

Great Faith Can Be Yours

Understanding how to receive the spirit of faith

Dr. Bankole Olusina

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Great faith is achievable, but not by human effort. It is furnished by a release of the Spirit of faith from God when a person's heart is ready to receive it. In this book, Pastor Bankie teaches in a live-talk style on the simple things to do so as to have the greatest faith needed for every situation manifested in our lives at such times of need. The things, he explains, include acts of love, passion, and simple faith. Reading this book you will understand among other things

- ***What it means that faith comes by hearing and hearing.***
- ***Why the widow of Zarephath was able to give her last meal to a stranger who claimed to have a word from God.***
- ***How the Roman Centurion reached the point where he was declared by the Lord Jesus as having the greatest faith He saw up till that point in the whole of Israel***
- ***And how you too can achieve faith of a like magnitude as this Roman.***

1. Faith is the central matter

In these modern days, I have noticed that a lot of the things being emphasized in the teachings that come out of the church are not exactly the core things of Christianity. The major thing in the following of Jesus Christ is faith. Faith is what pleases God and is the thing that the heart of the true believer should seek to improve in.

One of the problems with the partial teachings on faith is that people often look at it as if it is a mechanism for getting their needs met. But, of course, it is not. Yes, by faith needs are met, but that was not why God instituted it. Faith is so that we can fulfil the primary reason why we were created.

Now, we must understand that to do the will of God and so please God is the primary reason why we were created.

“Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

Rev 4:11

Paul explains again and again that we are to walk in a manner pleasing to God.

...that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Col 1:10

Now, that is the main importance of faith—it is the way of walking which pleases the Lord. We know that it is impossible to please God without faith.

Many of us have been taught that good works is the thing that pleases God; so we labour as much as we can in doing good works. O yes, that has its place, but it is not the main thing.

Others believe that long times of prayer really gets to the heart of God. So they pray and pray and pray. Again that has its place, but it is not the main thing.

There are many other ways by which one may try to please God. Some give and give and give; others take oaths of deep sacrifice that can be quite demanding on the flesh. All of these are being done by people who want to please God, but God is just not impressed.

Only one thing gets God's attention—faith.

Listen, that is the only thing that pleases God. Many have preached as if when you give a great sacrifice, then God is happy. But good as it may sound to the ears, that is not true. God is never impressed primarily by such actions but by a walk in faith. A man who picks up a stick by faith is greater in the eyes of God than the one who uproots a tree while trying to impress God.

This is the main difference between Christianity and other religions, and is why we say truthfully again and again that it is not a religion.

Religion emphasizes what you do. It emphasizes how you pay your tithes and offer your sacrifices. It emphasizes how you behave when you enter into the temple, how many times you pray and the posture you assume when you pray. These things are emphasized in the practice of religion and people do them hoping that by so doing they will be pleasing to their God and that he will in return bless them.

Not so with the Christianity taught by Jesus and by His apostles and prophets.

The emphasis in the life of the disciple is relationship. Jesus came to introduce us to the father so that we might have a relationship with Him. As we become transformed into the image of Christ Jesus, our relationship with the Father becomes more perfect and that is the ultimate in this world—to become exactly like the risen Christ Jesus.

The only thing that takes you there is faith.

Am I saying that works are not important? Not at all! I am just trying to explain that the place of works is secondary to that of faith. The role of works is purely as it exists as the tangible manifestation of faith; works are important only when they represent the expression of faith. You see, faith is a spiritual thing; it is intangible and cannot ordinarily be seen; the only way it is shown to be present is by the work it produces. When James was explaining this he said ...*I will show you my faith by my works* (James 2:18).

Any work done which is not founded upon faith in the heart is nothing but emptiness. There is a way that faith works inside your soul so as to produce true works for God, and this is

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what is called *worship in spirit*.

Let us see more on this concept of worship in spirit.

2. Worship in Spirit

I have tried to explain that the works we do will be accepted by God as pleasing in His sight only as they reveal the faith in our hearts. Interestingly, this was exactly what Jesus was introducing to the woman He met at the well in Samaria.

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:23,24

Notice the expression “*worship in spirit and in truth.*”

The word ‘and’ there does not indicate two kinds of worship but rather ties worshipping in spirit to worshipping in truth. The worship that is in the spirit is that which is in truth. Let me explain what that means.

There are two ways to worship God. I call one *rote* worship, and the other *true* worship.

The first was described by Isaiah.

Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their

hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote

Is 29:13.

In this, worship is made up of motions that have been written down by other people. The words are right; the ‘amens’ are in the right places. Every word is interposed with ‘praise God’, and all the motions are just proper and right. But God says their hearts are not in it; everything is done according to traditions that have been learned, motions that have been memorized. I chose to call it ‘rote worship’ after Isaiah.

As they worship, their hearts are far removed from the God being worshipped. Many who go to church are only involved in rote worship, and *hyper*-organized religion is designed to promote rote worship. In fact, any church that places more emphasis on their mode of worship than the preaching and teaching of the word of God is encouraging rote worship.

Rote worship is the reason why people go to church on Sunday but on Monday return to *business as usual*. It is the reason why many are so committed to their churches and denominations but the life of Christ is not manifested in their everyday lives.

The second type of worship is that in which the motions arise spontaneously out of the emotions in the heart. There may or may not be a commandment but the words and actions arise not because of commandments but because the child of God is just persuaded and ‘feels’ like doing it. If there are commandments, they are there to serve as a guide concerning controlling the spirit. This is the *worship in spirit*.

Worshipping in spirit does not at all imply that you have lost control, are 'lost in the spirit', or that you are speaking in other tongues. Many believe that worship is in spirit only when unusual things are happening and people are falling under the influence of the power of God. No No! O yes there are times of worship when you will become lost to the natural realm and indeed it will appear like things are out of your control, but that is not the only time that you are worshipping in spirit. To worship in spirit is to do things out of personal persuasion and out of a deep relationship. That is what God is seeking.

...for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers.

I remember an incidence many years ago in the fellowship I attended on while I was a university student. I was relatively new at that time in the fellowship and was not exactly such an expressive kind of person; at least at that time I was not. That night there was a prayer meeting we held on a Tennis court. During the prayers a song of praise to God was being sung, and at one point I felt just so glad to praise God that I raised up both hands in worship. It just came out of me. Now, a brother who I knew rather well before then was there beside me and he thought that I had raised up my hands because other people were doing so. So he spoke quietly but sharply into my ears saying, "You don't have to raise your hands if you don't feel like". Without even thinking about it for a second I replied, "and I feel like".

See, he thought I was doing rote worship when in actual fact what I was doing was true worship. This is just a simple

illustration.

True worship are those words and actions that come out of you because you have a relationship with God. True worship is a lifestyle; that is one reason why worship in the spirit cannot just be 'being lost in the spirit'. No. The fact is you remain in control most of the time. It has to be so because it is a continuous lifestyle. There is no 'time' of worship. David said *I will bless the Lord at **all times** and His praise shall **continually** be in my mouth.* It is an all times thing which happens continually. This lifestyle does not demand that you be in the choir; you can make a joyful noise all the time.

See, that woman of Samaria wanted to know about physical things like the place of worship, the mode of worship, what to take to worship and such things. Do we sing praise songs with a fast tempo and 'worship' songs slowly? When do we close our eyes and raise our hands? Do we kneel or stand? All kinds of questions. Jesus said real worship does anything anytime, as long as it comes out of the bowels of the person's spirit, it is acceptable unto the Lord.

No wonder David danced with all his might. People have tried to turn David's dance into a rote form of worship now. We try to encourage ourselves to dance like David danced. Please I'm not saying it is wrong to dance like him; but we must remember that when David danced before the ark, there was no encouragement from anybody; all that happened was that he remembered that when he first knew about this ark as a child, he was a shepherd boy. Now, here he was in control of the whole of Israel and commanding the movement of the ark. The God who did that for him is indeed worthy of all worship.

The dance came out of him spontaneously. I know this because that was the answer he gave to Michal when she questioned him.

So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD.

2 Sam 6:21

What I am trying to bring out is that the works that please the Father are not pleasing because they are good works but because they came out of the bowels of our spirits. That is true worship.

What is to me the best illustration of this principle is the faith of Abraham as manifested in the sacrifice of Isaac. That work in the life of this father of faith has been misunderstood by most people. They see it primarily as a sign of his love for God and his willingness to give anything up for God when in fact that was not the case at all. What God was testing was the faith of Abraham and not the willingness to sacrifice for God for the sake of sacrificing. What impressed and pleased God was that Abraham so trusted God that he was not afraid to sacrifice Isaac. The sacrifice of Isaac was a product of faith.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son. Heb 11:17

This is the place of works my brethren. It is only acceptable to God as a demonstration of your faith. As you walk with God by faith, the nature of God is constantly being formed into you so that the works of God come out of you at all times. You remember that I said that true worship is not a time of worship or a day of worship nor is it a place of worship. You worship constantly, everyday and in every place. It is with you as you breathe, as you walk and as you eat. Even in the bathroom.

This is why we can pray without ceasing.

We sing songs of praise in church and out of church. We rejoice always. We are constantly in communion with God by His Spirit and our spirit, even when we are not thinking about it. This is the joy of Christianity. No wonder Jesus said, '*no one can come to the father but by me*'. He is the only one who has introduced this kind of relationship with God to mankind. He has made continual worship possible by the power of His blood. He has indeed reconciled us back to God. Our whole lives are lives of worship. It is a constant walk with God. How beautiful.

Remember that I started all this to show the importance of faith. Faith is the spirit of real worship. To walk with God, which is actually a lifestyle of real worship, is possible only by faith, as was testified to by the life of Enoch.

Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Gen 5:24

...for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Heb 11:5-6

I have brought out the centrality of faith in the life of the believer. It is the core of everything. Just for completion, let it be known to you that real worship guarantees supplies of all kinds in life. You will never lack nor need to 'exercise faith' for material things. They will be added to you naturally.

But you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water

Ex 23:25

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Matt 6:33

If it is so important, then increasing your faith should be your central activity. It should be the core of your struggles. The Bible says, '*labour to enter into His rest*'; that labour is a labour in faith. It was unbelief that prevented those that were given the opportunity before from entering.

3. What is faith?

Faith is the ability to accept the reality of the unseen and consider them as real as the ones that we can see, indeed more real than the one we can see.

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Heb 11:3

For clarification, faith is a general term which implies the acceptance of facts that one has not personally checked. As a matter of fact, there is a lot of operation of faith in every person's life. Every time you board a plane without demanding to see the certificate of training of the pilot and the clearance paper for the last safety check on the aircraft, you are exercising some degree of faith. Every time you go to a hospital and accept a procedure to be conducted on you by a stranger who calls himself a doctor, it is faith of some sort that you are exercising. There is no other way to live life other than with certain degrees of faith.

However, when we use the word faith as believers, we are speaking of trusting in God who we cannot see. We speak of knowing that God is in control of everything and that this God has reconciled us to Himself in Christ Jesus. We are talking about believing the promises that God sent through his prophets for us and trusting those words so much we totally

rely on them, considering them as real, and indeed more real than the physical things of life. That is the faith of the believer. (*For more on this, please see my book, 'The believer'*)

The faith of the Christian is the way he relates with the spiritual realm. The contact with that realm is guided by the written word of God. The more he can depend upon what is written, the more of faith in God he is exercising.

Let me explain something about the word of God, the Bible.

It is the record by two sets of people. One, the prophets of God, who lived in the nation of Israel. This was a nation that was created specially by God to perform certain functions. Vital among these functions are that they kept a record of the will of God as given to the prophets, and that they produced the birth of Jesus.

First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

Rom 3:2

...the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures

Rom 1:1-2

The oracles of God are those things that God wanted the generation of the last days to know about His walk with man. Unlike what a lot of Christians think, God did not walk only among the Israelites in those days, but His walk with them

was peculiar in that it was with them that God planned the redemption of mankind and He gave them the documents that contained everything about the plan. The fact now is that there is no longer any difference between the Jew and the gentile; all that matters is faith in that plan contained in those documents. You are introduced by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus into God's family. Believe me, it amazes me when I see Christians who still think that Jews are more special to God than everybody else. No, it is the believer in Christ Jesus, Jew or gentile, that is now God's special person. Though it was the prophets of Israel who prophesied those promises, they belong to everybody; everybody who will lay hold of them by faith in Jesus has a right to them.

Your ability to believe those prophecies about the redemption of mankind is what faith is to the Christian. The word of God is real. It is God's revealed will concerning your life generally as a believer. For example, when He says that your sin he will not remember anymore, it means that all the sins of your childhood and your past life will not affect your future.

You see, the other day I was talking with a brother and he asked me about the importance of the past life in the life of a Christian. I explained that first, the important thing about a past life is that it affects the future. Solomon said that everything a young man and a young woman does during the passionate days of youth determines where God will place them in their latter days.

*Rejoice, young man, during your childhood,
and let your heart be pleasant during the
days of young manhood. And follow the*

impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.

Eccl 11:9

The energy of your youth can either be used to satisfy all your desires or you can employ the power of God to learn self-control and so invest the youth-energy in the realm of the spirit so that your life will be a life of righteousness. Many people today have sown failure into their futures by the way they spent their youths, and when middle age comes, they will begin to struggle against the destiny they bought with their own hands.

Now, this is the power of the forgiveness that is in Christ Jesus. If a young man or woman is convicted of sin and comes to realize that what was sown were seeds of error; if such a one comes to God in repentance, then their future will be like they have never sinned. The blood of Jesus will indeed wash away all the power of sin that have been self-generated against their future. See, sin cannot just be overlooked, it must be paid for. That payment is the blood of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross as a payment for all those sins and right now he is forever obtaining forgiveness from God for anyone who draws near to God through him.

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Heb 7:25

I discovered this from the prophets' writings. They are the authentic word of God. I know this because Jesus testified of it.

Now, the testimony of Jesus was recorded by the second set of people (Remember I explained that the word of God is a record by two sets of people, the first set being the prophets of Israel). The people who make up the second set are the disciples of Jesus who saw him, related with him and who committed the things He taught them to writing. Also included in this group is Paul who the Lord Jesus appeared to after His resurrection and taught him the mysteries of the New Covenant.

...the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Gal 1:11-12

The words of Jesus and the introduction into the understanding of the prophets are all recorded in the New Testament (the prophets are in the Old Testament).

So we see that both the New and the Old Testaments are important as the objects of faith for the believer in Christ Jesus. They represent the authentic word of God. If you can believe them, then you are walking in the faith of God and walking pleasing to Him.

If you can believe!

4. The ability to believe

In this chapter I want to begin to get into the main purpose of this book. All we have seen so far are mainly introductions to the subject. The question I seek to answer is, “How does a man come to believe?” The truth is that this is a very rarely taught topic, but I think it is an important question to ask and the correct answer will make our walk with God easier still.

Please allow me make a statement but be patient to read what follows as my explanation so that no one will run away with a wrong impression concerning what I meant.

This is the statement: *Though man has the basic (and most important) control, the ability to believe in the works of God and obey the word of God is ultimately controlled by God and not by man.*

Please I have not said that God simply decides who will believe and who will not. No. If that were the case He would not be just for punishing those who refused to believe as we could easily put forth the argument that they did not believe because He did not make them believe. What I mean rather is that God can organize circumstances and influence your spirit so that you will believe and also can do such so that you will not believe. It is a matter of fact which can be clearly seen from the scriptures.

In the case of Pharaoh, God told Moses that no matter what He does as miracles, Pharaoh would not obey the instruction of God because the Lord would hardened his heart

The LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.

Ex 4:21

Again, the very first assignment that the Lord gave to Isaiah after he answered the call of God was to remove the ability to believe from some people.

*He said, "Go, and tell this people:
'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;
Keep on looking, but do not understand.
Render the hearts of this people insensitive,
Their ears dull,
And their eyes dim,
Lest they see with their eyes,
Hear with their ears,
Understand with their hearts,
And return and be healed."*

Isa 6:9-10

It is understanding and right perception that results in faith in the heart. The opposite of faith is unpersuadableness or, as it is also called, unbelief. Unbelief means that the information presented to you did not succeed in persuading you. Please note that it is not the information that is faulty but the heart that is hardened.

It is a matter of fact that God can and does harden the hearts

of people so that even though they are seeing yet they do not understand. A hard heart is impossible to persuade.

The spirit of faith

Having made some points about the hard heart let me now talk about the diametric opposite. There is what the Bible calls the spirit of faith (see 2 Cor 4: 13); it is the opposite of a hard heart.

When the word 'spirit' is used in the scriptures, it does not necessarily refer to personalities or external forces like angels or demons. Many times it refers to a controlling force within an individual. This manifests as a baseline tendency which dictates how things around affect him and how he responds to them. For example, in 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul talked about the spirit of fear; the spirit of fear is what comes into people that walk away from God. Everything begins to scare them; all the imaginations of their hearts are of doom and gloom and calamity coming. They always see the worst coming out of things.

The spirit of boldness, on the other hand, sees the best that could happen, always remembers that God is on its side and is therefore joyful and full of love. Fear is a spirit, but not necessarily a demon; it's an attribute of the human spirit.

Now we can easily understand what the spirit of faith is. The spirit of faith is the spiritual force and attribute within a

person that makes them quick to accept the word of God. The spirit of faith causes you to believe what God says. It holds the word of God as superior even in the face of contradicting circumstances.

I explained earlier that everyone believes something, and that is just how life is. The spirit of faith however directs that tendency to believe to the word of God.

I have said all this to help us understand that there is more to increasing your faith than studying the word alone. Being acquainted with information does not mean you will accept it. I remember the experience I had with two ladies, colleagues of mine, once. With both of them over several days I had the opportunity to share my faith and how one could depend totally on God in the face of adverse circumstances. To both of them I said essentially the same things, but I got two widely differing responses. One said to me, “you have found what many people are still looking for.” The other looked at me and said, “I am sorry for you”. They heard the same things from the same person, one believed but the other thought I was out of my mind.

Being acquainted with information does not mean you will believe. Notice this verse:

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Heb 4:2

We have laid much emphasis on ‘get into the word,’ ‘read the word,’ ‘get to know the word’ as what to do to get great faith. Well that is a good thing to do, but having great faith entails more than just that. There is something about getting the open eyes and the spirit of faith which will make you believe the things you will discover. It is not the amount of times that you hear the word that is most important but the spirit of faith in the heart as you hear it.

Now you can understand that Abraham did not have an iPod loaded with messages yet he grew strong in faith. He did not have Bible on CDs or any of the technological advantages we have today concerning hearing the word of God again and again, yet his faith was so great that God began to swear because of it. No, it is not the repetition, it is the spirit.

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness of Me.

John 5:39

Notice the words of Jesus here and the mood they reflect; it is obvious He was saying that their thoughts were wrong—studying alone does not cut it. You must first get the spirit before the letters can be breathed upon so as to give you life.

Let me summarize what I have tried to get out across to us here. The spirit of faith comes into you from God, not by the volume of information but by the Lord finding your heart in the right place and condition.

The purpose of this book is to understand what we will do

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with our lives so that the spirit of faith will be imparted to us.

5. The double hearing

However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Rom 10:16-17

For a long time I tried to understand the meaning of that expression, *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word*. (Bear in mind that the original language, Greek, in which Paul wrote his letters did not have a comma placed after the first 'hearing'; it was placed there at the discretion of the translators).

We have taught that hearing and hearing means to continually hear the word. For sure it is a very good practice to listen to the word of God at all times, and there are many scriptures which teach just that, but that is not at all what Paul was saying here. If you take a good look at that expression the way we read it most times, the sense of it in the English is very difficult to grasp.

Without going into too much analysis let me suggest an interesting opinion to you which I believe is based on the truth of the word of God. The key expression there is actually 'hearing and hearing'. It is a clear case of double emphasis

which was used a lot in those days. To lay emphasis on an important subject, the speaker would often repeat it, thereby saying it twice. This is why the statements of Jesus often started with this expression, *verily verily*. Paul at a time said, '*rejoice, again I say, rejoice*'. An interesting scripture to explain it is from the account of Joseph with Pharaoh.

Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

Gen 41:32

To repeat a thing, in the Bible, is to lay extra emphasis on it.

This was what Paul was saying.

Faith comes by the word of Christ which a man receives by the principle of hearing and hearing.

What is the principle of *hearing and hearing*?

It means that I hear a word with an expectation to conform my life totally to it. It is not the number of times He speaks that is in question, it is the effect it has in my ears.

Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this... Ps 62:11

Once God speaks, I am ready to obey it even if I know it is difficult because of my lack of ability, but at least I am ready. Paul said once the readiness is there, it is acceptable according

to what one can perform.

In support of this doctrine, we need to note this interesting fact about the way the word obedience is rendered in the Hebrew. The Hebrew word often used to describe obedience to the word of God is one that emphasizes this double hearing thing.

Note this scripture.

Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

Deut 28:1

The literal Hebrew says, ‘*if you shall listen listening...*’ What we call ‘diligently hearken’, the Hebrew man calls ‘listen listening’. Did you note that? Does that not sound like *hearing and hearing* to you? It is that same power of double.

Paul was addressing a heart attitude to the word, not the number of times you play a tape. Hearing and hearing means to listen to the word with the attitude of learning how to please God and have your life transformed by His word. (Please note that listening to a message again and again is very good; I practice it and I encourage it, but more important is the heart that hears). Some people read the Bible like it is a kind of charm they must activate. They lead a life contrary to what is clearly expressed in the Bible that they read daily but they never try to amend their ways to fit what it says.

It is very common to find Christians who listen to the word of God with an attitude like they are being entertained. You know that most of the entertainment songs we listen to, even though we may know the words and sing along, we really don't care about the words nor are we trying to learn from them. I remember one boy I saw in a TV documentary who was called 'bitch-nigger'; when asked how come he had such a foul name, his friends said he picked it from rap music. Too much American gutter music like from the likes of Snoop Dog. He was from South Africa and had no idea what the words meant and so chose to be called a bitch and a nigger! This is how some people are with the word of God.

Because of the entertainment attitude, when issues are down you hear things like 'let's forget preaching and get practical'. The great teacher of faith Kenneth Hagin told of something his son said to the mum once. After hearing many fantastic stories told by his dad from the pulpit, which were testimonies of great manifestations of God's power, he turned to his mother and said, 'all them tales daddy tells when he is preaching, are they really true or he's just preaching?' To the child, what is preached did not have to be true.

Let us pardon the child that Ken Jr was, the problem is that this is the attitude of a lot of people, unfortunately. Preaching to them is a stage performance. I heard a brother say once that 'we Christians like to be preached to'. I looked at him and said something like, 'why not?' He said that what he was describing was reality and not preaching. He felt that real life often does not reflect what is preached. I looked at him and told him in many words, 'the word of God is not here to

describe your situation but to create it'. To him preaching was one of the entertaining features in the Sunday outing to church and had little to do with reality.

Please see what the Lord has to say about that.

"But as for you, son of man, your fellow citizens who talk about you by the walls and in the doorways of the houses, speak to one another, each to his brother, saying, 'Come now, and hear what the message is which comes forth from the LORD.' "And they come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people, and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain. "And behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not practice them.

Ezek 33:30-32

If we are to play words and opposite we would say the attitude described above, that of entertainment hearing, is exactly the opposite of *hearing and hearing*.

See, child of God, if your life is different from what the word describes, that does not make the word of God faulty; it only means that your life needs to be rearranged. Your life and experience do not at all validate or invalidate the word of God. If you accept the word, it will *create* for you a whole new set of experiences. The Bible says that God calls those things that are not as though they were. That means that when God is speaking, he is not trying to describe situations, he is creating them. The person who hears it *twice*, that is with

hearing and hearing, responds like Mary:

Be it unto me according to your word.

Once you speak like that, faith becomes strong in your heart and despite the opposition in your path you will not fear and God will then be able to bring to pass what He said by the word.

And blessed is she who has believed for there shall be a performance of those things spoken...

If this attitude is in your heart, then you are ready to embark on a great journey of faith with God.

6. The story of the widow

In going on concerning the matter of how to increase your faith I want to tell a story so as to bring out the importance of God helping us with our faith. Great faith is stimulated by God in your heart if that heart is in the place where God can help it. Your duty is to get your heart into the place of faith.

There was a woman who lived alone with her little son under difficult circumstances. She was a widow and had little money to take care of herself and her family. She was really poor and the economic situation was even making it more apparent because inflation had ruined the little she had.

On a particular day she was about to send her little son out to buy some food when there was a knock on her door. At the door was a strange looking fellow who obviously was tired from walking up and down, sweating and out of breath. Did she notice the appearance of a pastor? Maybe!

‘Good day ma’am,’ he said. ‘Can you please help me, I need to find the direction to the old parliament building. I have some business there and I have been going up and down for hours trying to locate it with no luck.’

‘Sure,’ she said. ‘Go along this tarred road, at the next junction you will see a sign post...’

She went ahead and gave him a detailed description of how to find his destination.

‘Thank you so much ma’am. But please could I get a little

money from you to ride a bus with; as you can see I am really worn out and have no money.’

‘I’m so sorry. I would have helped you if I could, but the only money I have left I was about to give my son to go get us something to eat when you knocked. After this, there is nothing else left with me and I do not even know how we will survive after today.’

Please note the next words that came out of the mouth of this stranger.

‘Ma, fear not. Give me some of the money so I can be on my way. After this you will have all the money you will ever need. For thus says the Lord, “your pocket shall never run dry, neither shall you ever lack money from today. For I your God I am with you to provide for you”’

Now, please think about it. What in the world is he trying to do? Collect of the little she has? If she gives him that money, she must be gullible.

Think about it some more. Why should she believe him? Could he not be another one of those pastors who go around, according to the Bible, plundering widows’ houses? In fact who says he is a real man of God? OK. After he might have collected the money and gone away, how would she find him if his words turn out to be false?

Friends think about it for a moment, anyone who decides to give to that supposed pastor under such circumstances, on the natural plain, is either gullible or knows something we are not aware of.

Look at the story again. It is actually my modernized version of the story of the widow of Zarephath. That stranger, of course, was Elijah. I have told it in this adapted version to help you think about it in a real fashion uncoloured by the knowledge of the outcome.

Now, we know that the widow gave to Elijah and she never lacked, just as the prophet had prophesied. She activated the promise of God by her faith and she reaped a heavy harvest. But the question still remains: how did she know that Elijah was real, and that giving to him would produce the harvest? If you don't answer this question, you will have a lot of sorrows in life because these things happen.

Many times prophets and pastors have come up with all kinds of God-told-me's and many people have obeyed and gotten nothing. A funny thing happened like that to a sister when we were university students. She was walking on the road when a young man just stopped her and told her that God said she should give him a certain amount of money. The interesting part was that she did not have that money he said but went ahead to try to raise the money. I spoke with her about it and I can tell you that the only reason she was going about looking to raise the money for the baby prophet was that she was afraid to disobey God. Nothing more. The interesting part? There was no way of knowing whether God really spoke to him or not. These things happen.

This kind of experience set me thinking. See, I knew that lady very well and she knew the scriptures, I dare to say more than the widow of Zarephath did, but I doubt whether the widow had as much trouble obeying a stranger as she did.

Now here is my simple and direct answer to the puzzle: the widow of Zarephath most likely had no way of telling whether he was real or not, but one thing she was sure of was that he was hungry.

I pray that you will understand.

I am trying to say that her faith was not as intellectual as we think but was more intuitive. She would have given all the same even if he was fake and would not have lost too much sleep over it. Faith is not always a product of intellectual reasoning (though sometimes it is, as in Abraham and Isaac's sacrifice), a lot of times it is nothing more than a manifestation of a general attitude.

Now, that is where the Spirit of God comes in.

Please let me say some more things about the widow, her sacrifice and her reward.

Many times you hear preachers encourage people to give 'sacrificially' because it will provide for them a real harvest. At such times the widow of Zarephath is the biblical example. For this reason people start giving so that they might get an immediate harvest. The problem is that if the truth is to be told, most who do such never get the results they desired. The preacher may tell a few stories of those who did and got the harvest but the fact still is that those stories, if they really happened the way they are testified of, are not typical but are rather the exceptions. The truth is that most times the whole story is not told.

Am I saying that God does not reward such seed sowing with

such harvests?

Precisely! He usually does not!

What about the widow of Zarephath?

To answer that I will like to step back a bit. I need to do that because the problem has been that we take the story of the widow as if her life started when Elijah got to her door. As a matter of fact her story had been going on long before then. See this,

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink."

1 Kings 17: 8-10

This portion is just to remind us of the background and to bring out an important point. Here was Elijah after he had brought famine upon the land and after the brook where he was living dried up. Remember that at that brook God had supernaturally fed him through ravens. This gives me the feeling that God did not send him away from the brook to Sidon because He could not supernaturally provide water. The truth is that as that brook was drying, that widow's food was running out. God was not sending Elijah to the widow for

Elijah's sake but for the widow's sake. By the time Elijah left that brook, the widow's miracle had been decided. What I am saying is that there already was a thing in her life that made Elijah set out toward her house to give her a miracle. His movement was because her cry to God was being answered. The arrival of Elijah at her door was not the beginning of her miracle but the end of what started long before.

Notice the words of Jesus about it.

And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town. 25 "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; 26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. Luke 4:24-26

In this account Jesus was bringing out a critical point. Please read this passage further down in your Bible and you will see, adding it to the story of Namaan, that he left the brook specifically to go and bless this woman with his anointing.

Why did God pass over all the widows in Israel to go down to Sidon? Here is the answer.

For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

2 Chron 16:9

Elijah was sent to the house in which God knew he would be welcome because other hungry people had been welcome in the house of that widow. Elijah was not the first. Her seeds had been sown in the time of plenty, even when she had little. She was a habitual giver who had honoured the Lord by giving to the needy and probably also His prophets. When the time of her own affliction came, God sent Elijah to her house. When Elijah arrived, there was a spirit of faith that God gave to her that made her believe the stranger who introduced himself as a prophet. God used some of His many methods available to create a believing heart in her. Elijah was her harvest time, not her seed time; her seed time was long before now. She had been sowing her seeds again and again.

Why did she still have to give Elijah to activate the promise?

The reason is that at harvest time, you must still get up with your sickle. The same works that brought you to the point of harvest will be required of you to receive that harvest.

*He who watches the wind will not sow and
he who looks at the clouds will not reap.*

Eccl 11:4

Both sowing and reaping require diligence and work.

Also there is what the English adage calls the last straw that breaks the camel's back! In her case, it was her gift to Elijah.

So you see why many 'fire-brigade' offerings don't produce any results; offerings being given when the fire of lack is burning. God does not act impulsively; you must maintain a

lifestyle before Him before you will get the fruit of it. You cannot just give once and then expect the rain to pour. There is always the matter of patience and due season.

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

Gal 6:9

The doing of good must be continuous, and then the due time will come. You cannot give once to get the widow's harvest. Giving a certain offering to get a certain harvest is most of the time a waste of time and money. If you are not ready to be a habitual sower, don't bother starting because it will not help you.

Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.

Eccl 11:6

What if?

Another question that may arise concerning the life of this woman is this: what if she had refused to give Elijah what he asked.

There are two answers; one theoretical, the other practical.

The theoretical answer is this: If she has refused, it would

have been a sign that she did not believe him as he said, '*for thus says the Lord.*' Please note that he asked for food from her because he knew that the food would not finish. He was asking out of her abundance, which was real to him. If she didn't accept him, she lost it all. You must believe His prophets so as to prosper. (2 Chron 20:20)

But there is the practical answer.

The practical answer is that she could not have refused him. At the time of her blessing, her past works had provoked that spirit of faith and that was what was carrying her. When God starts to speak to the heart ready for a blessing, He also supplies the spirit of faith.

As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet.

Ezek 2:2

When God is set to reward you for your faithfulness, and that reward requires a participation of faith from you, the good Lord knows how to stimulate faith in your heart. He can indeed put in that spirit of faith. It is by the Spirit of God and is given as He wills.

Yes we are to continually build up our faith in our daily walk, but there are times that what is coming requires more than the one we have; at such times there is a manifestation of the Spirit if we are worthy of it at that time.

7. The manifestation of faith

I have explained that faith is often a manifestation of the Spirit. When we say manifestation of the Spirit, which is a term lifted from 1 Corinthians 12:7, we mean there a work is done by someone, producing a variety of effects, but the work is more than the person could have done by his own natural abilities or even the spiritual abilities that reside *usually* within him. For example, one of the manifestations of the Spirit is the word of knowledge. In a word of knowledge, you may know something that happened to someone sometime before where you were not present nor were you informed about it by anybody. It is not knowledge that is resident within you but just a manifestation of the Spirit for that moment. When asked, ‘you were not there, how did you know so accurately?’ You will most likely answer, ‘I don’t know; I just *know*’.

In the same manner a lot of the accounts of faith recorded in the scriptures were manifestations of the Spirit. Many of the people who did some of the mighty works of faith were aided by a manifestation of the Spirit.

See, God is very good and very kind; He is not trying to make life hard for us but is always trying to help us as much as we would allow Him. This is why we are adjured to draw near to the throne of grace that we may find mercy and assisting power in the time of need (Heb 4:16). The manifestation of faith oftentimes comes to assist us because without faith God’s power cannot come.

Please note that God does not just sporadically manifest these things; rather He has reasons and things that He looks for before they are manifested, and that is what this book is all about—those things that move God to release the spirit of faith. The truth really is that His Spirit amplifies our mustard seed size faiths and makes them into great ones.

A backbone of the Spirit

I want to use the story of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, also known as *Shadrach, Mechach and Abednego* to explain my point. The story is that about the golden god that Nebuchadnezzar made.

Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image as a god and decreed that everyone must bow to it. Nebuchadnezzar was a very exalted ruler who ruled over most of the known world. Kings feared him. Yet these three Hebrew young men defied him.

Well after it was reported to him that the three Hebrew men in his cabinet defied him, he called them aside and gave them another chance to obey by bowing to the image that he made. We must remember that the punishment for disobedience was to be thrown into the hot furnace of fire. The men refused to even consider his offer.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O

king. 18 "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Dan 3:16-18

You know the rest of the story. The king ordered the furnace heated up seven times normal and had the chaps thrown into it. The furnace was so hot that the men who threw them in did not survive. But as for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego they were not hurt by the fire, not even the smell of smoke was perceived on them when they came out. There was a fourth man whose appearance was like that of a supernatural being, the delivering angel of the Lord.

How were they delivered?

By their faith!

The Bible says, in Heb 11.34, that by their faith they quenched the power of fire.

What is the point in my story? I am trying to help us realize that the Bible says clearly that these people were men of like passion like us; that means that when they saw fire they too were afraid. Also I want you to realize that to stand in the face of Nebuchadnezzar and refuse his orders was not as simple as it might appear to us. Because we have heard this story since childhood we easily fail to realize what they may have faced. The truth is that it was God that manifested in the lives of those boys to make them withstand the king and refuse to give in, even in the face of the fire. There was a manifestation of

the Spirit of faith to help them in the time of trouble.

Sometimes when we read stories of what Christians have done by faith, we tend to think that the people were always so strong in faith. Believe me, some were; most were not, but a manifestation of the spirit was given to those who had little at the time of need.

I summarize the story of these men like this: they could not have agreed to bow down even if they wanted to at that time. It was too late. It's very much like what I explained about the case of the widow of Zarephath. The time that the decision was made whether to bow or not was not when the idol was built and the order to bow given. Believe me, those decisions were made at the time they first entered Babylon and, following the leadership of Daniel, they refused to be defiled by food, ordinary food.

Notice something from that account in Daniel 1. The problem was food, and the man in charge was not anything as fearful as Nebuchadnezzar. That was the time that the decisions were taken. When bigger troubles came, God stepped in on their behalf and braced their backs, figuratively speaking now, with steel. It was God in manifestation. I believe that the fourth man that showed up in the fire was with them all the while, guarding their tongues from the fire of iniquity. Only the fire of the furnace made people to see him. Some of your troubles in life have come only to make people see the God that has been with you all the while.

What is the lesson I am bringing out here? It is that the manifestation of the spirit of great faith is granted to those

Great Faith Can be Yours

who made the right choices for God when their little faith was enough to handle the challenge.

8. Faith as a seed

Let me explain a point further that I started with the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, and this is about using your little faith to face little challenges so that God will give you the great faith to face great challenges.

There is an eternal principle that governs life, and that is the principle of *seedtime and harvest*. This is the meaning of it for practical life: *for anything very great in life that you aspire to achieve, God has given you small things to do towards achieving it*. The rest is done by His grace.

God has never called any of His children to struggle. For every great thing that He wants you to achieve He has placed a small key for you to turn so as to achieve it. What God wants in life is that you will succeed by the power of grace. *Grace is the release of God's power to achieve results when you do those little things that are within your own power*. Grace means that God gets the glory because it is not really you that is doing the mighty works but God working through you.

This is the principle of seed here: the little thing you do is the seed, and the great result that God brings to you is the fruit. It is seed and fruit; seedtime and harvest.

Great faith is a fruit, not a seed. Let's see what Paul said about that.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...

Gal 5 22 KJV

The word 'faith' here is often translated as 'faithfulness' by some translations but the literal Greek is 'faith' (Gr. *pistis*), and that is why most translations choose the word 'faith'. Faith is indeed a fruit of the spirit.

Now when he said *spirit* here, he was contrasting it to flesh. If you read it in context you will easily see that point. The thing we must understand from it is that there are two force-fields in life that you can plant your seed into. One is called the *flesh* while the other is the *spirit*. The seed sown to the spirit is the one that bears what the Bible calls the fruit of the spirit. Please patiently read the following verses because apart from proving the point I just made it has many things we must now learn. I have put some words in bold typeface for the sake of emphasis.

*And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one **who sows to his own flesh** shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one **who sows to the Spirit** shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

Gal 6:6-10

Please don't forget that your little faith is a seed while the great faith you are desirous of is a fruit. The seed of faith is sown in those little things that you can handle with it, which do not constitute great trials like facing Nebuchadnezzar. The seed of faith are those little things that we do as a result of our faith and our love towards people.

Many people start trying to develop faith when they want to get a great thing from God. Take this from me, at such times the level of faith you need is the fruit-faith. Unfortunately there is this thing about fruit—you can't force it to come. If you have the seed in the ground and the time is ripe, it will come; and if you don't have it, it won't come. Period.

It is important that we note from the portion of Galatians chapter 6 quoted above that Paul emphasized the importance of good works, works of love, as the major way of sowing into the spirit. He particularly highlighted the necessity for giving to one who has blessed you and also helping people, especially the people of God. It is not possible to be one who lives for himself primarily and be of great faith.

I will now use another Bible story to make clear this point.

Dear Cornelius

The story this time is that of Cornelius and is found in Acts chapter 10.

Before relating the story we must bear in mind a few points. One is that salvation is never by works but by faith. Two, there is no other name on earth by which man can be saved except the name of Jesus. We need to know these things to see how the life of Cornelius evolved from works to faith.

Again, please allow me quickly chip something in. You know I said earlier that God has many methods of stimulating faith, and that is so very true. One major one He uses again and again is vision. If the Lord wants to stimulate your faith about that which cannot be seen, He allows you a glimpse into the spiritual realm. There are so many examples in the Bible. You can read of Gideon in the book of Judges, Elisha's servant in 2 Kings 6:17, and of course you know of Thomas who Jesus obliged a visit after His resurrection after he had said he would not believe without seeing. Please bear these in mind.

Now back to Cornelius.

Cornelius was a Roman who was looking for the way of salvation but, being limited in understanding, most of the effort was works. He was a proselyte, that is a gentile who was following the laws of Moses. Now, the name of Jesus was available for salvation by faith but Cornelius was not aware. But despite his ignorance, he was sowing seeds to the spirit and the time came in which the seeds produced the harvest of faith for him. The good Lord simply used a series of great visions and occurrences to bring faith into his home.

Now there was a certain man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man, and

one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually. 3 About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in to him, and said to him, "Cornelius!" And fixing his gaze upon him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. 5 "And now dispatch some men to Joppa, and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; 6 he is staying with a certain tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea." Acts 10:1-6

Again we know the rest of the story. God had prepared Peter also by a vision and when he came to the house of Cornelius, faith was a natural result of his half-hearted preaching. I say half-hearted because until there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon that household, Peter was not even sure gentiles could be saved.

My summary from Cornelius? His good works worked with his prayers to produce the fruit of faith for him.

9. The force of love

*But now faith, hope, love, abide these three;
but the greatest of these is love.*

1 Cor 13:13

For a long time I wondered why love was the greatest. As a student of the word of faith movement it was hard to understand why faith was not the greatest. I'm not fully there yet but I am getting to understand it more and more.

Now, even more intriguing to me than this scripture on love being the greatest was the one that said that *faith works by love* (Gal 5:6). It was just totally confounding. But now I think I understand.

Let me start by pointing out that there were only very few times that Jesus called anybody's faith great. Many times he talked about little faith, at other times He taught on how mighty a work the faith of the size of a mustard seed could do, but only very a few times did he ever call anyone's faith great. There are two that come to my mind. One, the Syrophenician woman, and two, the Roman Centurion.

The Syrophenician woman had come to Jesus to beg for the healing of her daughter and for certain reasons Jesus was not giving her any response. When she wouldn't let up, the disciples tried to have the Lord give her at least a statement of dismissal. Jesus then tried to explain to her that praying for her daughter's healing was like giving the children's food to

dogs. His reason was that at that time He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Did she leave defeated? No.

*But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, **your faith is great**; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.*

Matt 15:27-28

She got her desire by a manifestation of great faith.

The Centurion' story is also a familiar one. He had a servant who he loved truly and who was deathly ill. This time people spoke positively of this man to the Lord and so He was ready to go and heal the sick man. But the centurion said to Jesus,

...I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Luke 7:7-8

This really was impressive in the ears of the Lord. Please notice what He said in response.

*Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found **such great faith**. When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

Luke 7: 9-10

I want you to notice something in both situations, that the people were propelled into faith by their love for someone else; they were not seeking anything for themselves.

You will notice in both situations that the people did not start out having the impressive statements on their lips. It was when they perceived a possible hindrance to the healing of their loved ones that something inside them rose. In both cases it was an understanding of deep spiritual matters, and great faith was the result. I very much doubt whether they had understood those things fully themselves until that point. In fact I believe it was the Spirit of God that quickened the understanding in them in both instances and so produced faith thereby.

The lesson here is on the power of love.

Love was what pushed these people. Love is so strong. The Bible says that God is love. He is never referred to as *faith*; but He is called love.

Many of us have had nothing but little faith in life and we have been wondering why. Let me at this time suggest an

explanation to you: your selfishness has been the problem. All the times you have gone to try to receive something from God, it has always been for yourself. You have always wanted a new car, house, wife, children, job etc. All of them have been to serve your own satisfaction. You have never gone on a project of love, either for God or for the people of God. No wonder faith has been hard.

You can develop personal faith. Yes, but the manifestation of the Spirit of God in faith is given to those who have a higher goal in life than their own personal satisfaction.

Sometimes we read of great accomplishments of faith in the life of some great servants of God, but it often escapes us that it was not for themselves that they were seeking but for how to bless the generation of the earth that God sent them to.

John Alexander Dowie was a great man of God and a great man of faith. He lived about the turn of the 19th century. He never spoke in tongues like many of us do today but he was so powerfully anointed that raising people from wheelchairs was commonplace. There was a time, I read of it, that he publicly tore off a tumour from a man's face, and new skin grew in the tumour's place as the man was healed instantly.

How did it all begin?

He was a pastor in Australia and the plague was killing people by their scores, many of them his church members. Compassion for the suffering gripped him and great faith to pray healing into the lives of people was born. After that he went everywhere healing people that were oppressed by the devil

Since then many who have read his story have tried at great lengths to get into that level of anointing. Fastings and prayers have been the preferred methods when love is what God is looking for. Many praying such prayers do not have any real compassion for the sick; all they want is a great ministry.

Listen to me; you cannot raise a Lazarus up until the tears of Mary and Martha cause you to weep too. Do you think it was all about anointing and being the son of God that made Jesus able to raise Lazarus? Do you think it is of no consequence that of the very few things to made Jesus cry, this was one of them? Even the Jews around commented, '*see how he loved him*'.

John G. Lake related an account in one of his sermons about how he prayed for a woman that was dying from cancer. He had prayed for many days without any serious manifestation but he did not give up. The woman was in great pain. One day as he headed back to the house where she was he heard her loud crying from pain from all the way down the street. He said that caused him to run the rest of the way and up to her bedroom where she laid. He picked her up in his arms, hugged her close to him and cried from compassion for her suffering. As he laid her back down she was totally healed.

I have personally experienced greatest answers to prayers in intercession when the problems of the person for whom I was praying touched me personally and moved me to tears. That was what James was saying when he said *the effectual fervent pray of the righteous avails much*. The Amplified Bible adds the word *heartfelt* to the fervent.

Many times, I see people run up and down complaining about how their country is bad, how they must go here and there and I wonder why they cannot see the great things the Lord is about to do. The Lord has now helped me to understand that you cannot see except He opens your eyes, and He will not open your eyes until the attitude of your heart changes from 'what can I get?' to 'what can I give?'

Love opens your eyes to opportunities. If you are always thinking of what you can give, how something can be done better for people than it already is, then it will amaze you how much faith will arise in your heart.

Another very good Bible story to use to explain this is concerning Ruth, an ancestress of Jesus Christ, born a Moabitess.

By the law of God, Ruth was outside the commonwealth of Israel and had no claim to the covenant of promise, but we can say that her faith begot for her a place in the annals of the history of faith and the blessings of God. She became an ancestress of David and of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, how did she get into that level of faith; that faith that overcame the curse that God had placed upon the Moabites (Deut 23:3)?

The answer is simple: it was her love for mother-in-law, a woman who had lost everything. She loved Naomi, her mother-in-law, so much she couldn't bear to see her left alone. Here was a woman who had lost her husband and her two sons and was about to lose her two daughters-in-law. She was going to be left alone and without any help that Ruth knew. For her, that would be too much punishment for the old

woman. She would rather suffer widowhood perpetually than have Naomi left alone in her old age. She was absolutely selfless.

Notice that it was appeal to her welfare that Naomi was trying to use to persuade her to go back home. She was telling Ruth to think of herself and her future.

"Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 "Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons, 13 would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.

Ruth 1:11-13

See, selfishness is the mother of unbelief. Once Naomi could get Orpah, the other daughter-in-law, to focus on herself, she was able to forsake faith and return to her gods. But Ruth would not for a moment forget Naomi's welfare; as far she was concerned, her future was not as important as Naomi's present. Ruth was not as not thinking of the Lord God of Israel as much as she was thinking of Naomi. No wonder the Bibles questions how we can claim to love the God that we cannot see when we have not demonstrated that love to the people that we can see (1 John 4:20).

Love is the power.

Let me get back to something that I said earlier about the faith of the widow of Zarephath. My understanding now is that it was her love for the needy which she had shown in the past and which was manifested by her willingness to give to the prophet that made her able to receive him by faith. See, faith is not a selfish instrument.

Just as I mentioned a little earlier, selfishness is the mother of unbelief. Once you are centred upon yourself and what you will get out of life, then you cannot receive the faith of God.

Remember the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness? The reason why Satan was so unsuccessful with Him was that all he was tempting Jesus with were selfish things. He was telling Jesus, ‘focus on yourself. Get food, get glory for yourself. Get fame; you need it’. All these things were focused on Jesus’ person; therefore his ‘faith’ in Satan was too small to make him fall for it all.

See, Satan really can’t tempt with godly things, things of love. He may try to make it look like that, but even the person being tempted knows that this thing is about self. Look at the garden. What did he tell Eve? “You will become wise. You will be like God.” It was all about what Eve would get. Selfishness is what encourages unbelief, which leads to disobedience, just like love produces faith.

Remember we said that great faith is a fruit of sowing to the spirit. Well, we have also established that acts of love are the seeds that we sow into the spirit.

10. The power of righteousness

In the last chapter I expounded about love and how acts of love are seeds to the spirit. Now, I want to emphasize another side of love—the love for God.

First let me explain something about the definition of spiritual things. Anytime you try to define something spiritual, it is very difficult to understand until you give it a physical face. That was why the discussion about faith in Hebrews chapter 11 had to go on into telling us what faith had done in the lives of people whose lives we are supposed to be conversant with, and what it would do in the lives of the reader. This is the same reason why Jesus always used physical things to explain the principles of the kingdom, physical things like seeds, vineyards, farmers, pearls and money. Spiritual things are only recognized and explainable by the physical manifestations.

Now, love is also a spiritual thing, and defining it must be practical. As an example, we define the love of God for man by explaining how He gives to him.

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
John 3:16*

"He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

Deut 10:18

In the same manner, defining the love of man for God will be by practical things.

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him...”

John 14:23

in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

Deut 30:16

Obedience is the definition of the love of man for God.

This obedience does not even yet refer to great things; we are speaking of obedience in the little things that are already revealed, the things that Jesus called, ‘my commandments’. These little things are those expressed in the word of God; things that we can easily obey. At the time of great things it is God who by His spirit sustains you. Your ability to obey great things by faith is a release of the spirit of faith into you as a fruit for how you obeyed in little things. The seed into the spirit is the obedience in little things.

Let me explain further. Do you know it takes a lot of faith to get married? How do you know the will of God? To select the right spouse and marry him or her takes faith. The truth

however is that the faith to do it is determined by how you have been living before God in smaller matters of relationships before then. There are those who do not care that God has a will concerning premarital sex but want to find out His will concerning marriage. No it is not so.

Eating the manna of God

I read something in a printed sermon years ago about the importance of feeding on the manna of God which came back to me as I was writing this book. When I first read it I also did not understand the importance of it, but as the Spirit of God began to give me the understanding I have been sharing with you about faith, I remembered it with better understanding. It will help us understand again the thing I said about faith occurring both as a seed and a fruit, and also this matter of obedience.

The main thing that was taught in that sermon was that what determined the faith of Joshua and Caleb when they went out with the other 10 spies to spy the Promised Land was what they had been eating. *Manna* was the food that God gave the children of Israel in the wilderness and those who had obeyed God in eating the manna and being thankful for it had their hearts prepared to believe God when great things began to appear. Believing in the face of giants can be difficult, but if you had been feeding on the manna of God, then your heart would be open to receive the spirit of faith.

The other people who rebelled when they were told about the giants, including the 10 spies who saw the giants, were the same people who had desired meat and the delicacies of

Egypt, and this is the reason why when they saw giants, the return-to-Egypt option was open and they rebelled against God.

I have come to understand by many studies and observations that there is a close tie between the body and the spirit, and what you do with your body affects the state of your spirit. There was a lie that was widespread in the body of Christ many years ago while I was a university student; people taught that God is only interested in your spirit and your heart and that what is outside is only seen by man. For the reason, it was said, it does not matter how you dress. You know, it was supposed to be a similar thing to what God told Samuel when he was about to anoint David, that God looks at the heart but men look at the outside. But, of course, as most errors are, it is just a twisting out of context of the truth.

Of a truth, what you do with your body affects the state of your spirit. A glutton cannot be sensitive spiritually (please I am not an advocate of punishment-type fasts, but gluttony does deadens the spirit). I know what I am about to say will surprise some people, but the clothes you wear have an effect on your spirit. Why do you think Satan spends so much time trying to corrupt dressing? It is one of his strategies to corrupt people so as to remove faith from the world. Don't ever forget that the real battle is about faith and not just the acts of iniquity. Remember that Jesus wondered whether He will find faith when He returns (Luke 18:8).

Corruption in outfitting is one Satan's strategies to remove faith from people. He placed homosexuals over the fashion industry; men who do not desire women were given the duty

of telling the women how to dress. Many Christians bought it under the deception that it does not matter and they are wondering why even Christian marriages are going the way of the world. Again please, there is a balance to everything; I do not advocate extreme dowdiness because even that has its own corrupting influence. What the Bible advocates is modesty and beauty as defined by the standards of God; the clothes of Aaron were made for *glory and for beauty*, adorned with precious stones (Exodus 28:2). Looking good is good. Beautiful ornaments, colourful, good looking clothes are all good things; the Bible also advocates looking good by anointing your face with oil, which in modern terms describes creams and make-up. The problem is with seduction-aimed designs, which the world now accepts as normal; sexy, they call it. A thing can be beautiful without being fleshly seductive, and *sexy* is evil outside the bedroom.

What you do with your body sexually is one of the strongest physical powers over your spirit, (for more on this, please read my book, *Worship and sex control*). You know at this particular point in writing this book, the TV behind me, tuned to a Christian station, was showing one of the classic Billy Graham sermons, and one of the things he said is that it is very hard for a promiscuous man, or woman, to believe. See, the truth is that sexual immorality leaks the spirit and few things kill spiritual ability like it. If you doubt me, remember David and Solomon; in both lives the only problems they had with the Lord stemmed from leakage of spiritual power from desire for women.

I will teach more on this in the next chapter when we get to

the power of passion.

What I am trying to bring out in this chapter is the power of righteousness. Righteousness simply means to do the *works* that please God. It defines the manner of life that one lives. I am explaining that how you live everyday affects your ability to receive the spirit of faith. That is why the Lord gave us instructions on how we should walk. It is not that He does not want us to enjoy ourselves, but rather He knows, and wants us to know too, that what many call enjoyment cripples them spiritually so that they are then unable to receive the things that lead to real and lasting enjoyment.

The one who walks regularly in the path of good works, keeping away from what is evil, not defrauding his neighbour or walking in the lusts of the flesh is the one who can receive the spirit of faith. Faith is not just about listening to the word of God; there is also an emphasis placed upon the kind of ears and heart that are listening.

Please let me emphasize this again that I am not saying that works is what pleases God primarily, but I am saying that when we are going for great faith, obedience to the righteousness of God which is the expression of our foundational faith in Jesus is what sets us in the proper path.

...the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

1 John 3:7

11. What do you love? (The power of passion)

This time I am not referring to love for someone or God, but I speak of things you love to do, where you love to go and the company you like to keep. What are those things that you really enjoy? These constitute one group of those very important things that set you up for faith or cripple your ability to believe.

Let's start from here.

*How blessed is the man who does not walk
in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his **delight** is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He will be like a tree firmly planted by
streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.*

Ps 1:1-3

You know I mentioned somewhere in the previous chapter about how physical things affect your spirit and I promised to speak more about it; well that is what I am on to now.

Let me state again that how you eat, what you wear, the

parties you attend, the use of chemical stimulants and such things all can affect the state of your spirit. This is why occultists use drugs like *cannabis* (Indian hemp) in demon worship and contacting the spiritual realm.

Now the choice of what you will *like* in life is yours and yours alone. You are the one who decides whether you will enjoy something or not. As a matter of fact most of the things that are used in life for 'enjoyment' do not have any inherent pleasant taste; people cultivate the tastes for them deliberately. Nearly everybody that smokes had a very bad experience on the first stick, but they stuck with it because it was 'cool' and made them feel accepted within a particular group. After a while, they were hooked. Only a few times in my life have I drunk beer, and I do not forbid it on religious grounds, but I do not drink it because, to me, it does not have any pleasant taste to look forward to, and because of my religious training I simply refused to cultivate a habit of it. For me the question is not even whether it is lawful but that even the expediency of taste is absent, so why bother. People drink bitter things to relax and enjoy themselves simply because they taught themselves to enjoy it.

The motivation most times for these habits is nothing more than the society and the need deep inside everybody to be accepted. We fill our thoughts with them, and then they begin to feel good. It is a deep spiritual truth what someone said, that 'feeling follows thought' (I think it was Charles Finney who said it). As we constantly think about something, we begin to like the thing. Whatever you pay attention to is the direction your desires take.

Now, after making your choice to like something, you naturally begin to practice or use it and then the thing begins to affect your spirit. If the fruit of that thing on your spirit is fear, you will become a fearful person who cannot understand why he is always afraid. Depression, which is actually a spiritual problem, is a very common fruit of many things that people indulge in, like drugs and alcohol. Unrighteous sex, for example, leads to neurosis, depression, and many other kinds of diseases such as cancers.

On the contrary, if the effect of your learnt habit on the spirit is joy, joy will always bellow from your belly. If the effect is faith, then faith will be normal to you. Again, as an example, cheerful givers are joyful people who tend to be full of faith; it is simply a fruit of sowing to the spirit. A generous man's heart is not only open to give, but is also able to receive great faith as a manifestation of the Spirit.

Having explained these points let us get back to Psalm 1, which was quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

Notice that the blessed man can be seen as walking not in those wrong places with the wicked, sinners, and scoffers. Also it can easily be noticed that the Psalm never said that the man tries to avoid them! All he does is to love the right thing—the law of the Lord. He delights in the law of the Lord. He rejoices when he sees it and loves to be where it is being taught. It was a deliberate choice he made to enjoy the word of God. Some have said that they find studying the Bible boring, but that cannot be a problem since most things are boring until you make up your mind to enjoy it.

You see, for a long time, and to a large extent till now, I could not understand the craze about golf. I just saw men waking up and down hitting a ball, then chasing it till they got it into a hole. Then one day I asked, and someone who was a fan of golf explained to me the whole aim of the game. Then I started enjoying it bit by bit. I have heard of women learning to enjoy football just so they could have a time of fellowship with their husbands when the game is on. It drew them closer. Until that decision was made, football was boring. This blessed man of Psalm 1 decided to enjoy the law of the Lord.

There are things that set up your heart for great faith and develop your spirit of faith, and they are the things that you must cultivate enjoyment for. This list includes listening to the preaching of the word, the company of believers (those who really believe and talk faith), reading books by teachers of the word, reading the Bible, listening to gospel music and such things. Other good but less important than the former are everyday activities like smiling, laughing, enjoying clean jokes, attending celebrations and dressing neat and looking good. These latter things lighten your spirit; a heavy spirit is the enemy of the spirit of faith.

You want to have great faith?

You must decide to enjoy the preaching of the word of God. You must learn to enjoy reading books of faith. You must deliberately learn to enjoy church and the fellowship of the brethren. The things of God are not hard; all God wants is for you to take delight in them and He will make everything easy for you.

*I rejoice at Your word, as one who finds
great spoil.*

Ps 119:162

Don't try to be entertained by preachers; they are not for entertainment but for simple hearing. You may not need to get excited, you know, jumping and screaming and stuff. Just listen to them. Then you will discover that enjoyment will enter your soul. Many people who started out *enjoying* some preachers never obeyed the word. The seeds that sprang up quickly, in the parable Jesus told about the sower, are types of those that started with enjoyment; they quickly wither (Matt 13:20,21).

What you delight in controls your life.

It amazes me how Christians will spend hours daily watching movies and expect to have faith. A brother told me once that he preferred to listen to music than to read books as if we are talking about different kinds of food. You are not setting yourself up for faith if you don't delight in the preaching of the word of God. I have never seen a Christians who prefers the company of unbelievers not struggle with his faith; the company you keep affects your ability to receive faith from the Spirit.

In life, God allows you make choices on little things and He in turn uses the choices you make to decide the kind of spirit He allows you to have. The spirit of faith is the portion of those who delight in the law of the Lord and so meditates in it day and night.

Let me explain what it means to meditate.

It means more than just to think, though that is a crucial part, but it refers to the thoughts that have spilled into the mutterings from your mouth. It describes what you say to yourself, and what you discuss with your friends and family.

And these words which I am commanding you this day shall be [first] in your [own] minds {and} hearts;

[then] You shall whet {and} sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, {and} teach {and} impress them diligently upon the [minds and] hearts of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets (forehead bands) between your eyes.

And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deut 6:6-9 AMP

The role of admiration

Let me just chip in something about admiration before we leave this chapter. What you admire you tend to focus on, and what you focus on tends to form you into its image. It is deep within the heart and works subtly from there.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Cor 3:18

A young boy wants to be like Michael Jackson or a young girl like Whitney Houston, and without necessarily applying any serious effort, it affects how they walk, talk and sing. Recently I heard that David Beckham went to Japan to play a football match, and overnight over 90,000 Japanese boys changed their hairstyles to that of Beckham. There are even those who admire criminals because of certain things about them that have been amplified, like their wealth and fearlessness. I remember a movie I saw once about a Mafia man which was based on a true story. The chap said all his days as a boy he wanted to be a gangster. The reason? They were above the law and had lots of money. He knew they were gangsters but those other things mattered so much to him. Of course he became a gangster.

Satan uses this subtle work of admiration to turn people into wrong things in life. James Bond is my best example. Here you find a 'perfect' man—handsome, fights evil people, tries to save the world, fearless, invincible and full of up-to-date gadgets; just the thing to woo the heart of every young man. The admiration is deep seated, created by hours of fixing the eyes on him in those lengthy movies. Call a young man James Bond and he will laugh joyfully. Who wouldn't want to be a hero?

But, there is an issue: James Bond sleeps with every lady that crosses his path, including the ones that are enemies (the spies who supposedly love him), even if he has to kill them afterwards. Subtly Satan deadens our consciences to male sexual promiscuity using the weapon of admiration. He sells us a lie without us realizing it, that real men have no holds barred on sex. O, Satan is a liar. The truth is that sexual promiscuity kills heroes. Don't forget Samson and Solomon. Samson was a hero greater than James Bond could ever be, but his roving eyes for women was what killed him. James Bond is fiction; Samson's story is more like what life really is!

Let me say it again: it is your responsibility to decide what you will admire, and you must do it based on understanding.

And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight ...

So that you may surely learn to sense what is vital, and approve and prize what is excellent and of real value [recognizing the highest and the best, and distinguishing the moral differences], and that you may be untainted and pure and unerring and blameless ...

Phil 1:9,10 AMP

Don't get carried away by newspapers and magazines' review and hype of people. Decide based on spiritual intelligence what you will admire, because what you admire tries to turn

you to its image.

There have been a few rap artistes that the first time I heard their music I thought they were the most talented people in the world, but once I listened closer, the words were so filthy I simply refused to enjoy them so I never listened to them again. No matter what manner of star you are, I refuse to dissociate the testimony of your personal life from your fame.

I remember the days of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Nigeria's world famous musician; he was very popular among the people mainly for his great musical talent but I kept on telling them that what I saw most was not his talent but the fact that he was a lawless man who promoted sexual promiscuity and idolatry. Some would answer me he was bold because he used to speak so much against the government; my argument was always that if you smoked the size of Indian hemp he did, you would speak against anything, even your father.

If you are a serial polygamist and a supporter of evil, I refuse to admire you. I only speak of such people with pity and prayer for mercy. The spirit of admiration towards them must not come from me because it may pass on to my children.

Who do I admire?

Great men of faith.

Great industrialists who have affected the world with not just their products but their spirit of righteousness.

I admire men who have made great sacrifices for their God and their faith.

I admire men who remained faithful all their lives to the wife of their youth, even when there were trials.

I admire people who were ready to give up their own comfort so that they might bring progress to many.

I admire people who lived for things bigger than themselves.

Glamour does not make me admire anyone; I admire you for the quality of your spirit.

I have noticed that when you admire a good thing, very soon God gives you the opportunity to perform it. Great givers are born of admirers of great givers. Once your soul takes pleasure in the testimony of good works, the spirit and the ability to perform it is given to you.

I recollect the first time I gave a certain amount of money out as a student (I can't mention the amount now because it is embarrassingly small in my eyes now, but it was a great sum to me then), it was because I saw somebody do it, I was so impressed that I told myself I had to do so, too.

As at the time of this writing, the largest single offering I have been privileged to receive for the work of the ministry was given by a brother who testified that he attended a meeting and heard testimonies of giving, so he thought, without having the money at the time, that he too should one day be able to give that. In a short while, sooner than he had planned, God made it possible and he decided that my ministry was the worthy place for him to put it.

Admire good things, and the spirit of faith will enter into your

heart.

Most of all let us admire the greatest love of all.

*fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and
perfecter of faith...*

Heb 12:2

12. The love of the praise of men

In continuation of our discussion of the power of what you love in this faith walk, I want to in this chapter bring out one of the most potent hinderers of faith that exists, and the words of Jesus is quite a good place to hear it from.

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?

John 5:44

The ability to believe, which is faith in the heart is hindered very much by what the Bible calls vain-glory. When you are more concerned by what people think of you than the impression you will make in the eyes of the Lord, then you are really going to live in unbelief.

I have said again and again in the course of this teaching that God is really the one who helps us to believe. Great faith is not possible by anything inherent in the human nature, but when the Lord sees readiness in the heart, He manifests by the Holy Spirit in the life of that person as great faith. If what people think of you is your primary consideration in your walk as a Christian, then God cannot release His power towards you to produce great faith in you.

The life of Saul, the first king of Israel, will serve to help us understand this very well.

There was a time that God gave him an assignment to go and take vengeance on the Amalekites; the instructions were very specific and there was no chance for misunderstanding. He was to destroy everything, human and animal, and was not allowed to take any of those things even as booty. But he disobeyed God, spared Agag the king, and took many animals for himself and the men.

But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

1 Sam 15:9

Now, disobedience is a manifestation of unbelief, just as obedience to the word of God is the manifestation of faith. God reacted with great displeasure, and this was what He said to Samuel:

“I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.”

1 Sam 15:11

When Samuel went to confront Saul on the matter, he began to give lame excuses. The real spiritual reason was that the supply of the Spirit to help him obey God was not there. The thing that took it away from him and prevented him from obeying the word of God was the fact that what the people

thought of him was more important than what the Lord would think

*...for **the people** spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed."*

1 Sam 15:15.

The concern of Saul was to be popular; he wanted to be a king that listened to the people primarily and did what they liked. To him, God could take a second place in the scheme of affairs. He so desperately wanted to look good in the eyes of people, so much that when Samuel pronounced the judgment of God, he was not as concerned about his fate as he was about his face.

Then he said, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."

1 Sam 15:30

His appearance before the people was more of a bother to him than the outcome of his relationship with God. That attitude cripples faith and makes it impossible for God to breathe into anyone the spirit of faith.

There are people who have had the light of God's word shine into their hearts and who God is directing to change their direction in life by leaving a particular group of people they have been associating with (may be a church or a social

group); they know the truth and in private will tell you this, but they are so concerned about what their friends will say and what they will look like in the eyes of the world. Once that consideration is paramount, then the Spirit of God departs and they return to their old ways. Eventually sin returns full force and anything they might have been delivered from takes them over again. Because they did not want to loose face in the presence of their friends, they lost the presence of the Spirit of God.

R W Shambach told a story of a boss he worked for when he was a young man. Everyone in the office knew of Shambach's faith, and in fact they called him 'preacher'. One day the boss tactfully arranged for him to work overtime, apparently so he could talk with him when everyone was gone. He was doing his work when the boss sent for him. Shambach said when he got there the boss asked him some questions about salvation and faith. He, sensing that the Spirit must have been working on this man, went on to demand that the man gave his life to Christ that night. The man was resistant and eventually said tearfully, "what will my friends say?" In his typical blunt style, Shambach told him his friends will most certainly laugh at him and will call him names but that the salvation of a man's soul is more important. Well, to cut a long story short, the man refused the call of the Spirit of God and Shambach went back to his work.

Next morning came, Shambach got to work and a worker called out to him. "Hey Preacher, have you heard?" "Heard what?" "The boss died last night!"

He died fighting the call of the Spirit of God because of what

his friends would say!

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?

If you want to perish like Saul and die in sin like this boss, then continue worrying about what people think of you before you think of what God thinks of you. Many people have denied the good that would have come to them in life because they are so concerned about their image.

Novel Hayes, an anointed teacher and prophet, told the story of how he became a single man after having been married for years. His wife simply packed her bag and walked out on him one day! Why? He had told her a day or several days before that he had decided to answer the call of God to go into the ministry, and she could not stand to be a Pastor's wife in the face of her circle of friends and society people. She was an elegant society lady!

The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.

Prov 29:25

Small faith, I said, is a seed, which when planted properly by obedience to the will of God in little things, begets great faith. Unfortunately, a lot of people allow the little faith that the Lord has allowed them to die because of 'what will people think?' It was also like that in the days of Jesus.

*Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him (Jesus), but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; **for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.***

John 12:42-43

God has many times allowed supernatural manifestations to occur and has by that means convinced many people about the reality of the gospel. Many have come to know the truth thus but so many times that seed-faith dies because taking a stand for God would mean having to face their society.

I remember the story of a young girl who was sick unto death; the leading specialist hospital in the country then (University College Hospital, Ibadan) had given her up to die and thus discharged her home. Well, someone contacted a man of God who prayed the power of God down in the name of Jesus and the child became well in about one week. The very first day he prayed, at the mention of the name of Jesus, the power of God physically lifted that girl off her sick bed unto the floor. So dramatic was the manifestation that everybody ran. In a few days of praying daily the child became totally well.

But, they were Muslims. Despite the demonstration of the power of God, the parents of this child, who had witnessed everything, refused to acknowledge the name of Jesus because of what their people would say!

The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.

God leads everyone to a point of decision; He gives us all an opportunity. Unbelief and hardness of heart result from a deliberate choice which we made against God at one point in time in life.

Honour comes from God. The very people you are trying to 'belong' with will believe tomorrow and leave you to your perdition. If God decides to honour you, you will have honour. When the time to honour Joseph came, it did not matter that he was sent to jail for purportedly attempting to rape his master's wife. Forget people first and obey God, and in due season you will have honour with the same people. Remember that Jesus said there is a kind of glory that comes only from the Lord Himself.

*...let your heart keep my
commandments...so you will find favor and
good repute in the sight of God and man.*

Prov 3:1-4

It is as you find favour and good repute in the sight of God that you will find it in the sight of man.

They made you a chief or a knight, and that is the reason you want to go to hell when you die! O how blessed are the ones who were disgraced before men in their youth, for theirs is the kingdom of God! They have no face to save and so can easily obey God.

The glory that man gives lasts a short while; they can withdraw it anytime (and God can remove it too), but the one that God gives lasts and lasts and lasts. It lasts into your life

after death, and even spreads unto your children's children.

Pray that God will deliver you from this snare of the fear of man.

13. The foolishness of preaching

The walk of the Christian is spiritual. By this I mean that we are not learning methods but are rather connecting ourselves by a right relationship with the reality of the spirit so that the things of the Spirit of God can be transmitted into our lives. It is not a mechanical way on how-to-do-this and how-to-do-that. All I have been doing is to explain some basic principles that underlie the transmission of the spirit. The Spirit of Christ is transmitted to those who relate with Him by faith and not to anyone who just learns the methods. The life of faith is lived by the transmission of God's energy into the believer. An unbeliever can learn all the methods of a Christians but will not get his results because it is not based on method but on the power of God.

I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

1 Cor 2:3-5

I am explaining this so that we will understand the operation of some things I said in the previous chapter. When I said great faith comes to the one who enjoys the presence of the

Lord and who admires the right things, I did not at all intend to imply that by listening much he will get great understanding and so know the methods to use in faith. No. Rather, I mean that just by being in the presence of the word of God there is a transmission of the Spirit into your heart so that faith is born.

An experience I have had many times is one in which I am present where the word of God is being preached, then a great light of understanding hits me about what to do about a particular situation. I leave there rejoicing because of the revelation and the solution it is producing already. When you ask me what was said, sometimes I can hardly recollect. Now, please don't get the impression that I was probably absent minded; what happened was is that the light I got was so great, and had little to do with the letter of what was being said, and it totally outshone the letters.

I remember when I was contemplating starting to teach on radio. The first time I went to inquire at the station, the bill I was given was so great that I did not go back. Many months passed, and then one day I was in my car waiting to pick my wife up from a church meeting. I was in the car listening to a message by my former Pastor, and then it hit me that the time was ripe to commence the radio message, the cost not withstanding. Now, please do not think that my personal finance or the ministry finance had improved much since the first attempt; all I remember is that I just knew it was time. Well, ask me what the man preached that caused it, and I have nothing to tell you. I went on to commence the negotiations with the station and God showed me by what happened that

He had prepared the way. The broadcasts have been a tremendous blessing to people and have been on for a few years now without interruption and even now runs twice a week. Faith to receive the supplies of God was birthed as I sat in the presence of the preaching of the word that day. I knew it was that preaching that God used to pass that faith into me; I shortly afterwards called the man of God to inquire of his bank account number so I could send him an offering just to appreciate God for the light.

In the presence of God by His word, faith is increased in the heart of those present. The reason is that there is a transmission of the Spirit in the air at that time. Jesus said the words are more powerful than their sound. Their significance is actually in the spirit that is transmitted as they move. When Jesus spoke, the words were carriers of a life imparting spirit.

...the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 6:63

The words are just the method by which God transmits His power. An illustration is seen in the power of Ezekiel's words.

Now it came about as I prophesied, that Pelatiah son of Benaiah died.

Ezek 11:13

He was prophesying, and did not even mention the name of the man who died nor was he talking to him personally at that time. Now there was nothing in his words, physically

speaking, that could kill that quick, but the power in it was toxic to hearts of iniquity.

Relevance today

A lot of times we have emphasized on methods rather than the crude preaching of the word. Listen, if God promised you that you will become, as an example, a great industrialist or maybe you have simply chosen to believe God for that, the great faith to perform it will not come by trying; the great things will not be built because you learned the methods. All you need to do is to just be present at all times where the word of God is going forth, and you will discover that faith to produce it all will be produced in your heart and ideas of what to do will begin to rise up inside you.

It is not my business as a preacher to tell you business ideas; all I have to do is to continue to speak concerning the plan of God, and anybody present with the double-hearing attitude will begin to receive the faith to birth things on the earth. Ideas and the wisdom for great inventions will flow naturally out.

That spirit of faith that is born inside you will make you speak words, and the environment will begin to respond to those words. You will say things as simple as, “we will build a power station,” and government legislations and the business climate will be adjusted to make it possible for you. Banks will be supernaturally connected to you to fund the ideas. Favours that no preacher can describe will open doors for you. That way, no preacher can take the glory. Please read these

words from Paul again.

*I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and **my preaching** were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.*

Paul was tired and afraid, yet miracles were occurring because he preached. A physically poor pastor can produce a billionaire by the power of preaching. The power is in the preaching, and to be healed is in the hearing.

Preaching simply means to proclaim the person, the power and the purpose of God. It is to exalt Him before all to see. He said, “*Say to Zion, behold your God.*”

Preaching is to direct the eyes of people to focus on the true God. As they do, wisdom, healing and grace will be released as each person requires it.

Don't underestimate God.

As a teacher, I have found the spirit of revelation most active in my life when I am in the presence of preaching. Most of the time the revelation is not at all related to what the preacher is saying. In fact I often have to discipline myself to continue to listen to the person speaking because I have become so caught up in the ministrations in my heart. Oh, it is so great.

If you are in need of healing or the fruit of the womb or any

such thing, it is not methods that you need, you need to be in the presence of the word, even when it is not being preached on healing.

For this reason it is so amazing to me when Christians who want to succeed do not have time to abide in the presence of God by His word. Many people only listen to the preaching of psychology and philosophy; things that appear like wisdom because they can easily be understood by the brain. No it is not so necessary.

The power of God is released when the most foolish things are said. Maybe all the preacher says is, “grasses grow by the power of God; all things He does, He does well,” and there and then, a woman who has been waiting for conception gets pregnant on the spot. The Lord just borrows a sperm cell that was left there 7 days ago (which medical science teaches should have degenerated and died), activates it by the power of the word and conception is the result. The spirit of God simply overshadows the whole thing.

I remember a photograph that I believe was among the things that God used to give my wife the power to conceive. I had always blessed my wife and prophesied fruitfulness upon my home, but this day we got a certain Christian women's magazine which had a cartoon drawing of a great hand passing a baby in the hollow of its palm to a woman waiting with outstretched arms. It was so powerful. It ignited in my wife the faith to understand that fruitfulness is not by sex and the timing thereof but that it is a gift of God.

Do you have a vision concerning what you want to contribute

to this life? No matter how great and unachievable it might appear to the natural eye, don't worry. Just keep the vision in your heart. Take it to church, take it to prayer meetings; let the word of God enfold it. Read the word and pray; don't even focus primarily on the vision, just be constantly fed with the Spirit of God, and the faith to produce it will be birthed in you. Even you may not know when it will happen, all you will notice is that an opportunity has come on this particular day, and because faith is now in your heart you will step into it.

14. Getting the Spirits of men

There is a little point I will like to add here on the transmission of the Spirit, and that is on how to tap into the manifestations of the Spirit of God that you have seen in the life of other men. Usually these are men who have gone before you and done great things that you admire.

First let me explain why I chose to title this chapter ‘Getting the spirits of men’. (By the way, we have a two-part audio series with the same title in our catalogue, and is still available from our ministry).

When I say the spirit of men I refer to the power of God that has been shown in the lives of some men as unique characteristics. For example we can say that Solomon had the spirit of wisdom, Bezalel had the spirit of the craftsman, and David had the spirit of a warrior. Now, these are parts of God manifested in the lives of these people, and such things still happen everyday. In summary it refers to the particular area in which certain people are particularly gifted or anointed.

Now if you see a quality in someone which you desire, there are things that you can do that will make the anointing pass from that person to you, or at least make a similar spirit be given to you. These things are many but the one I want to emphasize here is again the power of words, which is something similar to the power of preaching that I explained in the previous chapter.

You tap into someone’s spirit if you are always in their

presence, hearing their words. The interesting part is that even if you are unable to be in their physical presence (maybe the person is no longer living or lives in a far country), their recorded words (audio) and printed words are just as powerful. For example, there is a man of God whose anointing I covet, so I went and got a complete collection of all his messages and started reading; his boldness of faith always excites me and seeps into my life. If you are an industrialist by calling, you need to grab the materials of some leaders before you in those fields whose characters and successes are to be emulated, and read them with zeal.

I have personally found out that it is not the same when somebody else is writing about the man in question. Biographies are informative but they hardly impart the spirit. Unauthorized biographies are usually of very little help. Autobiographies are better but don't fully deliver the real thing except it contains their words, not just stories of who gave birth to who at what time and under which circumstances.

The most powerful materials however are the ones that contains their words; there are things that drop as a man just talks, things that he can never prepare ahead of time. One of such books that had such an impact on me is one which contains one of the last sermons by Lester Sumrall; the book is titled, 'Courage to conquer'. While reading the book the zeal of God was just gripping my soul and the desire to please God in all that I do was just growing stronger.

When great men write, read the books; their great spirits drop into your life. When you can get hold of their audio, don't let

Great Faith Can be Yours

it pass you by. There is a connection to a spiritual gift as those words flow through you.

15. The faith of Abraham

Having taught all these things up till this point it will be good to examine some things about Abraham, the father of faith, before we finish up.

Now, what I am trying to do in this whole teaching is to help people see that the great people of faith were actually men and women like you and me who did some simple things, those simple things that matter before the Lord. No one is born with great faith, and anyone can attain great faith. God is the author of faith and He makes it a personal duty to build up your faith and give you manifestations of the spirit of faith when needed. All the faith that you need to come to God is a very, *very* small one. I know this because the Lord Jesus used to rebuke His disciples as having little faith, yet the people were following him. If indeed they had no faith at all, they would not be His disciples in the first place. That goes to show that the faith needed to follow is smaller than what was called little faith.

Now, once you have that tiny faith, you are ready for the great one which God will lead you into by Himself. Concerning faith, let me say it again, the Bible emphasizes to us that the renown men of faith within its pages are men of similar weaknesses and issues like us; no supermen there.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six month.

James 5:17

The life of Abraham shows the progress of faith in the life of one walking with God.

The call of Abraham

When God called Abraham, he was not at all a man of great faith. Any man with little faith will answer a supernatural call. We must understand something I mentioned earlier about the power of vision as a stimulant of faith. See, God knows what to use to stimulate your obedience. A vision, or any other supernatural tangible manifestation, is a very power stimulus. The use of one or the other depends on whether the Lord decides that you are deserving of it or not. We have already seen many things that affect that decision.

I believe that in the case of Abram, among the things that God looked at that made Him come to him with a supernatural manifestation in his calling were his attitude toward his wife, his personal faithfulness in little things and his intense personal desire for greatness in posterity.

General calling

Lest many think I am saying that God calls perfect people I need to clarify this again. Abram was not perfect when he was called, but he demonstrated certain qualities that would serve as templates for spiritual growth in a walk with God. Actually, before the major calling we see in the life of Abram, there was a general call he answered. This is the same call that goes out from God everyday to everybody in their hearts, and it is the call for righteous living and acknowledging God. It is a call to

live above the moral standards of the society. If you have no regard for that, there will not be any special calling in your life.

Now, concerning Abram I mentioned three things that I believe were important in the decision of God to give him the special call. Let me explain each one.

His wife

The way a man treats his wife, his companion by covenant, affects so much how the Lord regards that man. In the book of Malachi, one the most serious charges that God brought against the people of Israel was their treacherous treatment of their wives.

...you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

Mal 2:13-14

A wife is a companion by covenant. She is not your inferior in any way but a joint-heir with you, equal in every degree. She is not subordinate because of inferiority but because of the need to have the proper flow of power in the home. Her role is that of a second-in-command; before God her position is just

as important as yours and her personality is as unique as yours. Her reward will be determined by how well she fulfills her function while yours will also be determined by how well you fulfill yours. You are not, as a man, constitutionally better than her at all.

Be sure that one of the things that the Lord judges you on is how much love and regard you show to your wife.

Listen to this: a woman who has left her freedom to begin to take orders from you is to be treated with all the love available. A good wife forsakes her personal dreams to take care of her home and children, to be a good assistant to her husband as he directs the whole family in the course of the purpose of God for their lives; she is to be highly esteemed for that. Treat her rough and you will have God to contend with.

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7

In the case of Abram there was a real marriage marked by devotion to one another even when Sarai did not bear any children. It is instructive to note that apart from the cases of Adam and Eve, and Christ and the church (or God and Israel), Abraham and Sarah were the only examples in scripture that I know that was used to teach real marriage. There is a reason for that.

I feel deeply sorry for those who treat their wives like rags; the Bible says that God does not give holy things to dogs. The calling of God is holy.

Faithfulness

Another thing about Abram that made him ready for the call of God was that God saw a dedicated man in many of life's affairs.

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Gen 18:19 KJV

There was a purpose for the call of Abram and the fact that he already displayed signs of handling little responsibilities as the leader of a household affected God's esteem of him. God's purpose was to be effected through many generations and it was important that the covenant be passed on to subsequent generations. The ultimate purpose of the call would only be effected after a nation had been raised up from the descendants of this man. For this reason it was important that the man of the covenant would be one that would pass on the teachings to his descendants. I believe this is a very crucial thing in God's decision to call Abram.

His desire

Have you noticed that God called Abraham using a promise as *bait*?

*Now the LORD said to Abram,
"Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing.*

Gen 12:1-2

Abraham did not go out to suffer; he went out to receive a blessing from God. There are many who think following God means you must not want anything good for yourself, but that would be incorrect. Following the Lord means that you trust Him to provide everything you need and to decide what is good for you and what is not. The doctrines that glorify pain and suffering are not of God but are adaptations of eastern religions into Christianity. God has never told anyone to *enjoy* pain or hardship. All He ever said was to *endure* them *until* the time of His promise. Pain and suffering are temporal, and they always give way to an eternal weight of glory.

*They afflicted his feet with fetters,
He himself was laid in irons;
Until the time that his word came to pass.*

Ps 105:18-19

It is not right to go out to look for pain and suffering just for the sake of pain and suffering. If you think that would please God you have been deceived. However if pain and suffering comes while you are pursuing righteousness and the pleasure of God, then you must take it as a soldier and endure.

God called Abraham with the promise of a reward, but that blessing was to come by a covenant of walking with God.

From reading the account of Abraham's life, one can easily see that there were a number of desires about his life that he had. One, he wanted to have an offspring. Two, he wanted to have lands, not just for living and taking care of himself but so that he could become a nation. Each generation of mankind tends to have a craving that is common among them. For example, the quest for having the wealth to simply not lack and to have the good things of life is common in these our days. I believe that in the time of Abram, to become a nation was certainly a common desire of men.

Those were the very things that God promised Abram. He was to become nations, and his descendants were to possess lands. The memory of his name was to be blessed.

That was the focus of his walk. His desire for a name in posterity and a country of his own would be fulfilled if he walked faithfully with God.

The power of resonance

There is a very powerful spiritual principle I want you to understand here, and I call it the power of resonance. Resonance is a principle in physics in which the amplitude of vibration of an object is greatly increased when a force with a similar frequency is applied to it.

The spiritual application is that when your desire, your deep desire, coincides with and agrees with the desire, plan and purpose of God, then great power will be revealed in your life to make it come to pass. The grace of God will literally take over everything in you until that desire is fulfilled. God will personally take you through the school of faith so that you can come to the place where your faith will be able to create that desire of God on the earth.

Let me explain.

How grace works

Anytime God wants to do something on the earth, He must involve a man.

*The heavens are the heavens of the LORD,
But the earth He has given to the sons of
men.*

Ps 115:16

It is agreement between God and man that produces effect on the earth. God has many beautiful plans for this earth, but

each plan can only come into existence as it is activated by someone's faith. The ones that have been produced are the ones that people have agreed with God upon. Once we can believe a thing, it immediately becomes possible.

All things are possible to him who believes.

Mark 9:23

All the great inventions of life are those things that God prepared in the heavens and which somebody on the earth had the *guts* to believe they could be done. When the person's faith agreed with the plan or desire of God for mankind, grace was released into his life to produce that thing. Faith is the connection.

What I am explaining is the great inventions are products of spiritual communications. An understanding of this was what gave Charles Townes the Templeton Award in 2005. He recognized that his discovery/invention of the maser and laser phenomena was no accident and opined that it was the same way that prophets get their inspiration that he got the idea for the laser.

Great inventions and ideas come like that. Of a truth many who popularized them were not the originators but rather are people who ran off with the light introduced through another; the real point of contact of the spirit with mankind, that is the person who first introduced the idea, is often never known. We only learn the name of the fellow who took the glory.

What am I saying?

You may live in a bad community; underdeveloped, poor and rough; yet God has a plan for beauty, for progress and for prosperity. However, if no one will believe with Him to bring it to pass, the rest of the people will continue to suffer. It only takes one person who will go like Abram and walk with God into the manifestation of faith. It takes time, but you will get there and then your name will become very great.

What are the desires of your heart?

No matter how great they are they can be fulfilled if you'll just hold on to them and walk with God. It may take time to build your faith to that level but it will be done. Know for sure that God is actually looking for you, He is looking for those He will use to do those things.

Somebody has to build power companies in third world countries to eradicate the problems of power supply.

Somebody has to build good and inexpensive health care systems.

Someone will create an educational system that will make illiteracy in the third world countries history. It can be done.

There must be a Joseph that will help protect the harvests. One of the major problems of the third world is pockets with holes. They work hard, harvest little, and even that little is quickly wasted for lack of adequate processing and storage. The time of favour for nations like Nigeria has come; we need Josephs.

Respect your desires; don't sell them quickly on the altar of

comfort and a good job. God needs those desires to work for the rest of the people. Start thinking like Abraham; start desiring a great name and nations to be born out of your bowels. Believe me, it will happen!

Once you can believe it, then God will make all the power and resources necessary available. It is not power or ability; it is just your faith in action.

That is how grace works.

16. Back to Abraham

In the last chapter we began to see why God called Abram and how his desires were important to God. We also saw the principle upon which grace is released according to the desires and faith of a person.

So, when God wanted to begin a phase of the plan for the redemption of mankind, Abraham's desire for a place in posterity was exactly what God needed. "I give you a name forever on the earth; you do My will with it."

That was agreed upon, and then the work began.

The main work was to build up the faith of Abraham.

It was God's duty. God loves to take charge of His own things and His plans. You cannot come to God with great faith because you don't even know what it is. All that is possible with man is a little bit of faith; God will teach you the rest.

You may say that Abram leaving his father's house was a great step of faith. Well, it was a step of faith, but not as great as we are wont to think. I say this because it is evident that he was already used to moving. After all, where he departed from was not Ur, it was Haran. It was his father Terah that departed from Ur. God is so good; He knows where to start you from. When Abram left, it was not much greater faith than many people have exercised today. The real great faith in the life of Abraham was taught him by God over the next few decades of a close walk. The good God used all his experiences: deliverance, wealth from favour, increased productivity,

visions *etc*, to increase his faith.

When Sarah was rescued from Pharaoh supernaturally after Abram claimed she was his sister, God was teaching him that He was his shield and protector. You will notice that after almost every major experience Abram would build an altar and call upon the name of God. The reason was that he would have just discovered another side of God.

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Gen 12:7

Many times Abram would become discouraged, then the Lord God would take him out and show him the vision of stars and sands, and again a personal word would come to him, “*so shall your descendants be.*”

Visions and personal words are so powerful, and the Lord used them severally to encourage Abram’s faith. A time came when his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, which means “father of a multitude”, so that he too would begin to prophesy like God about the destiny that he desired. Every time he called himself by his new name, he was prophesying and releasing creative power into the air.

...in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Rom 4:17

The birth of Ishmael was a product of a mistake, granted; but it was good he made it for a number of reasons. One, the rest of us can now learn from it. Two, and most importantly, God employed it to prepare him for the sacrifice of Isaac.

When God asked Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, it was a great sacrifice of obedience. The Bible tells us that Abraham loved Ishmael; he wasn't casting away an unwanted child.

The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son.

Gen 21:11

It was not like it might have been in our modern day in which they could simply move to another house in another town. In their situation, it was sending them into the wilderness with nothing. All he gave them was some bread and a skin of water. The child suffered and almost died of thirst and hunger.

It was his first experience in sacrificing a child for God. That was training for a test to come. Notice that here he was not personally killing the child nor was there a promise the fulfilment of which depended on him. It was a simpler step of faith than sacrificing Isaac, but it was a necessary step in training.

In all, it was a continuous walk that finally culminated in the sacrifice of Isaac.

The school of faith is really a school; in it you have classes

and levels. As you succeed in one level you move on to another. There are many who have never walked with God in little faith who want to jump into manifestations of great faith just because they read someone's story somewhere. You can't do that by yourself; but as you walk with God everyday, He will help you grow and when necessary give you a manifestation of great faith.

Isaac's sacrifice was the day of his examination.

*Now it came about after these things, that
God tested Abraham...*

Gen 22:1

He had been in the school of faith, and now it was the time of test. What was being tested was his faith. God wanted to know whether he had really learnt everything he was being taught. On a deeper level of understanding, actually what God was doing was to demonstrate to every being in this creation that Abraham deserved the blessing that he was about to swear an oath to concerning him. The success of Abraham did not take God by surprise; He had trained him by Himself.

Abraham's success was not just that of Abraham as the student of faith, but also the pride of God as the teacher. God is able to take any willing student to any level of faith. Abram started as a man of little faith and he ended as Abraham, the father of faith—great faith.

If you will walk with Him, He will teach you too. And that is the reason for this book.

17. A personal walk with God

The whole aim of the exposition in this book, as the title implies, is to get each person to walk in great faith before the Lord. I have shown in summary that it is actually God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit that causes us to walk in great faith.

for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Phil 2:13

I have also shown how the Spirit of God manifests as the spirit of faith in the time of need, even when our faiths have not developed to that level. We have also seen, from the life of Abraham, that great personal faith is taught by the Lord Himself, and he can teach faith to anybody that is willing. He can take you to any height possible if you will constantly walk with Him.

I said this earlier but I need to emphasize it, that all the great plans and blessings that God has for mankind can only be released into the world as individuals rise up by faith to obtain them. Just like Abraham, what you will download unto the earth by faith will not be for you alone, though you will be blessed by it, but for multitudes of people after you.

...in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Gen 12:3

One of the major reasons why the faiths of people have not risen to great levels is that God really doesn't have the time to be teaching you on faith to get food and raiment. Those are things that are added to you as you progress in your lessons toward the real faith. The real faith is to walk with God and receive from Him the desires of your heart that will bless multitudes.

Every beautiful nation of this earth was built by the faith of people and God wants to build third world nations into earthly beauties; but until people begin to take hold of things by faith, it will not happen.

What experiences try to teach us is that *even if God were to open the windows of heaven* these things cannot be. I am a Nigerian and I have heard it from Nigerians again and again. The corruption and structural decay that have been in the society have made men come to that conclusion. They have come to accept that nothing good can come out of the place.

I hold a different viewpoint.

I believe that *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.*

I believe that Jesus will not return until *all* His enemies have been made a footstool for His feet.

I believe that with God nothing shall be impossible.

I believe that the things that we see in those advanced countries can be created anywhere.

I believe that all God needs are people who can believe it.

I believe that God has been working over the years to create faith in the hearts of the Josephs that He will use.

I believe that my assignment is to sound the call to those Josephs that the time for manifestation has come. ‘*Say to Zion,*’ He said, ‘*behold your God.*’

Satan has been very busy persuading the people who God has called that all they need care about is what they will eat, drink and be sheltered with in this life. He has used the fear of tomorrow to make the prayer points of Christians nothing more than those of the gentiles, when God is calling for people who will build great enterprises, great cities, and great governments everywhere.

I do not believe that popular doctrine in the body of Christ that Satan rules over the world and that is why there is trouble everywhere. The truth is that man still rules over everything.

*The heavens are the heavens of the LORD,
but the earth He has given to the sons of
men.*

Ps 115:16

The fall of Adam did not change that. The problem has been with sin and men departing from faith in God. Problems in this life are the results of our sin.

*...and so death spread to all men, because
all sinned.*

Rom 5:12

Every time we hold on to God by faith, Satan is always pushed back. It is not just enough to call yourself a Christian; your faith must be bringing out of heaven blessings for mankind on the earth. You cannot be the one running up and down looking for where there are blessings. You are a creator of life by faith.

You have been born again for a while, or maybe you have just given your life to Christ, I want you to know that God's demand of you is that you allow Him build your faith. You must recognize that everything, I mean everything, that has happened to you, good or bad, is being used by God to build your faith if you respond correctly. God wants you to get to a level of faith so that with you, anything will be possible.

See, when we say anything, one of the things that distract people is that they start thinking, "do you mean I can create another Jupiter?" It seems so ridiculous that it stops meaning anything.

Let me say this clearly: If God wants you to create Jupiter, then He will work in you until the idea will no longer appear ridiculous to you. Other people may not grab it, but you will. But let us leave Jupiter the planet aside; there is something as outlandish as Jupiter in your mind that God wants to create through you. I am personally tired of Christians always scheming and studying just to get better jobs. Why can't they start believing God so that they will be the ones giving out thousands of jobs? Why can't they be the creator? Many people who have been denied jobs or sacked do not realize that *that* is part of their training in faith. There are steps you take in desperation which are serving to help you discover the

power of God, and so strengthen your faith. After that, you will build an altar like Abraham and call upon the name of God. Those altars are built after one experiences the power of God in reality.

Many of us do not yet know the name of God. We have listened to sermons with titles like, ‘the twelve names of God’, ‘the names of God in the New Testament’, ‘the names of God in the Old Testament.’ We have all the Hebrew names of God in our heads. But those things don’t move God because He knows they are just letters to us.

Let me tell you the name of God that matters. It is the one that you give Him by yourself as a result of the encounter you have had. When David was challenged by Michal for his misdemeanour of dancing almost naked before the ark; he did not say, “*I was dancing before the God who is the all-wise all powerful Jehovah tsikkenu who dwelleth in light unapproachable*”. (Many of us would have said that as if we knew what light can be approached and which one cannot be approached). No; rather, this was what he said.

So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD.

2 Sam 6:21

Now get this; that was the name of God to him. The name of God is not just what He is, but what He is *to* you.

But you have not allowed Him help you in the time of trouble. In the time of need you have run to every uncle you know and every embassy representing a prosperous country. You have refused to say *I will not leave you until you bless me*. You have denied yourself the opportunity to be trained in faith.

Oh, how God misses to be called by such names.

I am a husband and a father, apart from being a pastor. Among the many names I have been called by my wife, few have moved me like when she bought a book for me on my birthday the year after we got married and wrote on it, '*to my Husband, Teacher and Mentor*'. It touched the centre of my being. Honey, Sweetheart, Sugar, Baby are all good and romantic names but none is as stimulating from my wife as when I am acknowledged for what she feels about me from experience. Indeed I was, and still am, her teacher and mentor in the walk of faith.

Daddy is a good name from your son, but not nearly as good as when your hear him say, "I know my daddy will buy my own for me." He says that in the face of his friends and cousins who are showing off their toys and new clothes. He is saying, "I have a father who is *El sha-dad*."

God wants to hear such things. He wants to hear a real name and not just a memorized one.

When I call Him, I call Him my Hope. He knows I know what I am saying. He is my reason for expecting great things in life despite what circumstances may try to say.

He made my wife conceive and bear children. He gave me

money to be generous even when people are full of grumbling. He keeps me confident even when many people see only calamity coming.

When I say, 'father I thank you', before I eat, it is not just a religion. I am a doctor and I have seen people that have food and literally cannot eat it because of one disease or another. I am old enough in life to have seen again and again those that can eat but have no food.

I have believed Him for great things which I know He will do. He is my supplier.

He said to me,

*Behold I cause prosperity to flow towards
you like a river, and the wealth of the
nations like an overflowing stream.*

So He is my prosperity.

I am a preacher and I have received in the spirit hundreds of millions of Naira and US dollars to preach this all-powerful gospel of God. I call Him my supplier and He knows I know what I am saying.

See, I noticed that at a time the people of God had obeyed God in everything but He still had a bone to pick with them. What was it?

*Hear, O My people, and I will speak;
O Israel, I will testify against you;
I am God, your God.
"I do not reprove you for your sacrifices,*

*And your burnt offerings are continually
before Me.*

*"I shall take no young bull out of your house
Nor male goats out of your folds...*

*"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving
And pay your vows to the Most High;
Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me."*

Ps 50:7-9,14,15

The sacrifice of thanksgiving is that which He did not command but which one offers because He has done something great. In short, God was unhappy because they were not allowing Him to do great things for them. (Please be sure to read my book, *Acquiring life by faith*, for more on this.)

What I have tried to say here is that you too can come to the place of great faith, which will produce great things in life, if you will be patient and observe all the things we have discussed as the ingredients for developing great faith. God has never forsaken you. He has never forgotten you. Even when you were denied things that you desired and when it seemed that the devil had the upper hand in our life, God was still there. There was a lesson to learn in those circumstances, and there was a spiritual hindrance to be put out of your life.

The problem with us is that we only look at each occurrence in isolation when the Bible says that the real thing that God is doing can only be seen when we look at the whole picture.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Rom 8:28

Imagine if Joseph gave up on God because of his imprisonment and decided to forsake serving Him. The person without understanding would have said that God failed Joseph when the truth is that Joseph would have only departed *before* the day of his salvation. There was an appointed season when his salvation was to come.

They afflicted his feet with fetters, he himself was laid in irons;

Until the time that his word came to pass.

Ps 105:18-19

18. Due season and faith

If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth.

Eccl 11:3

One of the main spiritual concepts connected to faith is that of *due season* and I wish to touch on it before we conclude.

Due season is not a set time as in a date and the clock time of the day. God does not use time the way we see it, and this is why in the Bible we read that God may appear slow in the eyes of people when in reality He is not. This is what Peter was saying when he said that *the Lord is not slow concerning His promises.* (2 Pet 3:9)

God sees time in the sense of the events contained therein.

Sometimes we pray like this: “God, this makes five years that I have been in this situation and five is the number of grace, so this year is my year of breakthrough.” Or we say things like, “God cannot allow me to be in this place for so long,” and what we are thinking is that God will soon be tired of our joblessness. Really it does not work like that.

God counts time only as it fulfils events. Let us look at Abraham again.

From the time Abram was called to the time of the birth of Isaac was 25 years. Why did it take so long? The reason is that God was building the faith of Abraham to the place where

he could receive Isaac and keep him. We have seen in previous chapters how it was God that built the faith of Abraham. Until you reach the place of strength to receive some things, God cannot release them. The strength of which we speak is the strength of character and that of faith.

The blessings of God are weighty; indeed they are heavy. If they come upon you when you are not yet ready, they will be the source of your ruin. Saul was the personification of the unpreparedness of Israel for a king, and the authority of a king that was conferred upon him was his ruin. No wonder Paul explained about the importance of the word of God.

And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance...

Acts 20:32

Notice that the word first builds you up before it delivers anything to you.

I have explained this so that you might understand again that God has not forgotten you; He is only preparing you. You will quicken the time of your blessing by being careful to give thanks for every situation that you are in with an attitude of learning whatever the Holy Spirit wants to teach you from it. There are wrong attitudes inside you that need to be removed, maybe, and that is what He is still working on. If you start grumbling and complaining, then you will stay there longer, and worse case scenario, you die therein. Remember Israel and the journey to the Promised Land. All those who mumbled and grumbled perished in the wilderness.

Instead of “God, why me?” say, “Dear Father, I thank you.”

As you do that, your faith will be built up, and one day you will discover that believing God is so easy for you and the manifestations of God will become common place. Then you will simply say a thing and it will come to pass. You will speak against a fig tree and it will wither. Such faith and power is not built overnight, it comes from much training, and much testing. You can't study to get it, nor can you speak in tongues and confess it into existence. You must wait, and in its season, it will come.

19. Praying and faith

Can one pray to have faith? Can you ask God to increase your faith and your faith will increase? Many have said that it not right to pray for faith, but let us see how much answer we can give to this important question at this time.

Though every form of prayer is a manifestation of faith and indirectly affects your faith, there are a number of ways to pray and your faith will be affected directly.

A prayer of thanksgiving builds up your capacity to believe. In my opinion this is one of the most crucial. It is vital that you give thanks in every situation you find yourself, as the Bible says that is the will of God (1 Thess 5:18). As you see God in everything and recognize that all things are working together for your good, your heart will become healthier, and faith will rise out of it.

But a prayer I want to talk about is one that we must come to when our faith becomes weak before our very eyes and we recognize that we are about to faint. At such times you will try to confess but your tongue will refuse to say the right things. You know you should believe but fear grips your heart like a strong soldier.

What do you feel when you have done all things right, prayed all the right prayers, confessed all the right words and yet you are diagnosed with cancer?

What do you do when you have believed God for your health *and* rejoiced and praised, yet when you see the doctors report

you have only gotten worse?

What do you do when you fast and pray, intercede for people and declare boldly that you have overcome the devil, yet you get home and your baby is dead?

What do you do when as a man of faith you have given and confessed, yet money refused to come; your children went to school ‘by faith’ that morning but were sent back by works by the authorities for not paying?

You want to rejoice but tears come pouring forth.

You want to praise God forcefully but every opening of the mouth produces wailing.

At a point Jesus looked at Peter and said, *“I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, but when you are converted strengthen your brethren.”*

He said that because He understood that events in life can happen that will assail your faith and want to make it fail. At this particular point Satan was planning to use all the negative events of life possible to sift them all as wheat. The very thing they believed and derived hope from was about to be removed from them. This is the kind of time that faith really begins to get weak. These men had left all they had—careers and family, to follow Jesus, and He was about to be taken away from them forcefully, against all their assumptions. If their faiths failed, then Satan would have succeeded. Jesus had to pray specifically for Peter so that he might champion the recovery of faith.

David said it thus,

*...when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to
the rock that is higher than I.*

Ps 61:2 KJV

When the events that happen in life seem to have only proven that your faith is false, and your faith therefore becomes weak, it is time to pray.

Let us use Jesus here as our example of how to pray.

The time of the cross

For many months Jesus had been preparing his disciples for His departure. He had been telling them again and again that He would be taken from them, but when the time to go to the cross came, He began to faint in spirit. I know many people think that this could not have happened with Jesus, but let us not forget that He also had a body and was human. Spiritual understanding and revelation had shown Him that it was to be beaten and killed that would mark His departure. The more He contemplated this, the more pain gripped His soul. So He went to pray, and in His prayer He told the Father just how He felt.

*“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass
from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”*

Matt 26:39

I need to point this out because many of us have the erroneous belief that Jesus was never afraid of anything and as a person

of faith you must stand boldly at all times. When the times that we were unable to stand boldly, we judged ourselves as failures.

The truth is that what marked Jesus as different from us was not that He was not afraid but that He knew what to do what times call for fear; He knew to pray, and in His prayers He said things the way they were. He was not trying to be *correct* according to the doctrines and teachings on prayer, He just said it the way it was, but at the end His consecration to God was stated.

...yet not as I will, but as You will.

I want you to know that it is okay to cry before God.

In 2002, at the annual convention of my alumni fellowship I heard one of the most powerful messages I had ever heard in my life. The man of God introduced me to the knowledge of the life of Job as I had not heard it up till then. In summary, he said, Job's story was placed in the Bible by God to "cure the backsliding of the saints forever."

Job was in his time the world champion in trusting God and obeying Him, yet all the calamities imaginable in life befell him in one day. Until the day of Jesus nothing worse ever happened to anyone. Now, I remember this at this time because of what he said about crying. He said Job cried but his cry was directed at God. All the troubles of his soul he poured out before God. He never cried against God, he cried to Him. That preacher taught me that day that it is okay to cry.

(Jesus) in the days of his flesh... offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.

Heb 5:7 KJV

Many of us are 'strong' in faith, or we try to be. Real faith does not mean you never want to cry; real faith is, 'who do you cry to?'

I remember that message that day; it was for me, and for me primarily. In fact the man of God mentioned my name at the beginning. I still have the tape. He turned to me as he started his message and said, "the ways of God are wonderful, Pastor Bankie." He began to preach. Tears flowed down my face throughout the message. I was sitting on the front row; I sat fixed in my seat with my hands holding my cheeks and the tears reaching the top of my shirt. That was one message of love from God to me.

Shortly before then I had suffered a personal tragedy. What was to be my first child died in the mother's womb at about 8 months of pregnancy. Now, get this, I was a man of faith who had taught my wife faith. I never had any doubt about the pregnancy; after all, she conceived by faith. I was joyed that I was to soon be a father; I prophesied and prayed over her and the baby almost everyday. I remember writing a mail to a friend about it and I wrote that I prayed enough to raise an army. I was trusting in God and I meant it. I look back now and I really cannot say this was what was wrong. By my walk with God I would have learnt a lesson from it if it was from

misdoing. I never spoke wrongly or thought wrongly.

There was an experience one day that is quite interesting. A few days before that my wife had been complaining that she was not feeling the baby move much and the doctor said it was small for age. Well I prayed over her as usual and just relaxed in God's hands. On this day my wife was looking down and I asked what the problem was. She said she had not felt the baby kick that day. I moved close to her, place my hands upon the pregnant tummy and began to speak words of consolation. I released all the prophecies concerning childbirth and health that we had learned and told her simply that everything was alright. After saying that I said to the baby, "Now give your mum a kick so she'll know everything I said is true."

As soon as the words came out of my mouth, my wife shouted and jumped with excitement. Why? The baby gave her a strong kick just as I asked it to. Now, what more of a sign can one ask from the Lord? Now you can imagine with what assurance I faced the rest of the journey. But, one day she went into premature labour and the baby was born *still*. The doctor called it intra-uterine demise. You want to know what is called the trial of faith? That was it!

I remember at a point as things were progressing after the premature labour had commenced, I looked at the whole thing and things were just going so wrong I went into the guest room of my home, sat on the floor and cried. I cried and cried and cried. I looked up and said in many words, "Lord, you are my trust; why are you letting this happen to me?" There was confusion in my soul as a result of all the things happening. I

am a doctor and so was supposed to understand (and mentally I did), but when it is your wife, your baby and your faith, the story is different.

After the ill-fated delivery and when all our friends had gone from her hospital room, I took my wife's hands in mine and together we gave God thanks for all His goodness and mercies. From the bottom of our hearts we thanked Him for He is ever faithful. I remember that as part of his consolation attempts, one of my students sent me a teaching tract titled, *God cannot fail*. It was a tract I wrote and which my ministry had distributed thousands of to many people. I looked at my wife that night as she slept under sedation and said to God, "Please, if this is a trial of faith, I think it has gone far enough. Don't let anything happen to my wife."

Now, it was shortly after this that I went for that convention and the man of God began to preach on the sufferings of Job that was recorded to cure the backsliding of the saints forever. It was such a personal message for me. God sent me consolation. He was saying it was not a failure of faith but a trial thereof. It was not that Job did what was wrong but that God might demonstrate his faithfulness and by that trial lift Job to another level.

Many people have turned away from their faith because something went wrong. They felt if God was with them nothing would go wrong. Unfortunately it is not so. Many of the heroes of faith in the book of Hebrews chapter 11 lost things because of their faith. The thing about faith is that in whatever happens your heart comes out stronger in God and your dependence upon Him never wavers. When Job said,

“the Lord gave and the Lord has taken, blessed be the name of the Lord,” it was not a sound of unbelief or lack of understanding, as many teachers of faith have tried to imply; it was an inspired statement of faith.

Listen to what Paul said about his experience at a time.

For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.

2 Cor 1:8

When your faith begins to appear threatened by what is going on, get on your knees and speak candidly to the Lord.

Confess all that He is to you.

Give Him thanks and praise.

If you are afraid, tell Him “Lord I think I am afraid.” You know you should not be afraid but you are, and that is why it is more like a confession of sin. Confession of sin releases it out of your life. Sin is not only adultery and stealing; doubt and unbelief are grievous sins. Say, “Lord I trust in you, help me against fear.”

Look, let us read the psalms and see how David and the Messiah prayed. The prayers were candid, sometimes appearing like doubt to our modern school of faith; but once they are not complaining against God but are petitions and words of our trust in Him, it cannot be unbelief.

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb 4:16

20. Why?

We may wonder why these bad things have to happen. I don't fully understand too but let me share a bit of what I know with you.

Please don't forget that it is how we respond to the adversity that really concerns the Lord and what really counts spiritually. From the account about Job we learn that what we say is being watched. Those who depart from faith because of one of these setbacks have totally failed the test of faith. Learn to thank God at all times.

Oftentimes Isaacs die

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

John 12:24

There is a lesson that is lost to most people in the occasion of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. We have thought unconsciously that it is the normal order for Isaac to always come back with Abraham without dying since he was the child of promise. In fact, Isaac died as far as God was concerned and it was a resurrected Isaac that Abraham went back home with. All of us will be tested at one point or another to sacrifice an Isaac, but unlike Abraham, our Isaacs may actually die physically.

What do I mean by Isaac?

Isaac is that dream that you have believed God for. It is that goal and vision of blessing and being a blessing which you have and which your faith is drawing out of God.

Your first business may be your Isaac.

It may be a church you planted. It may be the young lady you wished to marry, whom you prayed about and felt God give you the 'o.k.'; you invested emotionally and materially in the relationship but, last minute, her father refused. You prayed and fasted but nothing changed. Eventually it became obvious to you that you were the only one in the prayer and fasting, for the young lady's heart drifted towards another. That is the death of an Isaac.

Why should Isaac die? Many of us think that it is a sign that it was not born of God. No. See, Jesus was a son of promise, conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit but He had to die. It is the seed principle. It is God's way of multiplying your blessings and making them endure. If they do not die, they abide alone.

See, life is spiritual. Physical loss does not at all mean the thing is gone totally; in fact when it is a matter of faith, it is a sign that it is about to be multiplied.

Remember my story of the pregnancy and birth gone wrong. Well, eleven months exactly afterwards my son was born, and since then I have had a total of 4 children born to us without any trouble to the mother's health and the babies'. The word of God that was poured upon that pregnancy did not return

void, it waited until it had accomplished. You can preserve your spiritual seed and multiply it, even though it may appear to have died, by the heart of real faith and thanksgiving. Never blame God and never be angry with Him. He loves you too much and is too wise in the planning of your life for you to even think He has any thoughts of bad for you.

For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Jer 29:11

When you loose something, it does not mean faith has failed; rather, it is your response to the situation that shows whether your faith has failed or not. Faith means to keep totally trusting in God no matter what. The Bible says that the trial of faith is precious, more precious than gold. Please don't fail your test of faith; it is indeed your passport to enduring blessing. Once you respond rightly to the loss of your Isaac, then the following results will come without much exertion on your part. You will even pray less and prophecy less, not out of spiritual laziness but because of the ease of results. The power of the spirit in the first seed would have been amplified.

If the promise of God, Isaac, appears to die, don't worry because its spirit is very much alive and will soon show itself as alive.

Recently a sister told me a story that just illustrates this thing so well. She took a qualifying examination and was not

successful. When the second time came, she put in a lot of spiritual effort, together with her husband, and they had a note of victory that showed she would pass. God showed by many signs that she passed; but the result came and she did not. They were so confident about the ministrations from the Lord that they protested the result. After the examiners rescored her papers the result was still not successful. It was a very difficult thing to understand for them.

One day afterwards a brother visited them, and without knowing what was going on told them his testimony. He had previously had a similar experience in which he believed God for something after praying, and was so sure that the Lord had given Him the thing. I think it was also success in an important examination that he was expecting. Well, the results came and he was not successful. It was quite surprising to him but he took courage and refused to even think that the Lord was not answering. He went back and took the exam again and then passed with flying colours. The sister telling me the story said that as soon as she heard that, she knew it was a message for her; the person talking did not even know what she was passing through when he started talking. Afterwards she went back with a heart of thanksgiving and the attitude of a victor for the next examination and passed with grades better than she was even praying for.

Listen to me, even though your Isaac may die, yet he will live again. Isaac is more of a spirit and cannot be killed; if you take the first flesh from it, it will acquire a better one and be back.

For that failed business, a better one is about to be born.

For that disappointment in the matter of marriage, a better wife, better than you ever imagined, is about to be found for you by the Lord.

For that child that you lost, many more will be born to you, and the laughter will be loud in your home.

Isaac may appear to have died, but his spirit is alive and well and will soon manifest!

When Isaac is about to die

When things are going wrong, do all you know to do that is in keeping with your faith and a sense of responsibility as the man that God has put in charge of the situation. Once you have done that, leave the rest to the Lord.

It is not everything in life that is within your control, and there is no point in trying to pretend. Things will happen that you cannot control; it only means it is the work of the Lord to control it. After you have prayed, do what is yours to do and leave the rest to God. What can a woman who wants to get pregnant do more than to pray and love her husband? It is God that causes that which has been planted and watered with prayers to germinate and bring forth fruit. What can you do about your goods on a ship crossing the ocean? Having prayed, leave the rest to God. Excessive praying may even be a sign of worry. Just relax!

You do not even need to go around trying to testify about

what has not yet happened if you do not wish to. If you want to talk about it, fine. Just speak in accordance with your faith. Just do what is right and leave the rest to God.

“Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight.”

2 Sam 10:12



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