows? According to Deuteronomy 6:7, do you promise to teach him the Word of God when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up?

- Father: I do.

- Mother: I do.

- Both Parents Together: We do.

- Minister: Amen! Shall we clap for them.

(Minister returns the baby to the parents.)

8. songs

a) To God Be the Glory

b) Ebenezer

9. pResenTATion oF giFTs

Minister:

Now, as was done in the days of Jesus when he was born, wise men came from the east with precious gifts. I will now hand over to the Master of Ceremonies as we receive gifts and presents for the baby.

10. MAsTeR oF ceReMonies TAkes oveR

11. cLosing pRAyeR (AT The AppRopRiATe TiMe)

pReAMbLe To bAby DeDicATion

The dedication of babies is similar to the Naming Ceremony. This is usually conducted during a service in church. The dedication takes place after the birth of the child. The minister's role in the Baby Dedication is to pray over the child and dedicate it to the Lord. This is done with the hope that when the child is of age he himself will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. You commit the child into the Lord's care and presents the names and their meanings to the congregation. The ceremony is usually done at the beginning of a service and it must be brief.

bAby DeDicATion

1. MinisTeRWeLcoMes The FAMiLy To The ALTAR

Minister introduces the family to the congregation.

2. ReAson FoR occAsion

We are gathered here today with our brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. ....(Last name of parents).... for three reasons:

i. Rejoice over what God has done for them,

ii. To give a name to their newly born baby and

iii. To dedicate this child unto the Lord. As the Bible teaches, we will call on the father of the child to give us the name(s) of the child and the meaning(s) of the name(s).

3. giving oF nAMe by FATheR

Father mentions the full name of the child and the meaning(s) of the name(s).

4. pRocLAMATion, sAncTiFicATion AnD AFFiRMATion oF nAMe on The chiLD by pRAyeR.

i) Minister takes the baby and asks all to join in prayer for the baby.

ii) Minister lays his hand on the child and prays. Prayer Father, in the name of Jesus, thine only begotten Son, we thank you for the name(s) that has been given today. We sanctify this name and we declare that this child shall be called ....[name(s) of child].... From today I pray that he shall live up to the meaning of this name(s). (The Minister makes reference to the name(s) and prays for the child to fulfill the purpose of the name(s), e.g.,

John means 'Jehovah is gracious', May Jehovah God be gracious unto this child always.

5. bLessing oF chiLD

Father, we thank you indeed for a good and perfect gift; the gift of a life. Thank you for blessing this family with this child. I reject every curse and every expectation of the enemy concerning the life of .... [name(s) of child] .... I bring down the walls of frustration that are lifted up against the life of this child. I superimpose the will of God for this child, over and against every plan of Satan.

I speak the blessing of God over this life. May the goodness and the favor of God be your portion all the days of your life. May you live to be a blessing to your parents. May you live to be a blessing to your generation. May you become what God has destined you to be. In Jesus' mighty name.

Amen.

pReAMbLe To The WATeR bApTisM ceReMony

Water Baptism is an important spiritual landmark in every Christian's life. It is one of the few ordinances that Christians are expected to perform. The pastor is expected to ensure that all Christians under his care have been duly baptized. It is also important to have a good understanding of the biblical and spiritual significance of this event. Water Baptism can be performed by those designated to do so.

noTes on bApTisMAL ATTiRe AnD pRoceDuRe

Instructions For Ladies

1. Thick trousers must be worn (not transparent)

2. Ladies having their menstrual periods should not come for baptism.

3. Ladies are not to wear only underwear, underpants or underpants and bra.

4. No swimming costumes should be allowed.

5. No bare-chested ladies should be allowed.

6. All ladies must be fully covered.

7. All ladies must wear bras under their shirts.

8. Ladies and men must not change their clothes in the view of each other.

Instructions For Baptizer:

1. The baptizer should not be bare-chested.

2. The baptizer must be fully and properly dressed.

3. A baptismal gown, trousers, a pair of big shorts, a t-shirt or shirt may be worn.

Instructions On Immersion:

1. Tell the candidate to hold nose and close eyes.

2. Baptizer holds candidate with one hand behind candidate, and the other hand on the forehead. Baptizer fully immerses candidate in water and raises him up again.

WATeR bApTisM

1. opening pRAyeR

2. ReAsons FoR bApTisM

We are gathered here today to baptize these believers according to the Word of God. The basis for baptism is:

i. To obey the Word of God.

ii. It is one of the requirements after being born again (Acts 8:36-38).

iii. It is an outward symbol of what has happened to you spiritually. Colossians 2:12.

iv. To fulfill all righteousness. Scriptures:

(i) Mark 16:16

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

(ii) Acts 10:47,48

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord

(iii) Acts 8: 36-38

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ….and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

(iv) Colossians 2:12

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

(v) Matthew 3:15-16

Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending...

3. enTeR The WATeR WiTh The bApTisMAL cAnDiDATe

4. Ask The bApTisMAL cAnDiDATe The FoLLoWing quesTions

i. Are you Born Again?

ii. Have you received Christ as your personal Saviour?

iii. Do you believe that Jesus died for you on the cross and that He rose again?

iv. Do you believe that Jesus Christ will be coming again to take His church away? (If you get a negative answer to any of the questions above):

v. Abort the Baptismal ceremony immediately

vi. Lead the individual to accept Christ as his Saviour

vii. You may continue to baptize the individual if he genuinely receives the Lord as Saviour)

5. LeAD The BApTisMAL cAnDiDATe in The FoLLoWing conFession.

a) I am a Born Again Christian. I believe that Jesus died for me and that He rose from the dead on the third day.

b) By faith, I believe that all my sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus

c) I believe that my name is in the Book of Life. I am now looking for and expecting the return of my Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will come in the clouds to take away His own.

d) As I go down into the water I identify myself with the death and burial of Jesus Christ. As I come up out of the water I identify myself with the resurrection of the Lord.

e) I am being baptized to fulfill all righteousness as the Lord Himself did

6. iMMeRse The bApTisMAL cAnDiDATe FuLLy in The WATeR

Ensure that he is fully submerged. (Ask him to hold his breath and his nose as he is immersed.)

7. AFTeR cAnDiDATe hAs chAngeD

Brief worship time. Thank the Lord.

8. cLosing pRAyeR

pReAMbLe To DeDicATion oF hoMes, BUSINESSES

At varying times in the ministry, members will ask the minister to impart God's blessing on their new homes, businesses or shops. The pastor's role is to bless, sanctify and dedicate the business or home into the Lord's hand. This dedication takes place on the actual site and is marked by the pouring of oil on the site as a symbol of the Holy Spirit's blessing.

Dedication of Homes, Businesses, ETC

1. opening pRAyeR

2. WoRship

a) To God Be The Glory

b) Ebenezer

3. inTRoDucToRy ReMAARks FRoM buinsess oR hoMe oWneR.

The reason for the occasion. A testimony of God's provision.

4. scRipTuRe ReADing

Deuteronomy 8:2,7-18

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water... a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees... a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it...

When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments...Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein. and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God... who led thee... who fed thee... and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant (His Word and His work.)

5. exhoRTAbion by MinisTeR

The scriptural exhortation should center on:

i. Thanking God for His divine provision.

ii. An admonition to the individual to remember God in the times of blessing.

6. song

a) To God Be the Glory

b) Ebenezer

7. DeDicATion

i. Acknowledge that the work has ended by God's grace.

1 Kings 7:51

So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated...

ii. Explain that the ministers or elders of the church are assembled together to pray and dedicate the project.

1 Kings 8:1,3

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel... all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

iii. Acknowledge God's faithfulness in completing the project.

1 Kings 8:1,22-24~

And Solomon stood... in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: and he said Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee... who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart... thou speakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

iv. Dedicate the project to the Lord, asking for God's presence to continually remain there.

2 Chronicles 6:40-42

Now, my God ... arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place... O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed.

v. Ask for God's continued blessing in every undertaking.

1 Kings 8:35-36

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain... if they pray ... and confess thy name... Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants... that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk.

vi. Anoint the premises with oil and declare God's blessings on the project.

8. WoRship

a) We Thank You Lord

b) To God Be the Glory

9. cLosing pRAyeR 1

10. ReFReshMenTs

The Wedding Ceremony 62

sTAnDARD WeDDing ceReMony

1. hyMn 1

(Whilst Ministers file in and take their seats.)

2. Bridal March

(Whilst bridal party files in.)

3. BrieF TiMe oF Worship

4. inTroducTion

(Whilst at altar; couple stands, congregation sits.)

Minister:

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted of God Himself, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church. Which Holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence in the first miracle which He wrought in Cana of Galilee. And is commended in Holy writ to be honorable among all men, and therefore is not by any to be enterprise nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly.

But reverently, discreetly and soberly and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained.

FIRST, it was ordained for the increase of mankind according to the will of God, and that children might be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of His Holy Name.

SECOND, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons that have not the gift of self control might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

THIRD, it was ordained for mutual society help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other both in prosperity and adversity. Into which Holy estate these two persons present, come now to be joined.

5. LegAL chARge Minister:

I require and charge you both as you will answer at the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed, that if either of you know of any impediment why you may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it, for be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.

Minister: (Bridegroom repeating after.)

I do solemnly declare/ that I know not of any lawful impediment/ why I ....(Name of bridegroom)..../ may not be joined in matrimony to ....(Name of bride)....

Minister: (Bride repeating after.)

I do solemnly declare/ that I know not of any lawful impediment/ why I ....(Name of bride)..../ may not be joined in matrimony to ....(Name of bridegroom)....

6. i 'WiLL' voWs

Minister: (To the Bridegroom.):...(Name of bridegroom)...., wilt thou have this woman standing by your side to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the Holy estate of Matrimony; wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

Bridegroom: I certainly will. Minister: (To the Bride.) ....(Name of bride)...., wilt thou have this man standing by your side to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the Holy estate of Matrimony, wilt thou obey him and serve him, love, honor and keep him, and forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

Bride: I certainly will.

7. giving AWAy oF bRiDe

Minister: Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

(Father stands, comes to the microphone and says:)

I, ...(Name of father).... on this ....(date).... do freely and willingly give away my daughter ....(Name of daughter).... in marriage, with all my blessings.

(Father thanked and applauded by congregation.)

8. exchAnge oF voWs

(Instruct couple to face each other.)

Minister: (Bridegroom repeating after.)

I, ...(Name of bridegroom)..../ according to the Word of God,/ leave my father and my mother /and I join myself to you,/ to be a husband to you./ From this moment forward,/ I shall love you,/ and I shall give myself to you,/ and we shall be one.

Minister: (Bride repeating after.)

I, ...(Name of bride).....,/according to the Word of God,/ submit myself to you,/ to be a wife to you./ From this moment forward,/ I shall love you,/ and I shall give myself to you,/ and we shall be one.

9. inTRoDucTion To Ring seRvice

Minister: May I have the rings please.

These rings are precious ornaments, made out of pure gold. May the gold in these rings remind you of how pure your marriage shall be. These rings are given as a token and a symbol of your love and trust. When you see these rings on your fingers, let them remind you of your love. Let them always remind you of the vows and promises you have made to each other this day. Remember that real love is as strong as death and many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it. If anyone would break up this union, it would be Satan. Therefore give him no place. Give him no place. This marriage is forever. Let us pray.

10. pRAyeR oveR Rings

Minister:

In thy name O Lord, we hallow and dedicate these rings that by thy blessing, he who gives it and she who wears it keeping true faith for one to the other, may abide together in thy peace, continue together in thy favor, live together in thy love, and finally dwell together in thine eternal Kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

11. exchAnge oF Rings

Minister: To Bridegroom whilst giving him Bride's ring.

I want you to place this ring on her finger with these things in mind. You are the Head of this union. This woman stands by your side, not at your feet. I want her to wear this ring in remembrance that she is your help mate. It is not a symbol of domination but a reminder of love. So place this ring on her finger, and as you do, say this to her:

Minister: (Bridegroom repeating after.) (mention first name of Bride three times)....With this ring,/ I thee wed./ I give it as a token of my faith./ I believe with all my heart/ that this marriage is forever./ It is all my love and all my faith,/ in the name of Jesus.

Minister: To Bride whilst giving her Bridegroom's ring.

I want you to place this ring on his finger with these things in mind. This man is your Head. You have been called to help and support him. Stand by him in all things, spiritually, physically and socially knowing that two are better than one. Now place this ring on his finger and as you do, say this to him.

Minister: (Bride repeating after.) (Mention first name of Bridegroom three times)....With this ring,/ I thee wed./ I give it as a token of my faith./ I believe with all my heart/ that this is forever./ It is my love, my sweet love,/ in the name of Jesus.

12. bRiDe AnD bRiDegRooM kneeL FoR pRAyeR AnD LAying on oF hAnDs

13. pRonounceMenT oF MARRiAge

(Couple stands.)

Minister: For as much as ....(Name of bridegroom)...., and ....(Name of bride).... have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to the other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of rings, I pronounce that they be man and wife together in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

14. soLo

(In His time He makes all things beautiful.)

15. ReMovAL oF veiL AnD sALuTATion [Ask The bRiDegRooM To ReMove The bRiDe's veiL AnD sALuTe (kiss) his bRiDe.]

16. coMMunion

Minister:

The couple will now receive Communion together. Hitherto they have come to the Lord's table as separate individuals but now they come as one flesh. The celebration of communion is to remind us all that it is because of what Christ has done for us that we are here in the first place. The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Let us pray. (Bless the bread and the wine. Thank God for Jesus Christ's sacrifice.)

17. hyMn ii

18. signing oF RegisTeR AnD oFFeRing

19. bibLe ReADings

20. seRMon

21. chARge AnD bLessing

(Couple stands, congregation sits.)

Minister:

I now charge you in the presence of God Almighty that you trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him. And He will direct your paths. These blessings will come on you and overtake you, if you will hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God. Blessed shall thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shall thou be when thou cometh in, and blessed shall thou be when thou goest out.

The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon all that thou settest thine hand unto. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body. And thou shalt lend unto many and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God.

22. pRAyeR oF bLessing

23. pResenTATion To congRegATion

Minister: (To Bride & Groom:)" Please turn and face this congregation.

(To Congregation:):Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Mr./Dr./rev./Pastor/etc. and Mrs./Dr. Mrs. ....(Last name of bridegroom)....

24. WeDDing MARch

25. coupLe FiLes ouT

(Followed by ministers then families.)

pReAMbLe To The WAkekeeping seRvice

Many families lay the body of the deceased in state at home for a period. This is an important and sorrowful occasion for all families. It is necessary that the pastor is present to introduce a spiritual and encouraging mood into a usually depressed atmosphere. The presence of a choir singing praises to God is a very helpful addition to the pastor's role.

WAke-keeping seRvice

1. MinisTeR goes inTo DesignATeD RooM WiTh The FAMiLy To pRAy oveR The boDy

2. ReAson FoR occAsion (AT The WAke seRvice.)

Dear brethren, the Word of God instructs us to rejoice with them that do rejoice and to mourn with them that mourn. As a church, we are also a family and consider our late ....(Name of deceased).... not just as a member of our church but as our brother/sister/father/mother. We really feel the loss together.

But as it is written, all things work together for good to them that love the Lord. In all things we must give thanks, for this is the will of God. Tonight we come here to mourn with you all and also to comfort ourselves through our fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Shall we bow our heads in prayer.

3. opening pRAyeR

4. pRAise AnD WoRship i

5. singing AnD FiLing pAsT The boDy

6. exhoRTATion/pReAching

7. ALTAR cALL

8. pRAise AnD WoRship ii

9. AnnounceMenTs

10. cLosing pRAyeR

pReAMbLe To FuneRAL seRvice

The Funeral Service may be held at the home of the deceased or in his church. However, some congregations meet in places which cannot be used as venues for funeral services. The pastor must therefore be flexible, and flow with whatever is appropriate. The pastor must minister with a spirit of hope and encouragement. It is important to note that the family is already sad and depressed. There is therefore no need to deepen their sorrow any further.

FUNErAL SErVICES

However, it is an appropriate occasion to minister to people on the reality of heaven or hell and the need to be genuinely 'born again'. Every minister of God must use this opportunity to preach the Word of God to people who may otherwise never hear the Gospel. An altar call for salvation is most appropriate, and must be made at every funeral service.

FuneRAL seRvice

1. congRegATion pAy LAsT RespecT

2. oFFiciATing MinisTeRs FiLe pAsT The coRpse AnD TAke TheiR seATs

3. coFFin is cLoseD peRMAnenTLy

4. congRegATion sTAnDs

5. hyMn i Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us

6. invocATion/opening pRAyeR

7. sCRipTuRe ReADing I

(Revelation 14:12,13)

8. scRipTuRe ReADing ii

(revelation 20:11-15)

9. hyMn ii

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it Lord that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

10. biogRAphy

11. TRibuTes 1-3

12. song 1 (by choiR)

13. oFFeRToRy FoR FAMiLy (song 2 by choiR)

14. seRMon

15. ALTAR cALL /cLosing pRAyeR

16. cLosing hyMn iii

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices
Who wondrous things hath done
In whom this world rejoices
Who from our mothers' arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

17. The beneDicTion

buRiAL seRvice

1. pRocession To The ceMeTeRy

(Led by choir, then the coffin, officiating ministers, and all others in that order.)

2. coFFin pLAceD on siDe oF The gRAve

3. MinisTeR TAkes his pLAce AT heAD oF The gRAve

4. opening pRAyeR

5. opening hyMn

6. MinisTeR insTRucTs ThAT coFFin be LoWeReD inTo The gRAve

7. scRipTuRe ReADing (By assisting Minister)

Revelation 21:3-7

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8. hyMn ii

(When Peace Like a river)

9. pRAyeR oF coMMiTTAL

Minister: Let Us Pray (Alternatively, you may pray inspirationally as led by the Spirit of God.)

Heavenly Father, we come at this time to commit the body and the mortal remains of our brother/sister to the ground. We take comfort in your scripture which says for the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. We therefore encourage ourselves with these words. As we commit this body into the ground we know that this is not a hopeless situation. We do it with HOPE and with faith in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

10. coMMiTTAL (MinisTeR TAkes shoveL WiTh soiL in hAnD AnD sAys:)

i) We look for the resurrection in the last day, and the appearing of the Lord Jesus, at whose second coming He shall judge the world.

ii) When the earth and sea shall give up the dead, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.

iii) And then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory, O' death, where is thy sting O' grave, where is thy victory.

iv) For as much as the spirit of our deceased brother ....(Name of deceased)...., has returned to God who gave it, we therefore commit the body of ....(Name of deceased).... to the ground and to the dust.

v) From earth to earth. (While sprinkling dust.) vi. From dust to dust. (While sprinkling dust.) vii. From ashes to ashes. (While sprinkling dust.) viii. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

11. FinAL pRAyeR

12. hyMn ii/choRus

a) It is Well

b) Ebenezer

13. inviTATion oF FAMiLy To spRinkLe DusT syMboLicALLy

(Now invite three members of the family to sprinkle dust.)

14. pResenTATion oFWReATHs

(Assisting Minister hands wreaths to Officiating Minister to read out the names.)

15. voTe oF ThAnks (by A MeMbeR oF The FAMiLy)

16. cLosing hyMn AnD song

(Forever, Oh Lord)

17. cLosing pRAyeR AnD The gRAce

pReAMbLe To MeMoRiAL AnD ThAnksgiving seRvice

This is usually held after the funeral and burial services. It is a good occasion to let the bereaved family feel important and loved. As they are acknowledged publicly at the church service, a sense of brotherhood and belonging is established. The family will never forget the attitude and commitment with which the ministers conducted themselves at the funeral of the relative. Allowing a member of the family to publicly address the church in a vote of thanks is a significant part of the ceremony which must not be omitted. Praying for the family is also important. This ceremony can be interjected into a normal service without prolonging it unduly. It must be apt but brief.

MeMoRiAL & ThAnksgiving service

1. inTRoDucTion

Dearly beloved, we would like at this time to perform the Memorial and Thanksgiving Service of our belated brother ....(Name of deceased).... whose sad event occurred at ....(Name of location).... on .... (The date of death).... The family is here with us today to thank God for His goodness and mercies and for seeing our brother through his lifetime. Could the family please stand.

2. WoRDs oF encouRAgeMenT To The FAMiLy

Our brother is with the Lord which is a better place to be.

2 Corinthians 5:8

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. The Holy Spirit Himself will comfort you since He is the Comforter. The Lord is the Father of the fatherless, the Husband of the widows and the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

3. pRAyeR FoR FAMiLy

Father, we thank you that your scripture is fulfilled today. This is the day that the Lord has made and we give thanks for it. We pray for the family that you would comfort them and bless them. We bring down every satanic projection and prediction against their lives, in Jesus' name. We cancel, reverse and nullify every setback, limitation, disappointment, and frustration in their lives. We uproot every fear of the unknown and fear of death in their lives. We cancel every assignment, claim and demand made against their very lives, in the name of Jesus. We release them to serve the Lord with assurance that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord. Amen.

4. voTe oF ThAnks

(A pre-informed member of family is called up to give a vote of thanks and any relevant announcement. This must be very brief.)

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. A lay person is principally someone who

a. Enjoys doing church work

b. respects ministry work

c. Is a zealous Christian

d. Maintains his secular job and yet is active in ministry

e. Someone who does not have a job presently and wants to do ministry work for now

2. A full minister is principally someone who

a. Has abandoned his secular job to concentrate full on the ministry

b. Are special people whose job no one can do

c. Is called by God

d. Makes a substantial contribution to ministry

e. Pioneers a church

3 Many full-time ministers do not encourage lay ministry because

a. They are happy to maintain their lay people as financial supporters

b. They want to maintain the ministry as the exclusive preserve of a few called men of God

c. They want to feel special

d. They think lay people cannot handle emergencies

e. They do not want to pay them.

4. One major key to church growth is

a. Abundant anointing

b. Major gifting

c. A good education

d. A charming person

e. The lay ministry

5. The two major keys to involvement in ministry for the lay person is…

a. Staying unmarried for sometime and humility

b. A good grasp of the bible and ministrations

c. Wisdoms and sacrifice

d. Deep concentration and meditation

e. Submitting to an older Christian and gifts of the spirits

6. The principal duty of apostle Peter according to Acts 6: 1-4 was to

a. Send out apostles form Jerusalem

b. See to the distribution of food for the Hellenistic widows

c. Accept Paul into apostolic fellowship

d. Be the head of the church

e. Pray and minister the word

7. "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and sliver, but also of wood of earth…" This verse is from

a. I Tim 2:19

b. I Tim 2:29

c. 2 Tim 2: 20-21

d. 2 Tim 2: 22-24

e. I Cor 11:21

8. The secret to harvesting a crop of well seasoned lay leaders is to…..

a. Look for professionals

b. Make sure they are well educated

c. Give them appropriate titles

d. Invest in them through human training

e. Ignore your full time staff

9. The reason why ministers do not share the burden is because……

a. They want to take all the glory for themselves

b. They want people to feel that they are the only ones operating in a supernatural gift

c. They want people to show appreciation to them alone

d. They are afraid of rebellion in the camp

e. They are afraid their associates will outshine them

10. It is a burden to pastor people because…

a. People are by nature ungrateful and forgetful

b. People will betray you

c. People are wicked

d. People put on weight easily

e. People can abandon you suddenly

11. The name of the king who was blessed by God but " did not run again " is

a. Josiah

b. Abinadab

c. Solomon

d. Hezekiah

e. Johoiakim

12. The name of the man who according to Paul in 3 Tim 4:14 "did me much evil" was

a. Demas

b. Hippochondras

c. Peter

d. The Jews

e. Alexander the coppersmith

13. The name of Moses closest assistants and relatives who rebelled against him were

a. Nadad and Abitu

b. Jethro and Jehu

c. Aaron and Miriam

d. Eleazer and Aaron

e. Caleb and Jeduthun

14. The principle strategy for distributing the burden is to

a. Employ a large number of staff

b. Pay people properly

c. Involve lay people

d. Plant more churches

e. Work longer hours

15. "Of all that you have given me I have lost none!"…. This is found in

a. John 6:39

b. John 17:12

c. John 18:9

d. John 6:30

e. John 7:30

16. The key starting point for all ministries is

a. Lots of money

b. Compassion

c. A registered office where people can come to

d. Musical instruments

e. Public address systems

17. To develop a genuine Shepherdorial burden one must

a. Pray for burden

b. Not be affected by ones won problems and burdens

c. Dive into the work and the burden will come

d. Work closely with

e. Shepherds and pastors

18. The Greek translation of the English word pastor is the word….

a. Anagkazo

b. Biazo

c. Episkopos

d. Poimen

e. Anaideia

19. A local church is ideally to be run by someone who has a gift of governments like

a. An administrator

b. A prophet

c. An apostle

d. A frugal person

e. A pastor

20. One of the principal ways to develop one's calling is to observe things about your calling a. By watching yourself

b. By observing your God given abilities

c. By doing what you admire most in the ministry

d. By doing what is popular

e. By watching for a dramatic supernatural experience

21. The following match-ups of verses referring to Jesus are correct:

a. I am the door... John 10:9

b. I am the vine... John 15:5

c. I am the way, the truth, …John 6:35

d. I am the resurrection and the life: John 11:25

e. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end...Rev. 1:17

22. Jesus Christ can be described as:

a. the light of the world

b. the bread of life

c. from above

d. the pillar

e. the bread of life

23. Poimen means:

a. teacher

b. pastor

c. shepherd

d. sheep

e. follower

24. When there is no shepherd

a. the sheep get scattered

b. an apostle will keep the sheep together

c. there will be no gathering of God's people

d. the sheep faint

e. many things cannot work

25. Are the following statements True or False?

a. Shepherd and pastor mean the same thing

b. Without a shepherding gift you cannot stand in the office of pastor

c. Your ministry will disintegrate if you do not have the gift for it

d. One of the key roles of a shepherd is to lead the sheep

e. The gift of government of used to lead people

26. In I Corinthians 12:28, the Bible talks about the gifts of governments. The word "governments" is translated from the Greek word, kubernesis, and it means:

a) to be established

b) guiding

c) progressing

d) ruling

e) pilotage

27. Are the following statements True or False?

a. It is time for evangelists to go out where the sinners are

b. It is times for prophets to leave the governing of local bodies to pastors

c. It is time for pastors to make budgetary allocations for the support of other ministers like evangelists, prophets and teachers

d. A church is not sustained by miracles

e. All of the above

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS UNDER IT Pastor Mobrawa has a church of over 2,500 members. He is the only pastor and also holds several crusades every month in different locations. He returns home after two weeks to find that the church was in debt to the tune of ¢ 6 million, the previous weeks collection has been used to pay for a new set of pews which had been ordered without his consent and the church organ which had broken down just before he left had still not been repaired.

28. Pastor Mobrawa is

a. not anointed

b. an out-of-place minister

c. someone with evil intentions

d. simply does not have the gift of governments

e. does not have the gift of administration and management

29. It is possible that Pastor Mobrawa

a. is an evangelist

b. would be better off out on the harvest fields

c. would have been better off not trying to govern a local assembly

d. will eventually become the laughing stock of the town

e. will soon not be able to sustain his congregation

30. Are the following match-ups correct?

a. Elisha's request for a double portion: 2 Kings 2:9

b. Elisha's request for a double portion: 1 Kings 2:9

c. Seeing certain things about your calling: 1Cor 1:26

d. Abiding in Christ: Jn 16:17

e. Abiding in Christ: Jn 16:17

31. Are the following statements True or False?

a. You can desire to go higher within any calling that God has set on you

b. You can decide which calling you can have

c. Elisha wanted another anointing other than that of the prophet

d. You can actually see things about your calling

e. Jesus was the highest possible level of pastor

32. Complete the verse below.

If ye -a-in me and my -b-abide in -c-- , ye shall -d-what ye will and it shall be -d-unto you: Jn 15:7

a. live

b. spirit

c. you

d. see

e. done

33. The following are signs of a greater anointing:

a. the ability to gather larger crowds

b. the ability to have a powerful effect when preaching from a simple scripture

c. an higher pastoral anointing leading to a larger church

d. attracting crowds

e. more miracles and revelations in a higher level of prophetic anointing

34. There is a time when every Christian must move on to become a teacher. This is found in

a. Heb. 6:12

b. Heb.4:12

c. Heb. 5:12

d. Heb. 4:15

e. Heb.5:14

35. The following are all reasons why you must be a Shepherd/Leader:

a. It is a sign of maturity

b. In order to be anointed

c. It is a sign that you are born again

d. People are aimless and useless in life without a shepherd

e. People need deliverance

36. What is the essential difference when the comma between 'saints' and 'for' (both words underlined below) is removed from the verse below? “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”: (Ephesians 4:11-12). “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”: (Ephesians 4:11-12).

a. Both versions are essentially the same

b. Placing the comma between the two words means it is the apostles, prophets etc. who must do the work of the ministry

c. Placing the comma between the two words means it is the saints who must do the work of the ministry

d. Removing the comma means anybody who is saved can do the work of the ministry

e. All of the above

37. You must aim to become a leader in the church:

a. To book your place in the heavenly residence

b. To overcome false accusations

c. Because people have become meat for false prophets

d. Because backsliders have to be restored

e. To ascertain whether you are called to the ministry

38. 1 Tim 3:13 talks about:

a. Those who have used the office of a deacon well

b. A good degree in spiritual things

c. ruling one's house well

d. Teachableness

e. Hospitality

39. "Combine material and spiritual progress" is one of the reasons why we must all strive to become shepherds. The scriptural basis for this statement is found in which verse(s) :

a. 1 Tim.3:13

b. 1 Tim.2:2

c. Titus 1:5

d. 1 Tim. 6:6

e. Titus 2:11,12

40. Are the following statements True or False?

a. If you call yourself a Christian then you have received a call to which you have responded

b. The call is sometimes simply a conviction

c. Many people miss the call of God because it feels so natural

d. Many people miss the call of God because it is not as dramatic as they expect

e. The call of God only comes to large ministries

41. Praying for God's will to be done means:

a. praying for your future

b. being able to relax afterwards and allow events to unfold

c. you know that His will for your life will not come to pass automatically

d. you are taking care of yourself

e. only good things can happen to you

42. When you pray for God to deliver you from evil you must

a. apply the blood of Jesus to your home and family

b. place an injunction on every flying witch

c. cancel every enchantment or curse spoken against you

d. bind your enemies

e. bind the devil and his agents

43. A church member said to her pastor after church, "You remind me of my father. He is so full of himself". She means…

a. her pastor was very anointed

b. her pastor was proud and arrogant

c. she was admiring her pastor

d. she was demeaning her pastor

e. her heart is not full of commitment to the church or pastor, but is rather filled with venom

44. You should become a shepherd/leader because

a. People are spiritually hungry

b. There is a lot in you that can strengthen other people

c. People are hungry for the truth

d. You need to obtain a good degree

e. You are a bishop

45. Are the following statements True or False?

a. A cell leader is a shepherd

b. A pastor is a shepherd

c. A bishop is a shepherd

d. An evangelist is a shepherd

e. All of the above

46. To fulfill the 'Great Commission'

a. we must teach the Word

b. we must go out

c. we must only allow evangelists to go out and preach the Word

d. shepherds must rise up to complete the work of the evangelist

e. only signs and wonders are necessary

47. To get a good degree you must

a. use the office of a deacon (shepherd)

b. have great boldness in the faith

c. have the gift of an evangelist

d. enter into full-time ministry

e. None of the above

48. To combine material and spiritual progress means

a. to pray in tongues while you study or work

b. you must entire full-time ministry

c. great gain

d. godliness with contentment

e. All of the above

49. A mega church means:

a. More laborers

b. More evangelism

c. The fields are white

d. More weddings

e. More favor with the political leadership of the land for the church and pastors

50. "Our Biblical quota of 25%" means that

a. 25% people will support the ministry

b. 25% of people respond to the gospel

c. 25% of people who hear the gospel will prosper

d. 25% of preachers are actually doing the work

e. The proportion of born-again church attendance to the total population of the city

51. When the anointing on one person is transferred to someone else whilst that man of God is alive, this is known as

a. anointing sharing

b. enhanced anointing transfer

c. acquired anointing transfer

d. living transferred anointing

e. modified anointing transfer

52. The following statements are true

a. Special ministries are released in a mega church

b. Numerous marriages taking place are indications of a healthy growing church

c. A mega church does not imply more people are being saved

d. God used Martin Luther in the reformation in Germany; Zwingli was used at the same time in France

e. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." This scripture is found in I Thessalonians 5:24

53. The following match-ups are correct

a. “Though thy beginnings be small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase”: Job 8:7

b. “Go out into the highways … and compel them to come in”...: Luke 14:13

c. “The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few”: Matt. 9:37

d. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel …”: Mark 16:15,16

e. All of the above

54. Type 1 counting is

a. The headcount of people in attendance

b. Total number on the church register

c. Cumulative counting

d. The seating capacity of the auditorium

e. A rough estimate

55. The type of counting that aims at outdoing everyone else is the

a. Type 3 counting

b. Type 4 counting

c. Type 5 counting

d. Type 6 counting

e. Type 7 counting

56. The following are dangers of wrong counting

a. lies

b. exaggeration

c. strife

d. discouragement

e. murmuring

57. "Cumulative counting" is

a. type 2 counting

b. the seating capacity of the auditorium

c. The total attendance at a special program over the entire period of the program

d. The same as type 3 counting

e. A figure that beats every other one quoted in the town

58. The following are all reasons why we must have a mega church:

a. It is a sign of maturity

b. In order to be anointed

c. It is a sign that you are born again

d. Our harvest field is the world

e. In order to look after the ministers well

59. The anointing allows you to achieve certain things. The following are associated with Elijah's ministry

a. He confronted religious leaders

b. He rebuked the kings of his days

c. He healed a leper

d. His ministry was ended by a woman

e. He blinded the eyes of a Syrian army

60. Elijah's anointing operated in John the Baptist's life because he was changed into vessel that could receive it. The following are characteristics common to the ministries of both men.

a. Both lived in the desert

b. Both ate things

c. Both wore clothes made of camel's hair

d. Both healed lepers

e. Both died in the same way

61. "A son honoureth his father a servant his master....." This scripture is found in

a. Matt. 8:9

b. 2 kings 3:11

c. Malachi 1:6

d. Phil. 2:9

e. John 3:30

62. The following are all signs of a servant

a. A servant cannot be inconvenienced by any job or task

b. A servant does not expect thanks or acknowledgement

c. A servant has a reward

d. A servant acts in his masters place when the master is not there

e. Once a servant always a servant

63. The following statements are true

a. A father in ministry can only be your head pastor or a pastor whom you can serve personally

b. Without a father in ministry you cannot succeed as a minister

c. The spiritual inheritance of anointing and gifts passes from anointed men of God to all their congregation members

d. A man of God you have never met personally cannot be a father-in-ministry to you.

e. Constant hearing of the words of the anointed

64. The following will open the door to receive the anointing on the life of a man of God

a. When you give him gifts

b. The passage of time

c. When the man of God lays hands on you

d. When you interact physically with the man of God

e. Once a servant always a servant

65. Jn 3:30 gives us the following characteristics of a servant

a. A servant does what his master wants in the way his master wants

b. A servant promotes his master while he stays below

c. A servant cannot be embarrassed by his job

d. A servant does not see himself equal to his master

e. A servant has a master

66. The following are descriptions of the different levels of soaking -in-tapes

a. Level A soaking: No impact. May not even understand it

b. Level B soaking: Absorb the word content but cannot reproduce it

c. Level D soaking: Absorb the word content and can reproduce it

d. Level E soaking : They catch the same amount of spirit/anointing of the message

e. All of the above

67. The following outline different steps in the art of soaking in a tape

a. Listen to it while praying and fasting

b. Leave the same tape running like a radio around you

c. Listen to many different tapes by the same preacher

d. Be the servant of the person you are listening to

e. When you are trying to get to level F soaking, you must listen to the same series from beginning to end.

68. These are signs of absorption

a. You are able to reproduce the message and preach it

b. Phrases and points of the message are used in your conversation

c. You are to get several messages from just one tape/message

d. You are able to follow the trend of the messages even when it sounds confusing and disorderly

e. All of the above

69. The following statements are true

a. Soaking-in-tapes can be used in place of personal Bible studies

b. The concept of "soaking-in-tapes" means you must listen to only one preacher

c. Video dimension is very important for learning how to minister the spirit

d. When you soak-in a tape to minister, you must no add other scripture if you are to follow in the original anointing.

e. all of the above.

70. The verses below give the biblical basis for soaking in tapes

a. Ez 2:2

b. Jn 6:63

c. II Tim 2:2

d. Acts 10:44

e. II Tim 2:15

71. The following pairings are good examples that confirm the fact that God does not work with only one person at a particular period.

a. Elijah and Micaiah

b. Isaiah and Micah

c. Zechariah and Malachi

d) Ezekiel and Daniel

e) Jeremiah and Daniel

72. The Church will be built by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is clear from

a. Micah 6:8

b. Zech. 3:10

c. Zech. 4:6

d. Mal. 3:10

e. Joel 2:32

73. The following are different ways by which the anointing comes

a. Intentional transferred anointing

b. Living transferred anointing

c) Acquired anointing transfer

d. Modified anointing Transfer

e. Anointing sharing

74. When a man of God dies or leaves the scene and his mantle then falls directly on someone else, this is known as

a. Living transferred anointing

b. Acquired anointing transfer

c. Former anointing reintroduced

d. Terminated transferred anointing

e) Diminishing anointing transfer

75. "… Gather unto me seventy men … and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them". This Scripture is

a. found in Num. 11:16,17

b. talking about the modified anointing transfer

c. talking about the living transferred anointing

d. talking about the anointing sharing

e. talking about the acquired anointing transfer

76. The following statements are true

a. Because God desires to bless His people anointing is not a difficult thing to catch

b. Anyone who desires the anointing can be anointed

c. You can desire another minister's anointing

d. God does not give the anointing to people who have a strong desire for the anointing

e. You can be anointed with the anointing on several men of God at the same time.

77. "If you desire a particular anointing, God will mould you into the type of vessel that can contain that anointing." This is known as the principle of

a. anointing transfer

b. modified anointing transfer

c. vessel change

d. imitated anointing

e. transformed personality anointing

78. The following match-ups of anointed men of God and their servants are correct

a. Moses - Aaron

b. Elijah - Elisha

c. Elisha - Gehazi

d. Elijah - John the Baptist

e. Moses - Joshua

79. To receive someone as a father and therefore inherit his anointing, you must

a. let the will of your father in ministry be done

b. see him as your "boss"

c. maintain an attitude of fullest trust

d. be one that was led to Christ by him

e. stay near him to interact personally with him

80. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Jesus, and Judah and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him “What barriers to the anointing are revealed in the above quotation?

a. The age of the anointed one

b. The family background of the anointed one

c. The qualification of the anointed one

d. The race of the anointed one

e. All of the above

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE BELOW AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AFTER IT:

James Jensen got born again at Angel's Delight church. He became a stable member of the church and after a while joined the usher's ministry. He soon became the ministry elder and enjoyed sharing the Word with his sheep. However, due to the death of his father while he was still young, he had been unable to finish school. The pastor of the church got to know and like him and after a while invited him (James) to live with him (the pastor) so that his financial burdens would be eased. James was really excited about this because he was sure that with a regular prayer time and a direct sharing of the Word with his pastor, he himself would soon be an associate pastor. On moving into the pastors house, however, James discovered that instead of being waited upon, he rather was made to serve the pastor. He had to sweep the house, wash the car and clean the pastors house everyday. After two months James got fed up and left the pastors house because he was offended. He soon left the church.

81. James Jensen was right to be annoyed because

a. as a ministry elder he had been invited to stay with the pastor as his guest

b. praying for a long time is tiring

c. he was not a houseboy

d. as a minister of the Word he was of equal status as the pastor

e. he was being exploited

82. James Jensen reacted the way he did because

a. he did not see his pastor as his father

b. he thought he had 'arrived' already when it came to spiritual things

c. he was not humble

d. he did not know that in the Bible those who received anointing were servants

e. All of the above

83. If James Jensen had been a bit patient, he might have received an anointing because

a. he served the man of God

b. he would have become like a 'son' to the man of God

c. of physical association and close interaction with the man of God

d. his pastor would have laid hands on him

e. every servant has a reward

84. If James Jensen had known the following it would have helped him

a. Elisha was the one who poured water on Elijah's hands

b. If Joshua had to be a servant before he became an anointed General, so would he

c. Time is a very important element in the development of any ministry

d. It would have helped to have an attitude of fullest trust in his pastor

e. All of the above

85. To receive a man of God as a father you must

a. fight to have a father in ministry

b. accept his position and authority

c. let your fathers will be done

d. main great respect and admiration for him

e. follow his words closely

86. Bishop Heward-Mills received a major impartation of the anointing

a. by fasting and praying alone

b. while he was in Bibiani

c. by soaking in a tape from Kenneth Hagin

d. because Kenneth Hagin led him to Christ

e. All of the above

87. The specificity of the anointing means

a. the anointing does specific things

b. the anointing makes you achieve specific things

c. your anointing cannot be exactly the same as someone else's

d. two people with the same anointing will do similar things

e. All of the above

88. “Soaking in tapes” means you are

a. 'chewing and pouring' the tape

b. a clone of the preacher

c. a copycat

d. losing your personality

e. someone who does not have a mind of his/her own

89. Catching the spirit of the ministry means

a. Think like a leadership

b. You have qualified from that ministry's Bible school

c. The standards and principles in the church must become yours

d. The same as catching the anointing

e. Observing and adapting to the spoken and unspoken philosophies and principles of that ministry

90. The following groups of people get easy employment within the LCI system

a. Bible school graduates

b. Experienced and seasoned ministers

c. A pastor of a small church who wants to join a larger network

d. Gifted and talented people who have relocated to the LCI neighborhood

e. Pastors who have been through the fire of ministry work and survived

91. In catching the spirit of the ministry, the following MUST be caught

a. The emphasis of the house

b. The friendship of members in the house

c. The vision of a similar ministry

d. The procedure of the house

e. The anointing of a visiting minister who once ministered in the house

92. The following are part of the steps taken to start a church

a. Count the cost

b. Be desperate to succeed by all means

c. Get a P.A. system

d. Get your leaders with whom you will work and appoint them to appropriate positions

e. Set the pastors salary and make it clear to the finance committee

93. The following Scriptures in praying for church establishment and church growth are correctly matched

a. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance...": Ps. 2:8

b. "My little children of whom I travail again in birth till Christ be formed in you": Gal 4:19

c. "…….enlarge my cost……": I Chron. 4:10

d. "Thy kingdom come…...": Matt 6:10

e. "……. increase them with men like a flock": Eze 36:37

94. In starting a church very first few sermons must be motivational in nature. The following motivational scriptures are correctly matched.

a. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy Latter end shall greatly increase Zech 4:10

b. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof - Eccl 7:8

c. For who hath despised the day of small things? - Job 8:7

d. You…built upon the foundations of the apostles…" - Eph 2:20

e. All of the above

95. The friendship between David and Jonathan can best be described as

a. Situational friendship commitment

b. Marital commitment

c. Fair weather commitment

d. Non-situational friendship commitment

e. A selective friendship

96. Wealth makes many friends; but the poor is separated from his...

a. This scripture is found in Proverbs 9:4

b. This scripture is found in Proverbs 19:4

c. The word that completes this scripture is family

d. The word that completes this scripture is relatives

e. The word that completes this scripture is neighbor

97. A person goes through three stages of church membership. These are:

a. Dove stage

b. Deer stage

c. Beast stage

d. Goat stage

e. Sheep stage

98. When a person is now being converted they are difficult to handle/keep in one place. This is the:

a. Goat stage

b. Beast stage

c. Sheep stage

d. Deer stage

e. Dove stage

99. Church members who are at this stage are around but they are independent

a. Deer stage

b. Goat stage

c. Sheep stage

d. Dove stage

e. Beast stage

100. These types of church members are the real members but they can be near or far, devoted or restless. These are the members at the:

a. Dove stage

b. Goat stage

c. Sheep stage

d. Beast stage

e. Deer stage

101. In Acts 2:40-46, the early believers".....continued steadfastly in the apostles....." the following are different things they flowed in:

a. The apostles teachings

b. Fasting

c. regular church attendance

d. Eating together

e. Selling their possessions

102. In order to develop devoted members

a. You must be a devoted shepherd yourself

b. You must marry in the church

c. Do not allow them to attend external programs

d. Say good things about the church

e. Do not allow them to marry from outside the church

103. Being devoted means:

a. Spend a lot of time there

b. Being consistent

c. Enjoying the messages

d. Admiring the pastor

e. Seeing the church as your "boyfriend" or "girlfriend"

104. The five golden opportunities to make your members devoted include:

a. Birthdays

b. Graduation ceremonies

c. Illness

d. Funerals

e. Job seeking

105. The following are characteristics of a motherly/fatherly shepherd

a. Comforts them

b. Praises them

c. rebukes them

d. Gives them money

e. All of the above

106. retention evangelism is

a. Person -to-person evangelism

b. Leaving the ninety-nine sheep and going for the one lost sheep

c. Evangelism that aims at maintaining the souls won

d. The same as not adding to or subtracting from the number you have-just retaining the number

e. Is supported by John 18:9 "of which thou gavest me...."

107. The following graph is similar to

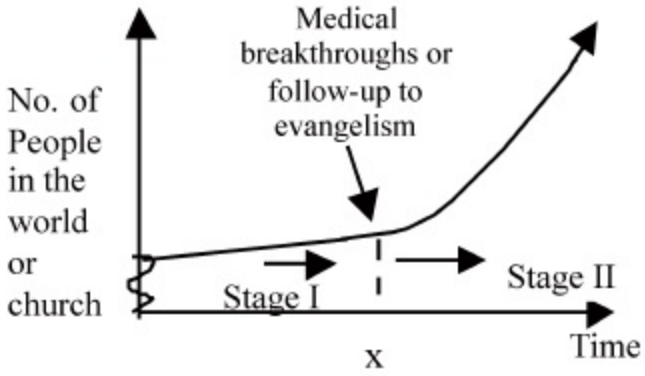
a. The world's population graph

b. The poultry farm graph

c. The family planning graph

d. Death rate graph

e. Birth rate graph



Use the above graph to answer the underlisted questions

Use the above graph to answer questions 108-110 below

108. What is represented by Stage 1?

a. Slow growth

b. No following

c. No evangelism

d. No retention evangelism

e. Fewer people saved

109. At a certain time T something happened that is represented by A. A represents

a. More evangelism

b. No retention evangelism

c. No growth

d. Follow-up begins e. rapid growth

110. What is represented by stage II?

a. Slow growth

b. rapid growth

c. Fewer people saved

d. Stage of retention evangelism

e. Fewer people dying in the church

111. By IDL visits we mean

a. Making idle Christians fruitful by visiting

b. Involving dedicated lay workers in the ministry of the church

c. Locating the homes of content

d. The ideal visit at the ideal time

e. Identifying the homes of existing church members

112. The following are all components of ABA visit

a. Bible study

b. Anointing

c. Anaiedeia

d. Aman

e. Anagkazo

113. WELP visit stands for

a. Witnessing to unbelievers

b. Encourage the new convert

c. Laying hands on the new convert to demonstrate the anointing

d. Praying with them

e. Ministering the word

114. For retention evangelism to work

a. You must relate with other pastors in the city

b. Direct your spiritual energy towards your calling and do not accept invitation to minister outside your denomination

c. Do not waste your time on non-serious converts

d. You must keep all the converts, God gives you even if they are reluctant

e. All of the above

115. Why must any member be permanent in LCI?

a. You are part of a garden

b. You are part of a tree

c. In order to have consistency of pastoral care and oversight

d. To avoid the deception of short relationships

e. In order to be saved

116. The following are true about being a permanent member

a. It is a sign that you have overcome the mistakes of instability due to double mindedness

b. People are hungry for the truth

c. Long relationships are trouble free

d. You see the fruit of your labor

e. To see the maturity of the church members

117. The following are all reasons why you must be permanent in LCI

a. In order to be anointed

b. To avoid being disloyal

c. To receive spiritual gifts

d. You will have opportunities to preach in the service

e. All of the above

118. The following areas of your life will "flourish " when you are permanent.

a. Your business

b. Your friendships

c. Your finance

d. Your health

e. All of the above

119. The following match-ups are correct: you must be permanent because:

a. The church is a place to celebrate your victory - Rom 12:15

b. You are part of a family - Eph 3:15

c. To avoid the deception of short relationships - Joshua 9:3-18

d. To avoid instability due to double mindedness - James 1:8

e. You are part of a garden - Is. 5:1

120. The following are all characteristics of an industrialized church

a. They are engaged in an NGO

b. They pray and Hod adds to the church daily, weekly or monthly

c. They have deliberate, planned and institutionalized outreaches

d. The church has reached the industrialized stage when it holds multiple services

e. All of the above

121. How is a church industrialized?

a. By its multiple services

b. Every chapel undertakes some form of outreach every month

c. There is an altar call at every opportunity

d. There is invitation Sunday

e. All of the above

122. The principle of the multiplied senior pastor is

a. the principle of one head pastor extending his capabilities to handle aspects of ministry work

b. having more than one senior pastor in local assembly

c. person "x" is defined as existing member of a church

d. every church can be divided into group A and group B group A members are the more reliable people who attend church twice or more

e. the principle of multiple services aims at making a variety of serious available to your church members.

123. The following are true

a. The principle of the scholarly pastor is the principle of using reliable data and technology to enhance pastoral work.

b. The 80-20 principles stipulates that eighty percent of your church growth is as a direct result of the work of twenty percent of your members

c. The principle of pastoral individuality means doing the work of the ministry

d. The principle of using lay people to do the work is based on Eph 4:12

e. All of the above

124. The following are descriptions of the different levels of soaking -in-tapes

a. Level A soaking: No impact. May not even understand it

b. Level B soaking: Absorb the word content but cannot reproduce it

c. Level D soaking: Absorb the word content and can reproduce it

d. Level E soaking : They catch the same amount of spirit/anointing of the message

e. All of the above

125. The following outline different steps in the art of soaking in a tape

a. Listen to it while praying and fasting

b. Leave the same tape running like a radio around you

c. Listen to many different tapes by the same preacher

d. Be the servant of the person you are listening to

e. When you are trying to get to level F soaking, you must listen to the same series from beginning to end.

126. These are signs of absorption

a. You are able to reproduce the message and preach it

b. Phrases and points of the message are used in your conversation

c. You are to get several messages from just one tape/message

d. You are able to follow the trend of the messages even when it sounds confusing and disorderly

e. All of the above

127. The following statements are true

a. Soaking-in-tapes can be used in place of personal Bible studies

b. The concept of "soaking-in-tapes" means you must listen to only one preacher

c. Video dimension is very important for learning how to minister the spirit

d. When you soak-in a tape to minister, you must no add other scripture if you are to follow in the original anointing

e. When you can reproduce the tape but not sue your own windows or verses it is known as lack of understanding

128. The verses below give the biblical basis for soaking in tapes

a. Ez 2:2

b. Jn 6:63

c. II Tim 2:2

d. Acts 10:44

e. II Tim 2:15

129. Bishop Heward-Mills gives the following as steps to receiving the anointing

a. the principle of vessel change

b. giving a special offering to the man of God

c. servanthood

d. receiving a father

e. coming to church every Sunday.

130. The following are types of receivers -True (T) or False (F)

a. Those who are physically near

b. Those who are spiritually near

c. Those who are spiritually far away

d. Those who are physically far off

e. Those who catch the anointing from the spoken word

133. The following. scriptures are correctly matched

a. Zech 4:6 - Not by might, nor by power but my spirit says the Lord

b. Acts 4:13 - ".... and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus"

c. John 6:63 - "... the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"

d. I John 1:1 - that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes to we have handled..."

e. 2 Tim 4:13 - ".....and the books, but especially the parchments

134. Are the following statements True (T) or False (F)?

a. The anointing is the most important thing you need to do God's work

b. receiving the anointing is only possible through listening to tapes and reading books

c. Going to Bible school is a sure way of catching the anointing.

d. The time you spend reading a book is time you spend fellowshipping with the author of the book.

e. A quick check of a scripture is the same as soaking in the scripture.

135. In which of the underlisted scriptures can the Hebrew words "Aman and Tsalach" be found

a. Joshua 1:8

b. I Sam 2:30

c. II Kings 3:11

d. II Chron. 20:20

e. Num. 16:1,2

136. "Aman means to

a. Nurse

b. Nurture

c. Prosper

d. Promote

e. Build up

137. "Tsalach means to

a. Go over

b. Nurture

c. Foster as a parent

d. Push forward

e. Break out

138. Certain giants in ministry caught the anointing that was on other man of God The following ministries are correctly matched to the men of God from whom they caught the anointing.

a. Reinhard Bonnke - George Jeffreys

b. Kenneth Hagin - Smith Wigglesworth

c. Benny Hinn - Kathryn Kuhlman

d. T.L Osborne - William Braham

e. David Oyedepo - Kenneth Hagin

139. Are the following statements True (T) or False (F)?

a. According to the Bible, believing in God leads to establishment

b. According to the Bible, believing in the prophet leads to prosperity.

c. You must believe in the Man of God to push forward in ministry.

d. You must believe in God and in the Man of God.

e. It is alright to believe in a Man of God as long as you simultaneously believe in God.

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE CAREFULLY AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW

Mr. Okoko has been a member of Gobligov International Church for seven years. He believes in God and studies his Bible and prays regularly. He likes his pastor but thinks pastors are not to be fully trusted because many of them are charlatans. At the same time he is just able to make ends meet with his salary and cannot afford to buy anything that is not strictly necessary. At the same time Mr. Okoko believes in being honest, upright and blameless.

140. The following statements are true:

a. Mr. Okoko is not financially blessed because God is displeased with him.

b. Mr. Okoko is not financially blessed because he does not pray enough.

c. Mr. Okoko is not financially blessed because he does not believe in prosperity.

d. Mr. Okoko is not a good member of the church

e. Mr. Okoko needs to believe in his pastor in order to experience prosperity.

141. Are the following statements True (T) or False (F)?

a. Mr. Okoko is not a Christian

b. Mr. Okoko is frugal

c. Mr. Okoko needs to experience 'tsalach'

d. Mr. Okoko should study the Bible more

e. Being honest and upright has made Mr. Okoko poor

142. Some people never catch the anointing because

a. they do not like the man of God's tribe

b. they do not like the man of God's color

c. they see the man of God as their classmate

d. the man of God is from their home town

e. All of the above

143. To acquire Bishop Heward-Mills' anointing you must

a. greet him after every service

b. associate with him through his books

c. expose yourself to his words through tapes

d. phone him often

e. All of the above

144. Are the following statements True (T) or False (F)?

a. The practice of soaking in of tapes is only practiced in Lighthouse Chapel Int.

b. As you listen to tapes you must memorize them in order to achieve the full effect

c. The practice of soaking in tapes is supported by Scripture

d. Associating with men of God means you must have personal contact with them sometimes

e. Believing in God establishes you

145. As you believe in God you will

a. be built up in faith

b. receive a strong foundation

c. have no further need

d. receive a push forward into ministry

e. All of the above

146. As you believe in the man of God you will

a. receive your calling

b. break out into ministry

c. not be safe

d. have a fruitful and successful ministry

e. All of the above

147. "There are, it may be, so MANY KINDS OF VOICES in the world, and more of them is without signification". This scripture can be found in

a. 1 Cor. 14:10

b. 2 Cor. 14:10

c. I Cor. 4:10

d. 2 Cor. 4:10

e. 2 Cor. 10:10

148. The first step to knowing the will of God is to

a. Tune your spirit to only the voice of God

b. Tune your spirit to only the voice of your prophet

c. Be very prayerful and sober

d. recognize that there are many types of voices in this world

e. Study the way the different voices operate and know their effects.

149. Brother Kwesi prayerfully approaches Sister Tampico telling her that he heard the voice of God speaking to him last night to marry her. Which other voice could he have heard?

a. The voice of his circumstances

b. The voice of his own will.

c. The voice of the flesh.

d. The voice of the mind

e. The voice of his friends.

150. Which of these statements are true?

a. The mind is a great asset for every Christian and every Minister

b. A Spiritual person needs to depend more on the voice of the Spirit

c. Do not send your mind on vacation because you have become a spiritual person.

d. Following mainly the voice of the spirit will lead to your promotion in Life and Ministry.

e. A combination of the voice of the Spirit and the voice of the mind will lead to your promotion in life and ministry.

151. Wisdom

a. The Bible says is the principal thing and with all your getting, get wisdom

b. The intelligent use of your thinking capabilities.

c. Is the ability to take right decisions based on the information available to you

d. Is the ability not to ignore realities when they are before you

e. Is one of the things that made a difference in the lives of Joseph, Daniel and Solomon

152. Which of these statements are true?

a. Too much reasoning can turn you into a fool

b. Too little reasoning can turn you into a fool

c. The wisdom of God must be allowed to supersede every reasoning of man

d. I Cor. 1:20 tells us that God has made foolish the wisdom of God

e. I Cor. 1:25 tell us that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

153. The voice of your flesh

a. is your human desire

b. is your physical feeling

c. says " do what feels nice and easy"

d. must not be obeyed if you want to be blessed

e. must be silenced by doing what is hard but nice.

154. In Romans 8:6 the Bible tells us that to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is

a. joy

b. peace

c. gentleness

d. life

e. blessedness

155. The voice of the spirit speaks to

a. only your spirit

b. your spirit

c. your soul

d. only your spirit and your soul

e. your mind.

156. The voice of the spirit to your spirit

a. Is called your conscience

b. Creates a quiet assurance

c. Is called the inner witness

d. Creates a relaxed knowing about something

e. Creates a silent assurance of your salvation according to Gal. 4:6

157. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This Scripture can be found in

a. Romans.

b. Romans 4

c. Romans 8

d. Romans 4:16

e. Romans 8:16

158. "There are, it may be, so MANY KINDS OF VOICES in the world, and more of them is without signification". This scripture can be found in

a. 1 Cor. 14:10

b. 2 Cor. 14:10

c. I Cor. 4:10

d. 2 Cor. 4:10

e. 2 Cor. 10:10

159. The first step to knowing the will of God is to

a. Tune your spirit to only the voice of God

b. Tune your spirit to only the voice of your prophet

c. Be very prayerful and sober

d. recognize that there are many types of voices in this world

e. Study the way the different voices operate and know their effects.

160. Brother Kwesi prayerfully approaches Sister Tampico telling her that he heard the voice of God speaking to him last night to marry her. Which other voice could he have heard?

a. The voice of his circumstances

b. The voice of his own will.

c. The voice of the flesh.

d. The voice of the mind

e. The voice of his friends.

161. Which of these statements are true?

a. The mind is a great asset for every Christian and every Minister

b. A Spiritual person needs to depend more on the voice of the Spirit

c. Do not send your mind on vacation because you have become a spiritual person.

d. Following mainly the voice of the spirit will lead to your promotion in Life and Ministry

e. A combination of the voice of the Spirit and the voice of the mind will lead to your promotion in life and ministry.

162. Wisdom

a. The Bible says is the principal thing and with all your getting, get wisdom

b. The intelligent use of your thinking capabilities.

c. Is the ability to take right decisions based on the information available to you

d. Is the ability not to ignore realities when they are before you

e. Is one of the things that made a difference in the lives of Joseph, Daniel and Solomon.

163. Which of these statements are true?

a. Too much reasoning can turn you into a fool

b. Too little reasoning can turn you into a fool

c. The wisdom of God must be allowed to supersede every reasoning of man

d. I Cor. 1:20 tells us that God has made foolish the wisdom of God

e. I Cor. 1:25 tell us that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

164. The voice of your flesh

a. is your human desire

b. is your physical feeling

c. says " do what feels nice and easy"

d. must not be obeyed if you want to be blessed

e. must be silenced by doing what is hard but nice.

SHORT NOTES QUESTIONS

1. Who is a Lay person? How different is he from a full-time Minister?

2. Mention the two keys to being in the Lay Ministry.

3. Explain what the Pineapple Patch principle is all about.

4. Pastoring is a real burden. How would you develop it?

5. What is shepherdorial burden? How would you develop it?

6. Why would you say that the Ministry is work and not rest? What type of work does the ministry involve?

7. A pastor's greatest asset is his ability to teach and preach. How does a pastor develop an effective preaching and teaching (feeding) ministry?

8. How would you know good pastor?

9. Describe the Pseudo Ministry and give three reasons why we should avoid it.

10. With scriptural support each, indicate the four things Jesus did to be a Model of excellence in Ministry.

11. Why do you believe that prayer is important? Give 7 reasons.

12. Prayer "availeth much" according to James 5:16 Give the (10) different definitions of this expression.

13. Explain what a spiritual warfare is. Discuss (10) facts Christian must know about our battle with the demonic hordes on this earth.

14. Why must every minister be careful of operating in the natural?

15. With scriptural support each, give (10) title of Satan.

16. Explain the following Greek Words which describe satan.

(i) Diabolos

(ii)Akerthartos.

17. Outline the content of the following prayers.

i. The Lord prayer

ii. First Ephesians prayer

iii. Second Ephesians prayer

iv. Timothy's prayer.

18. Praying for long is recommended . How can you do this effectively?

19. The world “intercede” come from the Latin word "“intercedere" What does this mean.

20. What does intercession against law of the following overcome?

i. The law of humanity.

ii. The law of elements.

iii. The law of creeping things.

21. Visitation is a powerful mixture of three forces. Mention these forces.

22. What rules must guide you for fruitful visitation?

23. Describe the Pauline visit bring out what each visit accomplished.

24. Listening to tapes will transform your teaching ministry. Explain how these happen.

25. What steps would you take as a pastor to encourage fruitful interaction among your church members?

26. What is PVCI? How does it help you transform your ministry as a pastor?

27. With a scriptural support, prove that a mega church is God's will.

28. A pastor friend has just started a church feels that it's cozier in a smaller church.

Give (10) reasons why a mega church is to be preferred.

29. Explain the concept of the 25% Biblical quota.

What lesson(s) does it teach the church?

30. People have given wrong impressions by their methods of counting people in church. Briefly explain the (7) types of counting recommended by the author.

31. Why would you say that counting is scriptural and what are the (3) dangers of counting?

32. Give (4) advantages of Numbering (by counting people at church).

33. A major principle to catching the Spirit of the Ministry is servant hood. Give (10) signs of a servant.

34. Which are the two types of receivers and how do they receive from a man of God?

35. Different people receive the anointing at different levels of receptivity. Briefly explain the (7) levels of receptivity.

36. Explain what you understand by the following:

a. The vision of the house

b. The principle of the house

c. The Procedures of the house

d. The emphasis of the house

37. What steps would you follow to start a church?

38. The key to increasing in size is to have committed church members. What are the four main types of commitment?

39. List the three different types of church members and give five keys for developing devoted church members.

40. Explain the following visits: IDL visit, WELP visit and ABA visit.

41. "The church will be rich in souls if we begin to be spiritually industrialized." Discuss this statement

42. Discuss the principles you will use for a mega church growth.

43. Associating with great men of God is one sure way of catching the anointing. How does this happen?

44. Write short notes on the following:

(i) The two types receivers

(ii) The art of soaking in tapes

(iii) The specificity of the anointing.

45. How would you know that you are on the road to catching the anointing when soaking in tapes? What mistakes should you avoid when you soak in tapes?

46. Explain the Hebrew words Amen and Tsalach. How do they relate to the catching of the anointing?

47. What barriers could prevent you from catching the anointing on a man of God?

48. Mention the areas of your life that must be opened to the voice of God. According to the author.

49. What is the first step to knowing the will of God in your life? Discuss the twelve different kinds of voices.

50. How can the Christian have victory over the flesh?

51. The Holy Sprit bears witness our spirit inner witness] Give seven characterize tics of the inner witness.

52. According to the textbook, dreams are valid method by which God leads us. What should every Christian know about dreams?

53. What four types of dreams are there, in what ways can the different kinds of dreams be interpreted?

54. Give three important safety checks by which the Christian can avoid mistakes when being lead by the spirits.

55. There are certain things that make you a son/ daughter to a spiritual father in the ministry, what are these?

56. Why would you say that not every man of God is a father? What are the marks of a father then?

"receiving a father is different from receiving an instructor" Explain this statement giving examples.

57. List the nine fathers of your life and explain each clearly.

58. "Father have the power to bless and to cures" Do you agree with this assertion? Explain your answer.

59. Your Daddy's "Devil" What does this statement mean?

Discuss how this happened with:

a) Absalom

b) Isaac

c) Jacob

d) David

e) Solomon

60. (i) Explain what you understand by the Greek Word "Allos"

(ii) How different is it from "HETEROS"?

(iii)Why is allos good?

61. Becoming allos leaves you with a certain mindset. Discuss.

62. Outline the alloses of the following

(i) Elijah -Elisha

(ii)

(iii) Elijah - John the Baptist

63. Explain how allos helps the building of team work in the ministry and solve problems.

64. Write short notes explaining how allos is a key to the following (i) Happy marriage (ii) Being led by the spirit (iii) The art of teaching and preaching.

65. What is your understanding of ministerial ethics? How does unethical behavior affect your ministry?

66. Reverend K. started a church four years ago, the church is doing well with many branches. Pastor C, his main assistant handles many aspect of the church.

(i). Outline a few ethical practices that Rev. K. the senior minister should do well to follow for a healthy ministry.

(ii). What guideline will help Pastor C. to be a good assistant?

67. Relating with church members, especially with the opposite sex, have been said to be a problem areas for ministers. What ethics would you recommend a healthy interaction in this wise?

68. How would you handle a powerful visiting minister who you would want to invite again to your church?

69. Many criticism have been leveled against ministers about finances. How would you minimize if not completely avoiding such criticisms against you as a senior pastor of the church?

70. (i) As an assisting pastor, if you have to resign from your present church, how would you go about it maturely ?

(ii) Under what 3 biblical reasons can you resign?