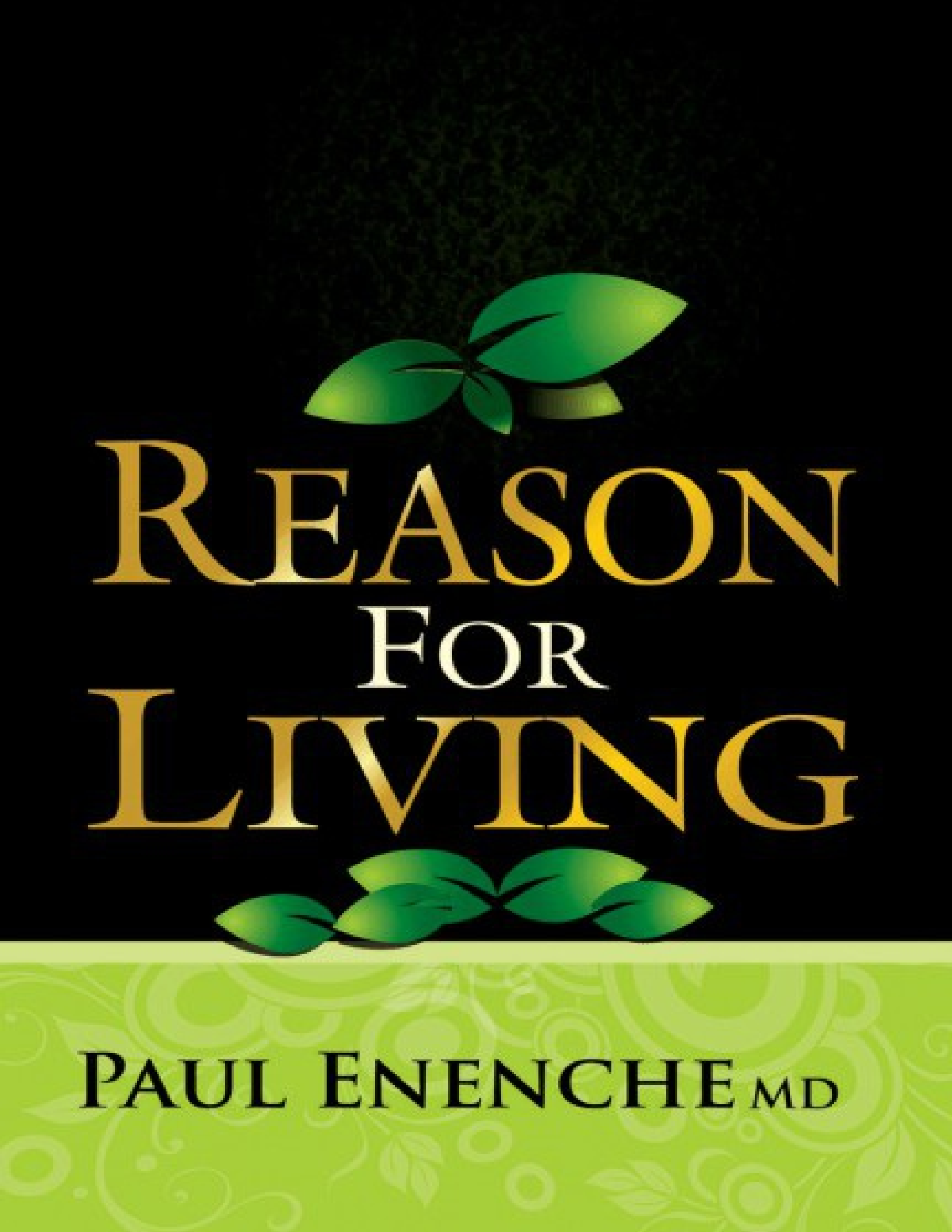

REASON
FOR
LIVING
PAUL ENENCHE MD

Reason For Living

By

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Introduction

Over two millennia ago, a Man was introduced into human history in a most unusual way and it became impossible for humanity to recover from the impact registered by Him on the sands of time and eternity. Great men and women came both before and after Him, but as suddenly as they came, so suddenly also did they disappear. Alexander the Great came and left. Herod the Great came and went. Napoleon the Great came and left. Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus the Persian, Dairus the Median, Tiglath-pilneser, Shalmanezar, Stalin & Lenin, Mussolini, Adolf-Hitler, Winston Churchill all came and left but this Man came and could not leave. He only lived for 33½ years but made an impact that will span all of eternity. He never went to any formal institution of learning but learned men and women of His days couldn't at all comprehend the wisdom of His speech. He

personally wrote no book but all the books ever written about Him can never be accommodated by any library on earth - no matter how large. In His teachings, He literally touched on all subjects of human interest – Architecture, Astronomy, Botany, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Medicine, Philosophy, Zoology, etc.

He is the fulcrum of human history. History rotates around Him – hence events that predated His birth are dated, B.C (before Christ). And events that happened beyond His birth are dated, A.D (Anno Domini – in the year of our Lord). To remove Him from human history therefore is to scatter human history. All dates lose meaning and history loses reference if He were to be moved from the scene.

What a colossal, monumental, gigantic impact! We are talking about a Man who has had more followers and ardent believers on His course than any mortal—dead or alive. Moreover, His influence appeared to have escalated after His death.

Join me as we celebrate the birth and arrival of the only Begotten and Beloved of the Father, the Joy of the angels, the Hope of humanity, the Prince of eternity, the Rose of Sharon, the Lilly of the valley, the only Star that is bright enough to shine in the morning, the Sun of righteousness, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of Jesse, the soon coming King clothed with light as garment and with hair as white as wool, white as snow and Whose eyes are as a flame of fire; Whose feet are like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; Whose voice is as the voice of many waters. Let us celebrate He Who has the seven stars in His right hand and out of Whose mouth proceeds a sharp two edged sword and Whose countenance is like the sun shining in full strength. Let us celebrate the One before Whose feet, John the beloved fell as dead by virtue of the surpassing splendor of His glory.

Let all celebrate the reason for the season. Let us celebrate our reason for living.

“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”– Phil 1:21

Chapter One

The Greatest Loser In History.

I learnt sometime ago that the universe is a university and that life is full of lessons. How true! Solomon of old learnt from everything around him hence he became the wisest man in his day. About him, the bible tells us that,

he spake three thousand proverbs. And his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And they came of all people to hear the Wisdom of Solomon from all kings of the earth, which heard of his wisdom.

(1 Kings 4:32-34.)

The point is, if you will learn the lessons of life and enroll in the University of the Universe, you will naturally abide among the wise.

In this first chapter, we shall learn wisdom from the events that happened around the birth of our saviour. We shall particularly learn lessons from the experiences of Joseph, Mary and the Inn–keeper.

‘And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the Inn' Luke 2:7 (emphasis mine)

Some time ago, I heard God's servant Pastor E.A. Adeboye (General Overseer of RCCG: the fastest growing Pentecostal denomination in the world) ask who we think the greatest loser in the history of mankind was. Was it Esau who sold his birth right for a morsel of bread and instead of being the first born of the covenant lineage of Abraham lost out and was disherited forever? Was it Samson who revealed both the secret of his strength and of his intimacy with God to a prostitute and ended up a great disaster? He died shamefully as a toy in the hands of the gentiles. Was it him? Was it Judas Iscariot who was one of the original disciples of our Lord and could have ended as one of those to sit on the twelve thrones in heaven to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28), but who by the force of unbridled greed sold the Master for thirty pieces of silver? He later on hanged himself in the frustration of dissatisfaction and is currently roasting in the

eternal flames of hell awaiting final judgment. Was he the greatest loser?

In the analysis of God's servant Pastor E.A. Adeboye, he opines that the greatest loser in the Bible, the greatest loser in the history of mankind was the Inn-keeper. The man who told Joseph and his pregnant and in-labour wife, 'no room in the Inn'. He believes that this man was the greatest loser in history. I think I agree with him.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

The question is: why was this man such a great loser?

1. He missed the opportunity of being the first earthly host of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He missed! He missed the opportunity to become the first person to welcome to the planet earth, the owner of the planet. What a loss! I mean, he missed the opportunity of giving accommodation to the Owner of all accommodations. He missed the opportunity of playing host to the One who said, 'the world is mine and the fullness thereof…' Psalm 50:12. What an irrecoverable loss. A wise man once said, 'He who refuses to embrace a unique opportunity loses…' That man was a loser.

1. He missed the blessedness that accompanies people who accommodate God's presence.

This is the second reason why that Inn-keeper was the greatest loser in history. You know, there is a blessedness that accompanies those who play host to the presence of God. You should remember what happened at the wedding in Canaan of Galilee. Jesus was invited to attend the wedding. Not to officiate at the wedding, not to speak at the wedding and not even to pray for the couple. He was invited to just sit there. I believe what they wanted was the assurance of His presence and goodwill. I believe they wanted a touch of the divine on their occasion – and they were not disappointed.

Under His watch, the wine finished but because nothing is permitted to finish (or expire) where He is, it was instantly restored as the people carried out His instructions. Nothing can get out of control where He is involved. Joy and

fulfillment are not permitted to run out where He is. That is called the blessedness of His presence.

You also remember the turnaround that Peter experienced after toiling all night and ended with not even a catch of fish? All he needed to do was welcome the master into His ship and there was an instant turnaround. 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a drought,' he was instructed by the Master. (Luke 5:4). His obedience of that instruction led to the harvest of fishes, massive enough to break the fishing net and sink two ships (Luke 5:5-7). That is called the blessedness of His presence.

Do you remember the honour that greeted the donkey which carried the master on His triumphant entry into Jerusalem? I mean, that donkey walked on the clothes and materials that the people spread on the ground in honour, not of the donkey but of the master – yet it was the donkey that walked on it because of the blessedness that accompany those who accommodate the Master.

What about Obed–Edom the Gitite? (2 Sam. 6:12) – the man who decided to accommodate the ark of the covenant of the Lord after Uzzah was killed while conveying the same ark when he presumptuously attempted to support the ark from falling, as the Oxen bearing it stumbled (2 Sam.6:6-7). Everybody was afraid to get near the ark including King David except Obed-edom. The summary is that God so blessed Obededom the Gitite and all that pertained unto him until the news spread round the country. When the news of Obededom's blessing reached King David, he sent and fetched the ark as if to say, “your own is enough”, not only you! What happened to Obed-edom the Gitite? It was the blessedness of accommodating His presence. That was what the loser called the Inn-keeper missed out on for all eternity.

That loser (the Inn-keeper) who was meant to accommodate the LORD of lords and KING of kings missed the opportunities of experiencing what the above mentioned individuals experienced.

What could have become of the life, family, business and endeavour of the Inn-keeper if he had agreed to accommodate the Master? Only eternity would reveal.

You know, the sad reality is that there are many in the world today who are telling the Master, 'No room…I have no room for you in my relationships and dealings. Jesus, be on your own and let me be on my own (keep to yourself and let me keep to myself).' What a tragedy! What a loss! It is an eternal calamitous loss of colossal proportions and immeasurable dimensions. Please avoid being such a loser.

1. He missed the opportunity of entering the history books of time and eternity.

This is the third reason why the Inn-keeper was such a loser. Heaven and earth could have recorded his name as the first arrival point of the messiah. Eternal archives could have registered his name as the man who was magnanimous enough to give accommodation to the son of God. He missed the opportunity of being celebrated by men and venerated by angels. He missed the opportunity of being a foremost history maker and front liner. He missed the opportunity of inclusion in the journal of God's redemptive process for mankind. He could have been referenced as one of the people that made God's redemptive process possible.

The first person I believe made the redemptive process possible among humans was Mary who agreed to carry the pregnancy without meeting a man at the high risk of severe generational misunderstanding. The second person would be Joseph, Mary's husband who agreed to co-operate with both God and Mary to make it happen. The third person should have been the Inn-Keeper in whose Inn Jesus could have been born, but he lost out. Do you know that every other person along the line fulfilled his or her part in the redemptive process? The owner of the donkey released his donkey for Jesus to ride on to Jerusalem. The donkey fulfilled its part by agreeing to carry the master to Jerusalem for the Passover. The owner of the upper room where Jesus had the Passover meal with His disciples fulfilled his part by preparing and releasing his facility for the master's use. Everybody including an animal played their part in God's redemption project except the joker called the Inn-keeper. He was the only person whose facility, Jehovah wanted to use but said, NO! He refused. Do you understand what I mean?

You will notice in scriptures that nobody ever turned Jesus down. When He called Peter and Andrew to follow Him, they abandoned what they were

doing and followed Him without question. When He called on James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were in the ship with their father mending their nets, they abandoned everything including their father and followed the Master. He saw Matthew at the receipt of custom, called him and he left all and followed Him. When He was accosted by tax collectors, He sent Peter to the sea to catch the first fish that came along, open its mouth and collect the piece of coin to settle the tax payment. Peter went and the fish complied. Everybody the master ever demanded anything from surrendered it with excitement except this joker cum loser called the Inn-keeper.

The question is, as you read this book, is there something God is asking you to surrender that you are struggling with? Is God placing a demand on your life and you are uncomfortable? Is He making a demand on your resources and you are not complying? Is He demanding higher commitment from you and you are arguing and giving Him several reasons why it will not be possible?

Please do not make the mistake of the Inn-keeper. Avoid the error of his way. The fact is, I have no idea where that man is right now. I don't know his status in eternity. One thing I know for sure is that he lost it (a divine opportunity) forever. You shall not be such a loser in Jesus name!

Chapter Two

The Matter of Spiritual Sensitivity

At this point, we intend to turn our attention to the unraveling of the mystery why the in-keeper was such a loser. Why did he miss out so much on such a divine opportunity?

1. LACK OF SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY.

I think the first reason why the Inn-keeper was such a loser was his lack of spiritual sensitivity. It was a bankruptcy of perception – and you know that perception determines possession. That is, your perception will determine your possession in life. Your perception determines your portion in life. It appears to me like the man, the Inn keeper, was at zero level spiritually especially with regards to spiritual sensitivity. Literally, God came by and

went past him and he was not aware. The Creator of the universe, clothed with light as with a garment, came in the form of a pregnancy and he was not aware. You know there are many losers in life today who had come face to face with divine opportunities and visitation but were not aware so they exist as established losers.

Do you know what delivered the Shunamite woman (2 Kings 4:8) from years of barrenness, reproach and frustration? It was the mystery of spiritual sensitivity. After constraining the man of God Elisha who passed by her home frequently to stop by for a meal a couple of times, she eventually revealed to her husband, the reason for her actions. 'I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee…that he shall turn in thither' – 2 Kings 4:10. It is something like saying, 'something is telling me that this man that passes by us all the time is not an ordinary man, there is something about him. He is of God. Let us do something for him.' They did that and the outcome was the termination of the yoke of barrenness on her life – her story changed, her portion was delivered, her possession was accessed because of spiritual sensitivity. That spiritual sensitivity made her accommodate an anointing that fought a battle of destiny for her. The fact is, your spiritual sensitivity is your connector to divine opportunities.

If there is a prayer you are going to pray at this point, it is, 'Lord, make me spiritually sensitive. Make me more sensitive spiritually than I have ever been. Let me not be deaf, dumb and blind spiritually.' I see fresh grace for spiritual sensitivity coming upon you right now in Jesus' name.

You see, there are many losers in life because of the bankruptcy of spiritual sensitivity – their future husbands or wives are passing them by all the time and they never see them. They keep praying, 'Lord Show me my husband, show me my wife, and God says, 'I have shown them to you but you didn't see them.'

Now, what is it that enhances sensitivity? It is spirituality. Sensitivity is a product of spirituality – hence high spirituality equals high sensitivity and low spirituality equals low sensitivity. When you are spiritually charged, you are spiritually sensitive. You easily pick up signals in the realm of the spirit. You could actually enter a room and feel something (in the spirit). You could

see a person and literally 'see' something that is not perceivable to the ordinary eye. That is why I say, high spirituality equals high sensitivity and low spirituality equals low sensitivity. It then goes without saying, that no spirituality will equal no sensitivity. I know you understand what I mean. Personally, I have been in situations where I literally knew the next statement a person was going to make (before they made it). It was almost as if you heard it before he made it.

The equation then is, spirituality determines sensitivity and sensitivity determines opportunity. So missed opportunities are the products of low spiritual sensitivity, and you know that “the missing of opportunities equals the abundance of regrets.” When people miss opportunities, regrets abound, but I see God changing the situations in your life today, in Jesus' name.

FIX IT SPIRITUALLY.

It was from God's servant Bishop David Oyedepo that I first heard that, 'man's real needs are spiritual.' There may be someone reading this book who may be saying, I have a financial, psychological, or even marital need but the fact is, your real need is neither financial, psychological nor material. It is not even the devil that is your real problem. The real need of anybody is spiritual. If you can fix it spiritually, everything else will fix itself. The Word says, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.' (Matt. 6:33). And these include: wife, husband, breakthrough, job opportunity, visa to travel, victory over demons, witches, wizards, etc – all these shall be added to you, if the spiritual is in order. The third epistle of John verse two says, 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.' The meaning is, “the prosperity of your soul and spirit determines your life's welfare.” The prosperity of your soul (and spirit) is what guarantees your life's welfare.

The prayer to pray at this point is: 'Lord, show me those areas of life where I am spiritually deficient. Show me the areas where I need to move up spiritually. Show me those areas where I need to upgrade my life spiritually. Show me the things I need to do with my life in order to be more sensitive spiritually. Show me what I need to do Lord in order to locate what belongs to me in you.'

For the young lady reading this book, your prayer for a husband will not be answered by God sending you a husband from heaven since there are no husbands in heaven. The husband or wife (for a man seeking one) is around on earth, probably in the vicinity where you are. The question then is, why have you not seen him or her? The answer is, because of 'spiritometer' issues. The spiritual meter or antennae may not be sharp, accurate or functioning correctly so, potential husbands and wives are unable to locate each other. The case is the same with the business or career person looking for financial or other forms of breakthrough. The fact is that they (the money etc) exist somewhere and right now, I prophesy upon you spiritual sensitivity. Receive the capacity to see God at work in your life. Receive the capacity to see exactly what you need to do in order to be spiritually alert and adjusted to be able to see what God wants you to see. I prophesy that upon you in Jesus' name.

Over twenty three years ago when God first brought me into contact with my wife to be in the university, I saw her zeal and passion for God. She evangelised in the mornings and in school buses. I then decided to begin praying for her for a marriage that would only enhance her calling in God. I prayed earnestly for God to give her a good husband. We were both around each other but I never saw her for myself as a potential wife (for reasons I can still not understand). You see, until God opens your eyes, you will never recognise those things around you that belong to you. For one reason or the other, they do not just occur to you as yours. That was my case. It is in line with the old Nigerian proverb that says: 'what you may be looking for in Sokoto (a distant North-western Nigerian town) may be in the pocket of your 'shokoto' (a traditional African wear)' Eventually, God asked me (after a while) to start praying for Him to open my eyes to know who would be my partner for life and ministry. I did and when the revelation began to come within the week, I said 'wao! Is she the one?' To be sure I was seeing and hearing correctly, I made no move until after six months.

Beloved, whatever it is you are trusting God for is never really far away. Those things that belong to your peace are never really far away, but it takes spiritual sensitivity which is the product of fervent spirituality. It was the absence of that quality, a bankruptcy of spiritual sensitivity that made the Inn-keeper to be such a loser – he was not aware of the arrival of God in his

life. He was not aware of his season of divine visitation, and when people miss their seasons of visitation, it takes a very long time, if ever, for the opportunity to come around again. Israel missed God repeatedly so they wandered in the wilderness for forty years, for a journey that should have lasted for at the most, 40 days.

It is a fact today that travelling by air from Egypt to Israel would take only 35 to 40 minutes of flight time. Even walking by foot will not take more than a few days to go from Egypt to Israel but it took the Israelites 40 years because of a lack of spiritual sensitivity that prevented them from learning and seeing whatever God was trying to teach or show them per time. You know, when lessons are not learnt, progress is never made. When lessons are not learnt, negative life cycles are repeated. When lessons are not learnt, life becomes a burden. For the Inn-keeper, the opportunity to honour, or host the master never seemed to come around again. It was an eternal loss.

That shall not be your portion in Jesus' name. Please do not forget this: your spirituality determines your sensitivity and your sensitivity determines your opportunity.

Key thoughts

When lessons are not learnt, negative life cycles are repeated. When lessons are not learnt, life becomes a burden.

You spirituality determine your sensitivity and your sensitivity determines your opportunity.

If you can fix it spiritually, everything else will fix itself.

Chapter Three

The Matter Of The Heart

A careful examination of our text would reveal that a second reason why the Inn-keeper failed to accommodate our Master at His birth and became such a loser was his lack of a compassionate heart. He lacked a heart for people – and I actually think that was central to all his other problems. He saw a

woman in labour probably at night (you remember our Lord's birth was announced to the Jewish shepherds at night), with the husband pleading for a place either for rest, delivery or both and he said, 'no.' I want you to see the kind of heart that could give such an answer! He must have said, 'madam' I am sorry, there is no space here.' I mean, the man had the heart to say, 'There is no space here!' to a woman at such a critical junction of life. May I ask you this question? Supposing you were about to board a vehicle and saw a pregnant woman still struggling to get in, what will you do? In all probability, you will step aside and say, 'madam, please go in.' Supposing again you were seated in a bus where people are standing and you spotted a pregnant woman also standing among the people, holding unto the hand rail, what will you do? You are most likely, as a normal-hearted human being, to get up and ask her to have your seat. That would be the most natural thing to do but not so with the Inn-keeper.

The callous man said there was no room. I believe that he could have evacuated one of the guests of the Inn saying, 'excuse me sir, there is an emergency here…' Worse still, if no room was available at all, he should have an office from where he worked. Even if he didn't have an office, he should have his personal sleeping place in the environment. He could have given up any of those for the distressed man and his anxious about-to-deliver wife to settle in. 'Please, get in, relax and feel free. I will give up my privacy for you and sit up for the night,' he could have said, but he didn't. That was what made him such a loser.

The truth is, we have so many people in our generation today who are like that man; they lack compassion – and the lack of compassion makes them lose out of their destiny. I can say that a 'zillion' times.

When you don't have a heart for people, you don't have a part with God. When you lack a heart for people, you will lack your place with God for life. The absence of compassion is the reason for the abundance of frustration on earth. The frustration happens both for those manhandled by the 'uncompassionate' and also for those manifesting the 'compassionless-ness'. You see, most people want to gain from others as much as they can without caring about the welfare of their victims.

Please don't forget this for as long as you live: your place or part with God

both in this world and that to come is connected to your heart for people. I counsel you to begin the journey of compassion today. Begin the journey of love today. Let God show you that to have a heart for people is to have a part with Him. My personal discovery is that compassion compels the unction or the anointing from God. Show me a man or woman who walks in compassion and I will show you one in whose life, the unction is manifested.

I am sure you are aware that the unction or anointing is nothing but the manifest presence of God. That means a compassionate person is a natural carrier of divine presence. It is clearer then why the Inn-keeper couldn't accommodate the presence of God – he didn't have a compassionate heart.

The summary of the matter is, a heart of compassion will qualify a person to be a carrier of divine presence, and to be a carrier of divine presence is to be a natural commander of authority in the realm of the spirit.

My counsel then is, move into the realm of compassion. Look at people with the eyes of love and put yourself in their shoes. Begin to do things with a consciousness of the realities both of God and heaven as well as the consciousness of human feelings. Do it and watch God change your life.

Sometime ago, I preached in church on the subject of love, and I encouraged the people to put into practice what they had learnt. Furthermore, I prophesied that the people would experience positive results and testimonies as they practice the love walk. A sister came back later to testify to the potency of the practice of love because of what she experienced when she decided to take God and His Word seriously. She said, when she left the church after the message that Sunday, she decided that she was going to practice the act of love.

She then went to one of the ladies in her neighborhood with whom she was not in good relationship - she was literally economical in her interaction with her. By virtue of her new decision, however, she exchanged pleasantries with her (previous enemy) who then said, 'a call just came to you from somewhere to report for work.' Do you understand? Before our sister went to meet her estranged neighbour to practice the teaching of love, she (her neighbour) had received a call on her phone for her – a favorable message. The question is, would she have volunteered the information – the good news - if they had

remained in their previous non-talking status? I don't think so. If they had continued their cat and rat existence as usual, in all probability, the good news would have come and gone, but reaching out in love changed everything – it brought out the information. Please don't miss out on life; don't miss out on destiny. There is no benefit in enmity. No benefit in animosity. There is no benefit in hostility. The lifestyle of bitterness, envy, malice and competitive jealousy leads nowhere. It profits nothing. A heart hardened against fellow human beings is the doorway to the loss of great possibilities and opportunities. It was a reason for the colossal loss of the Inn-keeper.

THE LOVE OF MONEY

The Bible makes it clear that evil is rooted in the love of money (1Tim. 6:10). I believe that was the case with the Inn-keeper; I believe that the third problem of the Inn-keeper that made him such a loser was probably the love of money – his love for money. I think he must have calculated the refund he would have had to make if he had asked any of his guests to vacate their room for the distressed Joseph and the heavily pregnant and anxious Mary.

The question is, if that man had known that it was God the Son that was coming in person to lodge at his Inn, wouldn't he have refunded everybody's money and cleared out all the rooms if possible, for the Master to be born in any of the rooms the parents wanted? You see, those who place gain ahead of good end their lives in pains and regrets. Many people put money ahead of people; ahead of relationship, and when you put money ahead of people, you may end your life mourning. Please, beware of those who put profit ahead of principles. Understand that making a difference is more profitable than making a living. Making a difference is more profitable in time and eternity than making a living (or income).

The question then is, what difference are you making in the lives of those God brings your way? What difference are you making in the lives of your siblings, neighbours, relations, husband or wife? As a person, my crucial question is, what difference am I making (or have I made) in the life of my wife? What difference have I made or am I making in the lives of those who listen to me? It is far more important to me than making an income. The truth is, I have never been anywhere before, where I asked people how much they

would pay me as honorarium before I preach. There are those who do it. I have not gone anywhere before where I was pre-occupied with how much will come to me at the end of the preaching. It is not part of my mindset. When I go before God in prayer before ministrations and in personal consecrations, the passion of my heart is how to make a difference in people's lives from which they never recover. I plead passionately for God to alter the direction of people's lives for good.

I have been to places in time past from where I flew back to base after ministrations before they had the time to give me an honorarium. I literally did not bother that there was an honorarium.

I have once travelled to South America for a preaching engagement and had to cut short my journey to meet up with an all-night ministration in a southern Nigerian city. When it appeared as if I was not going to meet up with the latter engagement because of flight unavailability to that destination the evening of the programme, I was ready to chatter a private flight at my own expense without asking for a refund. All because I had given my word that I was coming and I knew the people would be waiting to be impacted and imparted by God. God however graciously made a way and there was no need for extra expense.

I believe the Inn-keeper was a loser because money was probably given the greatest consideration in the things he did. Beloved, if you will put God first and begin to do things with the mind of making a difference in life and in your generation, you will not need to struggle for anything including money.

What is the summary of the reason for the monumental loss by the Inn-keeper?

i. Lack of spiritual sensitivity

ii. Lack of a compassionate heart

iii. Love for money.

What is going to be your prayer at this point? It should be:

Lord, help me to be more spiritually sensitive.

Lord, help me to both love you and love people more than I love money.

Lord, help me to re-adjust the principles of my life.

Lord, help me never to miss my day of visitation. Help me to be sensitive enough not to miss divine opportunities.

Lord, help me to love people like you love them, in Jesus' name.

I agree with you in prayer right now, and I decree that you shall not be a loser in Jesus' name.

Key thoughts

When you don’t have a heart for people, you don’t have a part with God.

Compassion compels the unction or the anointing from God.

Please don’t forget this for as long as you live: you place or part with God both in this world and that to come is connected to your heart for people.

Chapter Four

Thoughts From His Birth

One thing that is very striking about the birth of Christ (Christmas) is that it arrived with the manifestation of lights or insights. You know that one of the things that happened at His birth was that light came. Whether it was the star – a big light - which the wise men saw (Matt. 2:2) or the light which shone upon the shepherds (Luke 2:9), the birth of our Lord arrived and was announced with light. In Matthew 2:1-11, the Bible says,

1. 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,

2. 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.

3. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet

6. And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9. 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.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh (Matt. 2:1-11).

Also, read (Luke 2:7-14)

1. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

2. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

3. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

4. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

1. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

2. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

3. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:7-14).

From these bible texts (Matt. 2:1-11 and Luke 2:7-14), you can see that Christ's birth brought light, revelation and insight to humanity. When God decided to send His son, Jesus Christ, to the earth, what He intended doing was to flood the earth with light, insight and revelation.

So, we shall be looking at a couple of insights from the birth of our Lord but before then, I like you to take note of the following key thoughts:

1. The Son of God became the son of man

God the Son or the Son of God became the son of man so that the children of men can become the children of God. The Son of God became the son of man to make it possible for the sons of men to become the sons of God.

Also, what that means is, Infinite God became finite man. Now, for the Infinite God to become finite man shows that with God anything is possible. Like I have illustrated several times, it is the same as if an ocean entered a coke bottle; as if an ant swallowed an elephant. Incredible! The God that can't be measured; who is in heaven and whose footstool is the earth decided to enter into the body of a baby. What a mystery! Again, the meaning is that,

with God anything is possible.

1. Surrender is more important than experience.

When God needed someone to bring forth His child, He didn't go for an experienced woman - one who was familiar with child delivery. He went for an innocent virgin who was willing to surrender herself to the will of God. Virginity implies no experience. So the second key thought here is that, surrender is more important than experience. Surrender to God – not minding what you know or don't know - is more important than experience.

Availability and usability are more important than experience or ability. Being available for and being 'usable' by God are more important to Him than being able. Mary had no experience. Virginity also implies innocence or purity. Innocence has power. What that says is that, the power of innocence is stronger than the power of experience. The implication is, if you want to go far with God, you must discard your experience and provide innocence. Never prove to God that you know it all. Another thing to note here also is that, it is pure vessels that transmit divine virtue. In case you want to transmit the virtue of God to your generation, you must possess your vessel in purity. The purity of your vessel determines the flow of His virtue through you.

1. To qualify for the purpose of God, you must surrender your popularity.

In order for the son of God to be born, God went to an unpopular village to make use of an unpopular carpenter. That God literally went for a poor carpenter - an unknown carpenter to bring forth his son Jesus Christ into the world means that, He identifies with those who can never take His glory for themselves. In other words, to qualify for the purpose of God, you must surrender your popularity. That is our third key thought.

If God is going to do major things with your life, then you must come to the point where you will not take the glory. The question is, do you want to go far with God in life? Then, there would be the need for you to surrender whatever you can boast about. Those who struggle to make a name for themselves never go far with God. Think about it: God didn't go to the house of a Monarch or that of a popular millionaire to have His Son born. He went to a poor village, to the house of an unpopular man. What does that say to

you? It says: to qualify for the purpose of God, you must surrender your popularity.

1. With God, no level is too low to start in life.

Did you notice that the Master Jesus (the King of kings and Lord of lords) was born in a lowly manger where animals were raised? The lowest of all places any mortal man can be born because there was no room in the inn. What does that say? It says, with God, no level is too low to start from in life. That is our fourth key thought.

If the King of kings and the Lord of lords could start from a manger, then congratulations because it doesn't matter where you are right now and where you are starting from in life, there is a future.

Who gave birth to you is not as important as what was born inside of you. How you came into the world is not as important as what you become in the world. Where you are coming from is not as important as where you are going. So with God, no level is too low for anybody to start from in life. The truth is that, man's extremity is God's opportunity according to a wise man. Man's adversity is God's opportunity. When you are down to nothing, God is up to something. The way up is down.

Please understand that God is always attracted to the deficient and the depleted. Show me a person who is deficient and depleted; who is nothing in himself and who also is empty of everything; God is attracted to such a person. But for the man that is full of himself and full of his achievements, God is distant.

1. God is revealed to the fervent; not the slothful.

Scriptures make it clear that our Saviour was born at night. The bible said, where we read (Luke 2:8-10), that the shepherds were keeping watch over their flock at night, when the angel came to announce that the King of kings had been born. The question is: why was He born in the night? He was born in the night so that those who sleep can sleep and those who are awake can see. What that says to us is that God is revealed to the fervent; not the slothful.

Men and women who must experience God in their lives must be people that are awake spiritually; people who are alert spiritually. Those who slumber the slumber of prayerlessness and slothfulness never experience God. God's programme is always revealed to the diligent.

Show me a man or a woman who is diligent with life, diligent with duty, and I will show you a person that will partner with God in His purpose. What is clear is that the angel didn't go to shepherds that were sleeping. He didn't go to people that were lazying about. He went to shepherds on duty - and you know that God always does that. When it was time to call somebody who will deliver Israel (from captivity in Egypt), He went to the back side of the desert to get a man (Moses) who was on duty tending flocks. When He was going to call His disciples, He called those who were on duty, either fishing or mending their nets, or doing something else worthwhile. When he was going to call Gideon, He found him on duty, threshing wheat by the wine press. God's purpose is revealed to diligent people.

The lazier you are, the farther you will be from God's agenda. The more diligent you are, the more attracted you are to the purpose of God for your life.

In the next seven chapters, we shall turn our attention to a couple of major lights, insights and revelations that the birth of our Saviour brought to humankind:

Key thoughts

God is revealed to the fervent; not the slothful.

To qualify for the purpose of God, you must surrender your popularity

With God, no level is too low to start from in life.

Chapter Five

CHRIST CAME TO ALL (AND FOR ALL) AND SPEAKS IN THE LANGUAGE OF ALL

The bible reveals to us, two categories of people to whom God chose to announce the birth of His son. The first category comprised the wise men who were probably star gazers or astrologers from the East. They were obviously gentiles who had no dealings with God. The second category consisted of the Jewish shepherds who were watching over their flock at night. That is, God went to two extremes of the world. He went to the gentiles and went to the Jews. He went to the religious and went to the ungodly or pagans to reveal that something significant just happened in the world. What that says to you is that Christ came to all (and for all) and speaks in the language of all. This is the first major light or insight brought to us by Christ's birth. He came for both the Jews and the gentile; the religious and the irreligious; the wise and the ignorant; the whites and the blacks; the high and the low. All classes of human beings are included in God's package of redemption. Please understand today and forever that Jesus Christ does not belong to the Jews more than He does to the gentiles.

Christianity does not belong to the white more than it does to the black. Some people call Christianity the white man's religion and that is the lie of the devil to send humanity to the flames of hell. If God had wanted His redemption plan to be limited to the Jews, He would have revealed the birth of His Son only to the Jewish shepherds but he went across the boundaries of Israel. He went into the far east to maybe China, India or even the middle east to reveal to one extreme of people (the wise men), after He had revealed the same to another extreme of people in Israel (the shepherds). The aim is to show the world that He, the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him (Rom. 10:12). In summary, it is vital to note again that God does not belong to the Jew more than He does to the gentile, neither does He belong to the Greek more than He does to the Barbarian. He does not belong to the white more than He does to the black; neither does He belong to the male more than He does to the female. He does not belong to the old more than He does to the young. Jesus belongs equally to everybody. Get connected now!

It is very easy to see from our reference passages also that God speaks in the language of all. To the astrologers, He spoke the language of the stars (that is, He spoke through a star) – the language they understood. He used what they were familiar with to communicate with and to them. Conversely, He used an angel to communicate to the Jewish shepherds because they were familiar

with the ministry of angels. As a Jew, one must know about angels and angelic visitation.

He did not use the angel to speak to the wise men, neither did he use the star to speak to the shepherds. The shepherds will not understand the language of the stars; neither will the wise men understand the language of the angels. He spoke to everybody in the language each understood. What does that say to you? That God has a unique way of dealing with everybody. God has a unique way of relating with everybody. Every child of God has a unique pattern of dealing with God. The meaning of that to you is, never struggle (to achieve by all means) the same kind of experiences that someone else has with God.

Never struggle! For example, somebody may say, 'How I got to know who to marry was that God opened my eyes and I saw a screen, and the name of the person was written on the screen, and when I got up, I went and located my wife.' Then you are now here under severe stress and tension struggling to see a name written on the screen, in a vision in order to know who to marry. You know what? You may die a 'manchelor' (that is, a mature unmarried man – a chronic bachelor), waiting for such an experience. Someone else may say, 'I have a calling of God and God came to me in form of an angel and showed me my path of ministry,' then you decide, on hearing that, to wait for an angel to appear from heaven to reveal to you, your life's assignment.

The outcome of that may be that you have to wait in absolute frustration and futility until death. Never struggle for God to relate with you in exactly the same way that He relates with another person. I like to counsel you at this point to ask God to speak to you in the language that you understand. Ask Him to deal with you in the way that you will understand.

'Lord please don't speak to me through a star if I am a shepherd, and don't speak to me through an angel if I am a wise man; speak to me in the language that I understand.' That should be your prayer!

When I was a younger Christian before I became a pastor, I saw people who had very spectacular experiences with God. They had several experiences and could see several visions; I thought that they were superior to me because I had none of those experiences. I later realised however that there was a

sensitivity I had that many of them didn't have. As I grew further in the Lord, I realised that God will never be forced to deal with Moses the way he dealt with Abraham. If it was Moses, God would move through the rod. For Elijah, it was the mantle. Peter ministered through his shadow and Paul manifested God through handkerchiefs and aprons. Each one after his own order; the same God but with different operations and administrations.

Do you understand? You will begin to experience rest in your life the moment you discover that God has a unique way of dealing with you. There is something He wants to do with you that is different, and it shall be done in Jesus' name!

Chapter Six

IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE VERY NEAR, YET VERY FAR FROM GOD.

When you study our text carefully, you will notice that the Eastern wise men travelled from very far in search of the new-born Saviour whereas the people in whose land He was born were not aware. The message is simple: it is very possible to be very near yet very far from God. It is very possible to be very near yet very far from God. What that means is that, it is possible to be in church and yet be lost. It is possible to be in church and yet be far from God. It is possible to be a church worker and still be very far from God. That is the second major light and insight that the birth of Christ brought to us—that, it is possible to be a leader in church and yet be very far from God. As a matter of fact, it is possible to be called a pastor and yet be very far from God. If you doubt me ask Isaiah who was prophesying in Isaiah chapters1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and yet in chapter six, God was looking for whom to send. Another example is that of the old prophet in Bethel in 1Kings 13 who was on ground and yet God had to send a young prophet from Judah to come and carry out an assignment that the old prophet either failed to or could not carry out. It is possible to be near yet very far from God.

Apart from the Eastern astrologers and the Jewish shepherds, Bethlehem where Jesus was born was not aware that God the Son had arrived among them. Jerusalem was not aware; Israel was not aware that the God of Abraham (the God of their fathers) just came in the form of His son. Are you following? Even the priests in the temple were not aware. The high priest in

Israel at the time was not aware. Is it not a miserable thing for God to be doing new things in your generation and you are not aware? I mean for God to be doing something wonderful in your generation and He bypasses you is a sad situation. The question to ask under such a situation is, Lord, what did I do to be so uninvolved in your agenda? The question Israel should have asked God is, Lord, what did we do that you passed us and went all the way to the East to reveal to non-believers what you are doing in our midst? You know it is a fact that only very few people are ever aware of the plans and programmes of God for their lives.

When you think about the fact that God actually went to stargazers and astrologers, bypassing the majority of His own people – to communicate His plans, it calls for very great concern. The question then is, why should the sinners on the street be more in touch with divine revelations than the saints in the church? Why should a church member be more in touch with God than the pastor? The message then is, not everybody around God is with God; not everybody around God is hearing anything from God.

The point is, God has a lot of people around but He doesn't confide in them enough to tell them important things. What are you going to say to God at this moment? It should be, 'Whatever it will take you Lord, please don't bypass me. Don't let me be there Lord, and you are dealing with other people and not doing anything in my life.

There is an old song that goes,

Pass me not O gentle savior,

Hear my humble cry,

While on others Thou art calling,

Do not pass me by.

Saviour, Saviour, Saviour

Hear my humble cry.

While on others Thou art calling,

Do not pass me by.

It is possible right now for you to say Lord, I know you have great plans for my nation; I know you have great plans for my life. I know you have great plans for my family. Please reveal them to me; let me know your plan. Help me to be current. Tell me what it takes to be current with you.

You know, when you understand the time, you enter the realm of command. First Chronicles, chapter twelve and verse thirty-two reveals that the sons of Issachar were men that had understanding of the time to know what Israel was to do and as a result, their brethren were at their command. Do you want to be in command in life? Then you need to have an understanding of the times.

From all that we have seen so far, it is clear that there were people who were around the Master Jesus but didn't know who He was. There were people in Mary and Joseph's neighbourhood who didn't know who they were dealing with. There were probably people who played with the Master Jesus who didn't really know who He was.

The message then is, get into a closer, intimate relationship with the Master. Go beyond ordinary church attendance to experiencing the person for whom you came to church. Go beyond just having your name on the church register to coming to a point where you have a personal experience with the One you are calling your Lord and saviour.

Your prayer right now should be, 'Father, open my eyes to know what you are doing in my generation at this time. Lord, help me never to be left behind; never to be left behind in light. Lord, help me never to come to church and yet not know you; help me Lord, not to be so near yet so far. Lord, let me not to be lost in church; make me one of your close confidants: draw me closer to you Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Key thoughts

It is very possible to be very near yet very far from God.

The message then is, not everybody around God is with God; not everybody around God is hearing anything from God.

Chapter Seven

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS THE MOST AUTHENTIC MEASURE OF WISDOM.

Those who came to seek the Master from the East were referred to as wise men. What that means is, relationship with God is the most authentic measure of wisdom. To know God and to pursue him, that is wisdom. This is the third light or insight that the birth of our Master brought. It is wise men who seek Jesus. It is foolish men who seek their own ambitions. The way and manner you treat Jesus measures your wisdom. What you do with the king of kings and Lord of lords is a measure of your wisdom. Your prayer life is a confirmation of your wisdom. Your degree of seriousness in the study of your bible diagnoses your wisdom. The intensity of your spiritual life confirms whether you are wise or foolish. To know God and to pursue Him equals wisdom. Do you understand? Strong relationship with God is a confirmation of high level wisdom. The reverse is also true. A very poor relationship with God is a confirmation of low level wisdom. Please don't forget as long as you are alive that your wisdom is confirmed by the intensity of your pursuit of God.

You know that education is not synonymous with wisdom. Hence, an educated man is not necessarily a wise man. To be educated and not know God makes a person an educated fool. Similarly, an intelligent man is not necessarily a wise man. Anyone who is intelligent but does not know or pursue God is an intelligent fool. Being rich does not imply wisdom. A rich man who does not know God is a rich fool. (Luke 12:20). In addition, to be powerful outside of God makes a person a powerful fool. It is foolish powerfulness. Are you getting anything?

Furthermore, the action of the wise men (in our text) reveals that knowing about God alone is not what constitutes wisdom, but the pursuit of God, paying the price, leaving all behind and going the whole length to know him more and more. That is wisdom. You see, when the wise men saw the star, they didn't remain at home. They got up in search of the new born King, gave

it all it took until they located the place. They took off without knowing where they were going or how long it would take them to be back. That was reckless rascality but it paid off in the end. So, you can confirm your wisdom by the price you are willing to pay to go after God; to serve him; to love him and to live for him. The question right now is; how far are you ready to go with God? What cost are you ready to pay? That is what really validates your wisdom. Please understand, that the knowledge of scriptures alone does not confirm wisdom. There are people who are very vast in scriptures, but there is not a dime of sacrifice they are willing to offer for the course of God. Their relationship with God never cost them anything. They have never left their comfort zones to go for God.

The message of His birth is, be wise and pursue God. Join the company of the wise. Do not build on that which does not last. Join the company of the wise today and history will remember you both in time and in eternity for good--and that you didn't live a foolish life.

Make this confession now:

I refuse to be a fool. I refuse to pursue mundane things. I refuse to pursue things that won't last. I refuse to pursue things that can't stand the test of time. I am a wise person. I am pursuing the right things, In Jesus name.

Chapter Eight

NEVER ATTEMPT TO FINISH, IN THE ENERGY OF THE FLESH, WHAT WAS STARTED IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

After the wise men saw the star, they began the struggle to look for where the child was. They were probably asking questions for direction until they arrived at the house of Herod, and the wicked Herod said, 'Go and look for the child and If you find Him, let me know so I can also go and worship Him.' They were literally moving in confusion up to that point, but something very mysterious happened. The moment they got out of the house of Herod, the star went before them.

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. (Matt. 2:9-10).

It appears to me like the star disappeared when they were struggling in their strength. It seems like there are certain steps people take in life that cause divine direction to disappear. The fourth light or insight of His birth to you is: never attempt to finish in the energy of the flesh what was started in the power of the spirit. Again, never attempt to finish in the energy of the flesh what was started in the power of the spirit. Never try to finish what God started. The one who revealed the star must be allowed to direct your steps. Don't only believe him to be the alpha, also believe him to be the omega. Allow him to 'omega' what he 'alphaed'. Allow him to perfect what he initiated. Allow him to end what he began. Your prayer to God right now should be:

Finish what you started in my life oh Lord!

Many times people find themselves in the midst of frustration. They ask questions like, 'Didn't God show me something? Did God not give me a revelation? Why is it not coming to pass?' 'Why is it that what God showed me is not happening? The answer is simple; they are trying to complete what God started, and He has never given any man the power to complete what He starts. He is 'obadaciuos' and 'agidigbacious' (massive) enough to finish anything He started. He said, 'My glory will I give to no man. I don't want anybody to beat their chest and say I did it. If I started it, allow me to finish it.' Many times we are impatient with God, so we rush to complete what He started. Many times we are over excited, 'Oh! The revelation is so powerful', we say and then rush out to try and work it out in our own strength - and the outcome is absolute frustration.

Please, understand that the star that came did not only come to bring revelation, it also came to give direction. The star came first to bring a revelation, and what was the revelation? A King has been born, God the Son has just arrived in His world. It brought that revelation, but many people stop with the revelation, they don't press on for the second assignment of the star which is to offer direction. The star was also meant to lead the wise men to where the child was. However, they took the revelation and ran with it, and experienced so much frustration because they didn't have the direction.

For a clearer picture, see this scenario: God comes to a young man and says, 'I have an anointing for you. It is an apostolic anointing with an evangelistic dimension in healings, signs and wonders. I am going to be sending you to the nation of India to spark up a revolution there and destroy the three hundred and thirty million deities there by my power.' The next day, he goes to the Indian Embassy seeking visa to India. What? Next thing, his visa application is rejected.

Why? He failed to realise that what he had was a revelation. The direction was yet to come. God just told him what He wanted to do with him. He hadn't shown him the steps. He was too much in a hurry to understand that probably he was to embark on a lengthy fast, read certain biographies or autobiographies of great men of impact, go through certain trainings for ministry etc. He was so much in a hurry, that he got revelation without direction. And where there is revelation without direction, what you have is frustration. Revelation minus direction equals frustration, but revelation plus direction equals celebration.

After they got out of Herod's house and saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. They did not ask any questions again until they reached where the baby was by the direction of the star. From this moment, your days of confusion and frustration are over.

In conclusion, know that whenever you surrender your agenda, you connect His assistance. He is saying to you, 'You have been struggling so much, you have been trying so hard to see what man can do for you. If you surrender your own agenda, your own way of doing it, then you will be set for my assistance.' I see you step into the realm of divine assistance today, in Jesus' name.

Key thoughts

Never attempt to finish in the energy of the flesh what was started in the power of the spirit.

And where there is revelation without direction, what you have is frustration.

Chapter Nine

GOD NEVER ABANDONS HIS PEOPLE HALF WAY

God never abandons His people half way. He does not have abandoned projects. He who revealed the star will also reveal the end. He who brought Israel out of Egypt will take Israel into Canaan. He doesn't bring people out to leave them midway. He didn't show the wise men the stars to leave them stranded on the way. That was why the star re-appeared again. Please understand that nobody goes all the way with God and ends empty handed. When the wise men saw the star, they left their wives, children, family, businesses, pursuit of money etc. and began to look for where the King that was born was. Along the line, it looked like they missed their direction but God showed up at the end to link them to their destination. Beloved, nobody who believes in God ever ends in shame. Shame is never the portion of men and women who pursue God. No sir! I believe the relatives of this people may have been waiting to see them return unaccomplished. I could imagine what transpired when friends and relatives asked them (the wise men):

Relatives: ‘Where are you going?’

Wise men: 'We are looking for a star.’

Relatives: 'What star?'

Wise men: ‘A star we saw indicating the birth of a great King.'

Relatives: 'When will you come back?'

Wise men: 'We don't know'

Relatives: ‘Where particularly are you going?’

Wise men: 'We don't know.'

Relatives: 'How long will it take?’

Wise men: ‘We don't know.'

I believe that their relatives (and friends) may have thought that something was wrong with those men and must have been waiting to see the outcome of

such madness. Now, when they (the wise men) came to Bethlehem, the situation was not helped. The people of the land where the king was born were not aware. They searched in vain to locate the new born King and nobody was willing or ready to assist them – including the king of the land. You know there are times when a person may be so passionate about God and yet nobody is interested. I mean times when the things that excite you about God do not excite anybody. That was the point the wise men were. The matter was in fact worsened by the fact that at a point, even the star they saw at first couldn't be located anymore.

So there are times when even your original spiritual bearing may seem to be lost. The revelation and encounter that drove you into the pursuit of God may appear very faint. What do you do? What do you do when people can't understand your passion for God? What do you do when people are indifferent concerning what excites you? What do you do when it seems like you can't even trace God yourself anymore? What do you do when people are waiting to see you come back empty handed in your pursuit of God? The answer is, go forward! Keep moving! Don't look back. Don't look down in depression. Don't hang around with those who are hanging around. Just keep on moving. Victory is ahead. Victory is in the front, just ahead of you. The bible says in Hosea 6:1-3,

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Has God called you? Have you received a revelation from God? Have you seen a promise from the scripture? Is there something God spoke to you by prophecy? Does it look like it is not yet coming to pass? Don't go back, don't look back, don't hang around, move forward! Move forward!! Keep on moving even when people don't understand you! Keep on moving even when people are not willing to go with you! Keep on moving even when you cannot understand everything yourself! Just keep on moving!

Do you remember the blind man that they brought to Jesus at the pool of

Siloam? He (Jesus) took mud and blocked his eyes further (it was referred to as anointing), and said to him, 'Go and wash at the pool and come back and you will see.' (John 9:1-11). The response of the ordinary man would be, 'Me? I should go and wash? If I had eyes to see and move, would I come to you for healing?' Instead of asking such questions, he went, and the bible didn't record that somebody led him. He went and washed and came back, seeing. He moved even when he neither understood the action nor the instruction of the Master. He moved because vision is higher than sight. What the eyes of your heart sees is superior to what the physical see.

Please do not forget that God never abandons His people halfway, but to prevail with God, you must persist with Him. To prevail with God is to persist with God. Breakthrough is tied to persistence. In your spiritual activities: prayer life, study of the word etc. your breakthrough is tied to your persistence. Persist and prevail!

Key thoughts

The prosperity of your soul and spirit determines your life’s welfare.

Chapter Ten

SPIRITUAL BEHAVIOUR IS A FUNCTION OF SPIRITUAL REVELATION

When the wise men came, they saw the baby and the mother and what did they do? Do you remember what they did? They fell down and worshipped Him. What! Mature adults from a very distant land lying on the floor; worshipping a baby? Can I please ask you a sincere question? When you see a mature adult today lay prostrate before a baby; a breast feeding baby, worshipping him and the baby is not talking or responding, what would you say happened to the man? Madness, right?

You know, the wise men didn't even care about the mother or the father of the baby. Their only interest was the baby who they came to worship because only they knew what they saw. Do you know the meaning of that? Spiritual behavior is a function of spiritual revelation. The reason we don't behave alike is because we haven't seen alike. Spiritual behavior is a product of

spiritual revelation. Revelation is the fuel for reverence. Deep revelation brings deep reverence. Deep revelation will produce unusual, abnormal, un-understandable behavior.

When you see me, you may feel that I am a radical for God. The reason you feel like that is that you haven't seen what I have seen otherwise you too will be equally 'radicalised.' Imagine these mature adults (the wise men) arriving and bowing down before a child – worshipping Him. That could only be a product of deep revelation. You see, the deeper your revelation, the less your concern for human opinion. What people feel about your church going or worship of God becomes immaterial because they haven't seen what you saw. The deeper your revelation of God, the less will be (or the lower) your carefulness in behavior. A point will come where people may actually think that you have gone mad. They may begin to reason among themselves, 'Is he not an educated man? What has happened to this gentle man?' What happened to this educated man?' The answer is, he saw something! Personally, I am naturally a gentle man so much so that in my sixth year in medical school, I won the Gentle Man of the year award of my set. However, when it comes to spiritual matters, I lose gentility especially on issues dealing with the devil. I lose all gentility!

Now, why is it that people are very concerned about what others think of them? - Very careful about people approving them; about human opinion; about convenience; etc. Why are people so concerned and careful about what people feel or don't feel about their spiritual convictions and actions? It is because they haven't seen anything. Beloved, it is time for you to ask God to reveal Himself to you. Ask Him to show you what He showed people like Paul the apostle. Ask Him to show you what He showed a person like Isaiah and many of the prophets of old. Then you will lose every trace of gentility and act in a way that will cause people to wonder. What the wise men saw uprooted them from their native land and nothing could stop them until they located the child. They lay prostrate before the baby in worship the moment their search ended. They saw a child and called Him the king of the Jews. All that was the product of what they saw before they left their land. Will you at this point again ask God to help you to see things that will move you to the realm of the unusual? Will you ask Him to deliver you from every trace of fleshly limitations? Do so!

You know one day, the army of the Midianites surrounded Elisha and were about to hit him. His amour bearer or Personal Assistant was shaking like a leaf shaken by the east wind. He said, 'Alas! My master we are surrounded.' He was shaking but his master was calm. After he shook like that for a while he said, 'Master, are you not troubled that people have surrounded us?' (Emphasis Mine). Elisha however said, 'Lord, open his eyes to see what I see. Open his eyes; let him see.' (2Kings 6:18 paraphrased). The bible says that God opened the eyes of Gehazi, and he saw the mountain surrounded by horses and horse men of fire. Many times, you shake when you hear some news or dreamt a dream only because you haven't really seen something you need to see. I prophesy upon your eyes today, they are opened. From this moment they cease to be ordinary eyes; they become supernatural eyes. They will see what others can't see in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a new day for you! May your spiritual behaviour change. May you arrive at a realm where your behavior will begin to command your results in Jesus' name.

Many times, in the course of deep worship, you may notice someone stand aloof, uninvolved, apathetic. I mean the kind of worship where others are either prostrate on the floor, kneeling or even weeping. What could be wrong with the indifferent individual? The answer is lack of insight, revelation and understanding regarding the Almightiness of God. The summary so far is, behavior is a product of revelation.

Key thoughts

Vision is higher than sight.

To prevail with God, you must persist with Him. To prevail with God is to persist with God. Breakthrough is tied to persistence.

Your level of sacrifice determines your level of success in life.

Chapter Eleven

THE SURRENDER OF SELF MUST OCCUR BEFORE THE SURRENDER OF THINGS

You will notice that when the wisemen located the new born king, they fell

down and worshipped him before they opened their treasures and brought out things. Before they ever gave the gold, the myrrh and the frankincense, they bowed before Him. That says that the surrender of self is before the surrender of things. The surrender of self is superior to the surrender of things. God is more interested in who you are than in what you have. Before He takes anything from your hands, He wants to have your heart. He is more interested in your heart than in your things. You know, there are many people today who are busy giving God several things. They give God their time and energy in kingdom service, always busy in church with one assignment or the other. They give God their financial resources towards one project or the other (and that is not bad), but they never give God their lives. Never! I have seen an usher before, who abandoned his wife and children in the village, came to the city of Abuja, took another lady as his wife but was still functioning in church as an usher. I also heard of a whole family – father, mother, children in the ushering department of a church whose family business was that of stealing church money, returning home and determining how much they made that day.

A whole family on the way to hell! You see, people can give God many things but not themselves. God does not really own such people. In their lives, He doesn't have the final say; there is no instruction of His that they obey. He does not have the stamp of finality on their lives. Paul the apostle once said, 'Let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the brand marks of Jesus.' (Gal. 6:17 paraphrased).

You know, when you see a shoe made in Italy, the name is there. When you see one made in the US, the name is there as well. When you see an African you know he's an African; when you see a woman, you know she's a woman. Paul, the apostle was saying in essence, On my body is written; “made for Christ”. There is a mark on my body that makes me unmistaken.

You can't see me and think I am an unbeliever. I have been marked for God: made for God, by God, in God The fact is, when God owns you, everyone including your enemies can see the mark. Your boss in the office can see the mark. Both those who love you and those who hate you have at least one point of agreement and that is: 'This one belongs to God.' Sadly however, the case is not true of many Christians today. There are many whose friends

cannot confirm who they are. Worse still, there are many others whose wives or husbands can't even confirm who they are. Many bosses can't verify the Christian identity of their 'Christian' subordinates. You know in ancient times, slaves were often labeled using the initials of their owners such that when they got into the city, everyone could tell to whom the slave belonged. I believe it was that kind of mark Paul the apostle was referring to. I believe it was the same principle the wise men operated – the first thing they did was to give themselves and then their things followed.

In summary, God is saying, before your things, I need you. Hand Me your life, give Me your heart, let Me brand you. Understand that until your life is surrendered to God, your gift is not acceptable to Him You can ask Cain. God never accepted his gift. You see, human beings can be confused by human actions but God can never be. God can never be confused by sacrifice, offerings or any other effort that is devoid of total surrender of life. He can never be confused and He can never be compromised. He is saying, 'It doesn't matter what you give me, if you haven't given me yourself, it means nothing.' As we proceed to the next insight, please do not forget that the surrender of self is superior to the surrender of things. That is the seventh light we see from Christmas.

Key thoughts

When lessons are not learnt, negative life cycles are repeated. When lessons are not learnt, life becomes a burden.

Your spirituality determines your sensitivity and your sensitivity determines your opportunity.

It is when you give your best that you live at your best.

Chapter Twelve

TO RECOGNISE HIM AS LORD IS TO RELEASE TO HIM YOUR BEST

The bible says that the wise men opened their treasures. The real worship of God makes you to have nothing to hide; nothing to cover; nothing to conceal; nothing to withhold from Him. They opened their treasures. The meaning is,

to recognise Him as Lord is to give Him your best. So when He is your Lord, you open up for Him and to Him your life. That is, the innermost parts of your life; the things you will never share with any mortal human being; things nobody ever knows or has heard from you; He will hear them from your mouth. The wise men gave their best: the gold, the frankincense and the myrrh. Please note that, God is not looking for the rest from you but the best of you. If you will not give Him the best, don't give at all. God always goes for the very best. For example, when He wanted a womb to bring His Son to the world, what kind of womb did He go for? A virgin womb! When He rode to Jerusalem in His triumphant entry, what kind of donkey did He go for? It was a donkey that no man had ever sat on (Mark 11:2). He didn't get a second hand donkey.

Even in His burial, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea where He was laid was a tomb in which no man had ever been buried (Mtt. 27:60). Please, don't give to Him whatever is second best – second best resources, energy, wisdom or talent. The sad thing is that people give the best of their intelligence to their work places and offices but never deem it fit to give the same or even more to God in the service of the Kingdom. If your church has a television ministry, educational institution, or whatever specialised arm your church operates, and you truly belong in that church and you are an expert in your field, you are duty bound to give that assignment a wisdom better than the wisdom you have ever given any secular institution under heaven. Personally, God being my witness, the energy I am giving ministry today, I never gave it to any secular endeavour. I have never given this kind of energy to anything under heaven. I study the bible more than I studied medical books, God is witness. I read through my medical books once or twice and that was enough to go in for any exam and succeed, but not so with the Bible. Beloved, God is saying, 'Give me your best. Open your treasure. Don't just take the one on the top; empty it. It is possible that you have been giving God your time, energy and resources, but has it been your best? The summary of what God is saying is, first give me your self and then give me your best. When you do that, He responds to you accordingly.

In conclusion, I am sure that you know the implication of those gifts: the gold, frankincense and myrrh. The gold was the symbol of His royalty and prosperity. The frankincense was what the priests used in offering incense to

God. So, it was given to confirm His priesthood ministry. What about the Myrrh? Myrrh was what they used in the bible days to embalm dead bodies: it was a confirmation of His status as the sacrificial lamb who will give His life for the world. So they came to identify and celebrate Him as king, priest and sacrificial lamb. Will you celebrate him as the king of your soul? Will you celebrate Him as the High priest of your life? Will you celebrate Him as a Lamb of God that taketh away your sins? Go ahead and do so!

Chapter Thirteen

GOD IS LOVE AND LOVE GIVES THE BEST

At this point, we shall turn our attention to the message of Christ's birth as it practically applies to our lives as children of God. 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:…' Isaiah 9:6

‘ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Joh 3:16

The birth of Christ clearly came to communicate the love nature of God the Father. 1John 4:8 makes it even clearer that God is love: 'He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.' Christ would not have come into the world but for the loving nature of our Father.

Now, how does that affect you and me? God made us in His Image and Likeness. And if His nature is love, then love is the essential nature of man. We cannot be who we are meant to be on earth until love becomes our lifestyle. We cannot reach our full potential in God and reach our destination in time and eternity until we walk in love. We cannot walk with God until we walk in love because two cannot walk together except they be agreed—Amos 3:3.

Also, it is important to note that the more we walk in love, the more like God we become. The gift of Christ came to instruct us to begin to love as God loves. The more you walk in love, the more like God you become and the more victory we will experience on the earth.

WALKING IN LOVE MAKES YOU 'UNMOLESTABLE!'

Furthermore, the more like God you become, the more authority you manifest on the earth. For instance, God can never be diagnosed of cancer neither can He ever be a victim of witches and wizard or of scarcity and iniquity! That means, if you can acquire God's nature (the nature of love), then you will walk in a degree of Divine nature that will cause you to be 'unmolestable' by any devil!

LOVELESSNESS EQUALS LIFELESSNESS!

Don't forget this for as long as you are alive: a loveless life is a defeated life; it is also a godless and lifeless life. Show me a person who is filled with bitterness, unforgiveness, petty jealousy and malice, and I will show you a person who is living a lifeless life. The truth is, spiritual activities are futile where love is absent! That means, prayer; fasting, church attendance, reading and quoting the Bible won't work where love is not at work! If for instance, somebody is fasting for seventy days but does not talk to his neighbour, or he comes to church anytime the church doors are open and yet he is not in talking terms with his father or mother; or if he has passed through all the Bible trainings in the world and still does not greet the next person seated by him in church. All those spiritual activities are useless, meaningless and unprofitable because he lacks love!

THE ABSENCE OF LOVE IS THE REASON FOR FRUSTRATIONS!

1 Cor. 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.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.

Nothing works where love is not at work. That is why many Christians suffer frustrations and are victims of so much satanic activity, but you can deliver yourself right now by walking in God's nature—love.

So, if you want your prayers, fasting, church attendance, service and sacrifices to work, then you must work them by walking in love.

I pray for you right now for the grace to love like God loves in Jesus' name!

A LIFE OF LOVE PUTS YOU IN CHARGE OF THE EARTH!

Don't forget what we have said so far: that the birth of Christ shows us that God is love, and what that means to you is that since God made you in His image, the more you walk in love, the more like Him you become and the more victory, mastery, authority and audacity you will both experience and manifest on the earth! I believe that equation is clear enough. Let's proceed.

LOVE GIVES

The second message of Christ's birth to us at this point is that love gives. God is love and love gives. This was demonstrated in the fact that He so loved the world, that he gave…. (John 3:16a). It has been said over and over again that it is possible to give without loving, but it is never possible to love without giving. What that means is that someone could give you something because of an ulterior motive but nobody can truly love and not give because love gives!

UNTIL YOUR LOVE IS EXPRESSED, RESULTS ARE NOT EXPECTED

The act of giving is what gives expression to love. Love has to be expressed for its result to be experienced; it has to be expressed in order to transform a person's life. That is why I said that until your love is expressed, results are not expected. Of what use for example is a song that was not sung? Likewise, of what use is a message that was not preached? And what is the use of an aircraft that just kept taxing on the tarmac without taking off? That is how useless love in the heart is, when it is not expressed.

LOVE LACKS MEANING UNTIL IT IS EXPRESSED BY GIVING!

Some men claim that they love their wife and children but it has never shown in the lives of those women and children! Note this: love is nothing until it is expressed, and the expression of love is in giving! When you love, you give

something. For instance, if you love the Lord, you will give Him something. Likewise, when you love a person, you will always be moved to give that person something.

THINGS THAT YOU CAN GIVE

It is important to understand that giving is not limited to money. It includes your prayer, wise counsel, material and financial resources, etc. So, don't say you love when nothing is leaving your direction towards the person that you claim to love.

LOVE GIVES THE BEST

The third message of Christ's birth to us is that love gives its best.

John 3:16

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

Love does not just give, it gives the best! That is why it is one thing to give and it is another to give your best. I want you to note that it is when you give your best that you live at your best. When we give our best in our love relationship with God, our friends and loved ones, is when we live at our best.

TO GET THE BEST, YOU MUST GIVE THE BEST!

Many have given but didn't see results because they haven't given their best. They gave their time, talents and treasures, etc, to God but it was not their best. Even in their relationships with people, they give what they can but not the best and that is why they are also yet to get the best out of their relationships.

For instance, some people say marriage is 50/50, that is, the man will love 50 percent while the woman will bring her own 50% love to make the marriage work, but it is not so because the Bible said a man—100% man—would join a woman—100% woman—and the two of them shall become one! (Gen

2:24). Therefore to say that marriage is 50/50 is wrong because it means that half and half is to come together but that is not what the scripture says.

So, a man should give his wife the best— the best of himself, his affection and resources. Likewise, the woman should give her best to her husband. When that is done, they will get the best out of their union. The same applies to parents and their children. When parents give the best of their wisdom, counsel and spirituality to their children, they will see the best out of those children.

GIVE THE BEST; NOT THE REST

Some time ago, I wanted to give out something and somebody tried to restrain me because that thing was so good and precious and in reply, I said something like: 'That is why I want to give it out.' God told Abraham: 'Give Me your son, your only son, Isaac, the best you have.' (Gen 22:2 Paraphrased). What that means to you and me is that God desires for us to give Him the best. The question then is, when it is time to give, what do you give? Your best or the rest? I want you to note that in order for us to begin to see the best of life, we must give the best out of our lives.

Christ's birth came to tell us that love gives the best. If you are a parent, I challenge and admonish you to please begin to give your best to your children. Begin to give your best to your parents (or parent figures), spouse, boss at work and to your employees if you're an employer of labour.

Don't stop there; let it flow to those who look up to you and finally, come to the point where you don't know how to give anything that is not your best. That is the third message from the birth of Christ.

Key thoughts

Nothing works where love is not at work.

When it is time to give, what do you give? Your best or the rest? I want you to note that in order for us to begin to see the best of life, we must give the best out of our lives.

Don’t say you love when nothing is leaving your direction towards the person that you claim to love.

Chapter Fourteen

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE, YOU MUST GIVE THE BEST TO LIFE

God gave the best to get the most. Let me explain what I mean by that. There was a time that God had only one Son (John 3:16), but He decided to release that Son to get many sons to glory.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10).

… but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

1. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

(Rom 8:15b-16)

So, you and I are children of God just because God decided to give His best to get the most out of humanity.

What this means to you is, if you want to see your purpose on earth come to pass, you must give out your best. Come to a point where you give out your best at all time. If God gave His best in order to achieve His purpose of reconciling man back to Him, then giving out your best is the key to achieving anything you intend to achieve in life—be it in your walk with Him or in the work of your hand.

YOUR LEVEL OF SACRIFICE DETERMINES YOUR LEVEL OF SUCCESS IN LIFE.

Bishop David Oyedepo said: 'You can't get more out of life than you are willing to put into it.' In computer language, they say garbage in; garbage out, and so in everything you do, please note that your level of sacrifice

determines your level of success in life.

THERE IS A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR SACRIFICE AND YOUR SUCCESS

There was a time in our lives when my wife and I embarked on a spiritual exercise. I was so desperate for God, for his power and Presence that I decided to embark on a long term prayer and fasting schedule and when I told my wife about it, in her customary manner, she said: 'Let's go, I'll join you,' and so, the fast started. One year came and passed and the journey was still on, until we realised that it was almost one and half years since we tasted anything before a certain time of the day. Now, that was a sacrifice, a pressure and a push to get somewhere, and thank God for His mercies, our lives and ministry have not remained the same since then. The point is, there is a direct relationship between your sacrifice and your success in life.

SACRIFICE IS THE SECRET OF SATISFACTION

Nothing significant can be achieved in life without sacrifice because it is the secret of satisfaction and fulfillment in life. God had a plan to reconcile humanity to Himself, but it could not be achieved without sacrifice. So beloved, to get maximum satisfaction out of life, sacrifice is required.

PEOPLE WHO TAKE THINGS EASY NEVER SEE EASE IN LIFE!

The Bible said: Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion (Amos 6:1a). What that means to you is, people who take things easy never see ease in life. A wise man, Zig Ziglar, said: 'Life is easy on those who are hard on themselves.' By implication, it means, life is hard on those who take it easy in everything. The same rule applies to spiritual matters as well. It has been confirmed that there can be no victory spiritually without warfare. That is why spiritual victory is not for lazy people.

For instance, it takes spiritual hard work to come to a point in your life where you rise above spiritual afflictions like being forced by witches to do the undesirable in the dream or being plagued by nightmares! Again, coming to a point in your life where the devil is running while you are pursuing (and not the other way round) is not attained by cheap work. It requires spiritual

alertness and a very aggressive heart that is stuffed with revelation from the Word of God. Halleluiah!

So, the birth of Christ came to say that to get the most out of life, you must give the best to it. Therefore, moving to another level of success and results in your life requires a new level of sacrifice.

A HIGHER LEVEL OF SACRIFICE PRODUCES SPEEDY RELEASE OF EXPECTATION

Remember the story of Hannah? She had been going to Shiloh annually and sacrificing animals but didn't see result because her sacrifice was not costly enough. Then she told God something like: 'God, I now want to move to a higher level of sacrifice. If you give me a male child, I will give him back to you as a prophet.' (1Sam 1:11 Paraphrased). It appears to me like God replied her and said: 'Good! Now you have moved higher to another level of sacrifice, therefore, your result will be speedily released.' That change in the level of sacrifice changed Hannah's life forever.

Again, Solomon offered a thousand burnt sacrifices and the moment he did that, God appeared and said: 'What do you want?' (1Kings 3:4-5). I want to believe that he had been praying before now but nothing happened. However, immediately he offered his sacrifices, God appeared—personally! What that means to you is that sacrifice in your prayer life, study of the Word of God, personal development, etc, facilitates a speedy release of your expectations.

SACRIFICE: THE KEY TO DISTINCTION

I heard the story of a man who was interested in playing football but was told that his physical body size was not ideal for playing the game, but he refused to give up. He decided to wake up at 2am every day and do all manner of workout till 5am. After a very short time, he attained the body size required for the game and further became a star because he was willing to sacrifice. If such a sacrifice could be put in to achieve an earthly mundane result, how much more necessary would it be for one to sacrifice and see eternal results.

WHEN YOU GIVE LIFE ALL YOU'VE GOT, YOU'LL BECOME ALL YOU WERE CREATED TO BE!

Average people work between eight to nine hours a day, high impact people work for twelve hours and above while those at the peak of their professions put in nothing less than sixteen hours! Some people in the last category even put in up to eighteen solid hours' work per day and so they don't sleep like others do, neither do they lazy about like others. They give life everything they've got in order to become what God wants them to be! You can do likewise.

THEY GAVE THEIR BEST AND BECAME THE BEST

Let me tell you about Wilma Rudolph. She was born with bilateral pneumonia and scarlet fever; and to worsen the issue, she caught polio as an infant and became crippled! Her prognosis was so terrible that the doctors gave her only a year to live. She was a Christian and from a Christian family and so by divine intervention, she exceeded the doctor's deadline and lived beyond a year, but during her growing up years, they had to fix metal braces from her waist down to her legs because she had developed bilateral clubbed foot which made her walk crookedly.

She came from a large family of twelve and when it was time to eat, everybody ran to the dining table and she was always the last to get there. That condition also made them visit a doctor every year and when she was twelve, as they were driving to the doctor's place, she said to her mother: 'Mummy, one day I will leave this little village and go into the world and you will hear about me!' So, when they returned home, she removed the metal braces and began to force her legs to walk! Usually, polio legs appear as if they would break but she did that determinedly for one full year and instead of breaking, the muscles of her legs began to develop! The next time she went to see the doctor, he asked her what she had been doing. Scared, she began to apologise but the doctor quickly reassured her that whatever she had been doing was working and that she should keep at it, and so she continued.

She went to secondary school, still forcing her legs to walk but she wasn't about to stop daring things. She went to the basket ball coach and indicated her interest in playing the game! I believe the must have coach looked at her in amazement and said: 'Play basket ball with which leg?' Eventually, she was given the chance to play and guess what? In the course of her playing, her coach realised that there was something else that she was doing better —

running! So, this previously crippled girl was introduced to field and track (running). She so excelled at it that she was chosen to go and do 100 and 200meters dash in a sports competition!

Long story made short, in 1964, she began to prepare for the Olympics. Her preparation included waking up at 5am every morning and running round the track for about eight hours! Her hard work paid off in that year's Olympic race as she became the first person and first woman in history, to win three Olympic gold medals at once! She won them from doing 100 and 200 meters dash and then from doing 4/100 meters relay race as an anchor woman.

So, the sickly, crippled child became a renowned track and field runner because she made up her mind that she was not going to live with her former identity, and then she went ahead and sacrificed everything that was required for her to become what she wanted to be. What that says to you is, to the extent you are willing to sacrifice, to that extent you are willing to succeed.

Let me round off this chapter by telling you about Les Brown. Les Brown and his twin brother, Wesley, born on 17 February 1945, were abandoned in a story building in Liberty City, Miami-Florida in USA. Fortunately, a 38 year old single woman, Mamie Brown happened to pass by that building and probably heard the babies crying, carried and trained them as her own. It was from her that they got the 'Brown' as surname because they never knew any of their parents.

Wesley made up his mind that life was not fair and so he squandered it drinking, smoking and living a profitless life. The other one, Les Brown, made up his mind that he was going to do everything possible to become somebody despite his background. In the fifth grade, he was mistakenly declared 'educably mentally retarded' and placed back in the fourth grade and later failed the eighth grade due to his inattention to school work, his restless energy and his teachers' failure to recognize his true potential. He was referred to as 'D. T.' for 'Dumb Twin.' The label and stigma severely damaged his self-esteem for many years.

Mamie Brown's belief in her son's ability to achieve whatever he set his mind to achieving made a difference in Les' life. He said, 'Her strength and character are my greatest inspiration, always have been and always will be.'

Today, Les Brown is a recipient of The Council of Peers Award of Excellence, the highest honour of the National Speakers Association. Les Brown rose from a hip-talking morning DJ to a broadcast manager; from a community activist to a community leader; from a political commentator to a three–term state legislator in Ohio; he speaks to presidents of nations and corporations. He has preached in various conferences including T.D Jakes' conferences. Why? He made up his mind to be successful and he didn't stop there. He worked hard and sacrificed to become what he is today. That is why he says: 'When life knocks you down, make sure you land on your back because if you can look up, you can get up.' /Lesbrown.org/lesbrown.com/. In other words, to him that is joined to the living, there is hope and a living dog is better than a dead lion. Beloved, if you can look up, you can get up but it is by your willingness to sacrifice.

DEMAND MORE FROM YOURSELF!

I want you to begin to demand more from yourself than what you are currently demanding. If God could give His only begotten Son to redeem you, what have you personally sacrificed to ensure that your life's purpose comes to pass? What have you sacrificed in your relationship? What have you sacrificed in your relationship with your spouse, children and loved ones? What is your level of sacrifice? It determines the level of your success in time and eternity.

Don't forget what we have said so far, that the birth of Christ came with a message that says God is love; love gives; it gives the best, and to get the most of life, you must give the best to life.

Lift your hands and give God the praise for the insights you have just received so far.

Key thoughts

There can be no victory spiritually without warfare.

Nothing significant can be achieved in life without sacrifice because it is the secret of satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

You can’t get more out of life than you are willing to put into it.

Chapter Fifteen

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

All over the world, people celebrate Christmas – both those who know its meaning and those who don't. Many years ago, my wife and I travelled to a South-East Asian country in November and we were amazed that the city was ablaze with Christmas decorations. Now, this was basically a Buddhist nation (that is probably one percent Christian) celebrating Christmas from November! Their streets were already heavily decorated with Christmas lights without really knowing what they were celebrating!

Again, while in secondary school, one of my classmates was boasting about how much immorality he committed on a Christmas day. Why? He lacked the understanding of what Christmas is all about so in this concluding chapter, I will be sharing with you the real essence of the birth of Christ—Christmas.

Christmas is the celebration of the birthday of the One Who was perfectly God and yet became man—God the Son descended and became man so as to give man the opportunity to ascend and acquire the Divine nature. His birth made it possible for God to reach out to man and for man to reach out to God. That is why Jesus is the junction between Divinity and humanity, and it is His birth that we celebrate at Christmas.

Again, we celebrate the One Who never got a university degree and yet, countless professors have been awarded professorship for studying Him and what He said. He never wrote a book but there is no library in this world that would be able to accommodate the volumes that have been written concerning Him and His sayings. Note that it has been confirmed that the Bible is the number one best seller of all times!

We celebrate the birth of the Man Who never studied Medicine or built a hospital but has done (and is still doing) more to relieve human sufferings and afflictions than all the Neuro-surgeons, Cardiothoracic surgeons, paediatricians and orthopaedic surgeons of all generation! We are talking about Jesus the resurrected Lord!

He didn't spend much time on earth (only 33 years), but His foot marks have remained on the sands of time and eternity and generations yet to come will never forget Him. At age twelve, He began to study aggressively for ministry which started at age thirty and lasted for only three and half years, but it was a three and half years that has spanned eternity!

CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE ONE WHO IS FOUND IN EVERY HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

We celebrate the birthday of the Man who transverses every realm of human endeavour— in Astronomy (the study of stars, planets and galaxies), He is called the Bright and Morning Star. In Geology, He is the Rock of all ages and in Zoology, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world as well as the Lion of the tribe of Judah!

In Electricity, He is the Light of the world. In food and nutrition, He is the Bread of life and the Water of life. In Medicine, He is the Balm of Gilead and the Great Physician. In Law, He is our Advocate with the Father and the Judge that is coming to judge the whole world. In architecture and building, He is the Stone that the builders rejected that has become the Head Corner Stone! In animal husbandry, He is the Chief Shepherd. In the military workforce, He is the Captain of the host of the Lord's army and in Geography, He is the way. In Philosophy, He is the Truth while in Botany, He is the Seed of the Sower and the corn of wheat that falleth to the ground that must die!

In information technology, He is the One in Whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! In Accountancy, He is the One before Whom everyone must render the account of their lives. In Politics and governance, He is the King of kings, the Lord of lords and the soon coming King.

Lift your right hand and give my God and your God, sixty seconds of praise! He is worthy to be glorified and celebrated, and He alone is the reason for the season!

CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE HUMAN LAW SUSPENDER

At Christmas, we celebrate the birthday of the One Who went into every realm of life and suspended their laws.

LAWS OF REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY SUSPENDED!

He went into biology and suspended the laws of reproductive biology. The law says the male seed must meet with the female seed before a child can be conceived and delivered but it appeared as if Jesus said something like: 'I set aside that law because I Am the Master of biology!' He went ahead to be born without the meeting of a man and a woman!

LAWS OF ENZYMATIC REACTIONS SUSPENDED!

He went into the realm of Chemistry and Pharmaceutics and suspended the laws of enzymatic reaction. He proved to the world that wine can come out of water without any enzymatic reaction and that H20 can become C6H12O6 without any chemical reaction! That is the One we celebrate at Christmas!

LAWS OF DEMAND AND SUPPLY YEYERIZED!

He went into economics and 'yeyerized' (made useless) the laws of demand and supply. He mesmerised that law by feeding over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish! (Matt 14:19-21). Supply was not enough and yet demand was overwhelmed—that, to me, was a major messing up of the law of demand and supply!

THE LAW OF GRAVITY HUMBLED!

He went into the realm of aeronautics and 'uselessized' (rendered useless) the laws. The Newton's law of universal gravitation and the law of gravity summarized, infer that whatever goes up must come down, but He rendered useless those laws by resurrecting and ascending to heaven against gravity! No force could pull Him down! Halleluiah! Beloved, we serve a God and Master that cannot be trapped by any law of man.

LAWS OF FLOATATION HUMILIATED

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of the One Who went against the laws of

floatation and Archimedes principle. He did that by walking on water, which is contrary to the Archimedes principle that states that: a body immersed in a fluid is buoyed up by a force equal to the weight of the displaced fluid. This principle, also known as the law of hydrostatics, applies to both floating and submerged bodies, and to all fluids. But He walked on water and there was no displacement of an equal volume of water. He stood on it and the water had no other option but to be solid! That is the God we serve, and it is His birth that we celebrate at Christmas!

WE CELEBRATE THE ONE THAT no devil CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT!

We are talking about the One that the devil and all his agents put together can do nothing about; neither can any law on earth hold Him down! So, I have good news for you and it is the fact that Jesus is about to make a difference in your life! The Master with the master key, Who can do and undo is about to cause a positive change in your life! When men rule, He over rules and as such, there is nothing anybody can do about the change that He is about to make in your life!

BARRICADES ARE INCONSEQUENTIAL TO HIM!

One day, when He wanted to enter a house, the door was shut and He simply passed through the wall into the house! (John 20:19,26) It looks to me like He said: 'If you close the door, I'll pass through the wall; I don't need the door because I am the Way, the Truth and the Life!'

Go ahead and surrender your life to Him in adoration. He is the reason for the seasons of our lives. He is our reason for living. 'We worship You Son of the living God, wonderful Man of Galilee; You have conquered over and over again! We love You Jesus!'

VERY VERY IMPORTANT

Beloved, before you drop this book, I intend to address the most important issue both in time and eternity. It is the matter of the soul. It is the matter of life. It is the matter of life after death.

Please note the following:

A: LIFE IS TERMINAL.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: – Hebrews 9:27

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 12:7

B: DEATH IS NOT THE END OF LIFE.

Beyond death, life continues either in heaven with God or in hell with satan.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:2

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Psalm 9:17

And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, nor maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 21:27

C: HOW YOU LIVE ON EARTH DETERMINES WHERE YOU WILL END IN ETERNITY.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Romans 14:12

D: WHO YOU LIVE FOR DETERMINES WHO YOU LIVE WITH IN ETERNITY.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. – Acts 4:12

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. – John 14:6

Beloved, in order not to end in a regrettable eternity in everlasting flames and torment, you must answer the following questions with all sincerity and accuracy:

1. Who are you living for? Who controls your life? Who directs your actions and lifestyle? Is it self, the world or Christ?

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. – Philippians 1:21

1. What are the controlling desires of your life? What do you desire above every other thing in life? What drives you? Is it God, worldly pleasure or self?

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

1. What is your public testimony? Do you represent Christ to your world? Are you living an exemplary Christian life to the world around you? Who do they think you are?

And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. – Acts 11:26

.. be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. – 1 Timothy 4:12

1. Does God know you as His Own? Is He proud of you as His child? Can you say that He is pleased with the way you are living your life?

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord

knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. – 2 Timothy2:19

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? – Job 1:8

1. What are you looking forward to in eternity? Are you sure that a pleasant welcome awaits you? If you had died before this time, where do you think you deserve to be, considering your action, lifestyle and life's priorities?

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. – 2Timothy 4:6-8

Beloved, are your answers in the affirmative to all of the above questions? If not, it means you either need to surrender your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ by accepting His sacrificial death on Calvary for you or you need to re-dedicate your life to Jesus Christ.

IF SO, PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME:

Lord Jesus, I come before You today to surrender my life completely to You. I have lived a self-centered life that is far separated from God. I have had priorities that are not eternity-centered. I have always lived in rebellion, disobedience and sin up till now.

Lord, I am sorry for the way that I have lived and I ask for Your forgiveness and mercy. Lord, please cleanse my sins by Your Blood and take Your place of leadership and rulership in my life. Fill my heart Lord with the right desires and priorities. Deliver me from the vanity and fantasies of this world. Give me the grace to say no to sin and compromise. Give me the grace to live in righteousness and represent You well to my world.

Help me escape the tragedy of eternity in hell. Help me Lord to make Heaven

at the end of my journey on earth. Help me Lord to live both in the consciousness of Your Presence and of eternity. Continuously reveal to me everything that would make me unworthy of Heaven.

Thank You Lord for hearing and answering me in Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, please do the following:

i. Send to us, your name, phone number and contact address by email: mailto:info@dunamisgospel.org or by phone: +234 803 3200 320.

ii. Become serious with God by identifying with a righteousness and eternity-conscious church.

iii. Study your Bible daily to receive the Word from God.

iv. Speak to God daily in prayer and let Him know your feelings and challenges.

v. Disconnect from every wrong association. Don't follow them to hell if they won't follow you to Heaven.

vi. Speak to others about God. Share your testimony of transformed life. Be instrumental in assisting someone to escape hell.

vii. Repent promptly. Do not sleep over unconfessed sins. Apply the Blood over your soul for cleansing continuously. Live eternity-ready.

The Lord bless you.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN INSPIRED AND BLESSED BY THIS BOOK WE WILL LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Connect with Dr. Paul and his ministry via:

Website: http://www.Dunamisgospel.org

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Pastor Paul Enenche is a trained Medical Doctor, called of God into full time ministry, with a heavy Apostolic and Prophetic mantle for the restoration of human lives and dignities. His ministrations are characterized by deep undiluted insights from the Word of God, accurate Word of Knowledge and the demonstration of the power of God in Supernatural healings, miracles, signs and wonders. His ministry is geared towards causing our generation to:

1. Experience God's Person and Presence in our lives,

2. Realize our true purpose for existence,

3. Comprehend our full potential in life,

4. Discover God's life-changing and life-lifting principles,

5. Connect with God's power to overcome the negative forces of life and above all, to

6. End our journey with God in eternity in Heaven and to escape the torments of hell.

He is the Senior Pastor of Dunamis International Gospel Centre, with the headquarters situated beside the Old Federal Secretariat, Area 1, Abuja— the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. They currently run five services every Sunday and two over-flooded services every Wednesday evening, among other services. His passion is to see that the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. As a result, his ministry is involved in aggressive spread of the Gospel via every possible media— the Commission's Television Station— Dunamis TV, their 24/7 Web-TV and Web-Radio broadcast as well as campus revival meetings, crusades and aggressive church plantings.

He is married to Dr Becky, a beautiful, intelligent, submissive, supportive and hardworking Medical Doctor, also called of God into full time ministry. And together, they have four blessed children.

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