

A close-up photograph of a person's legs and feet in blue jeans and black sneakers, stepping on a shovel that is digging into a mound of brown soil. The background is a soft-focus green field.

Bezael Enlite

HOW TO WORK FOR GOD

2nd Edition

Pastor Bankie

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Bankole Olusina

Bezalel Enlite

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PREFACE



The initial edition of this book was first released in 2009. Before then I had written a few books, and I have also released some more since then. However, I consider 'How to Work for God' to be the most important book of all these my books till date. I believe that the people of God more than ever before need to know exactly what the Lord demands of them. In Nigeria where I live, I see a lot of zeal for the work of God, but this zeal unfortunately is mostly misguided; this also occurs in many other parts of the world. This is possibly the reason why I think that this is the most important of all my books. The title says it all.

I decided to read through the book again before a second printing is embarked upon so as to see if I need to adjust anything. In the process I made a few adjustments here and there so as to make the points easier to understand. I also made bolder statements in some areas so as to better drive home certain points.

That is why this second edition came to be. The main substance of the book however remains the same, the few changes made serving only to make points clearer. I trust that as you read the Lord will lead you into the truth of how you should do your own work for Him.

God bless you,

Pastor Bankie

April 2016

INTRODUCTION



Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

Eccl 5:1

Many people profess a desire to serve God, and they go about it in the practice of religion. Religion, as we popularly know it, is the way by which man attempts to reach God; it is the way by which man tries to use service to please Him.

RELIGION VS CHRISTIANITY

We should quickly look at what true Christianity is as opposed to religion. Even though Christianity is generally referred to as a religion, we must be careful to separate the two. In religion, people are trying to do works that will make them acceptable to God. They hope that having done something God will smile with favour upon them. He will bless them financially, heal

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their bodies, bless their families, and eventually accept them into His heaven when they die. Christianity however is not based upon this principle at all.

Christianity starts with a free gift of being accepted with God. We are accepted with God the Father only through one way and only because of one thing. We are accepted because of faith in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the way to the Father; when we believe in Him who is the Son of God, the Father accepts us into His family. We become children of God, not because of what we have done, but because of who we believe in.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Believing in Him means that we are totally committed to Him as a person and that is why we use the expression, “give your life to Christ.” A life given to Christ is a life of faith, and is the only reason we are accepted before God. We are not doing work so as to be accepted by Him; we do works because we are already accepted by Him. That is what it means to be made righteous by faith. Paul wrote this thing clearly in his letter to the Romans thus:

But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law... We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. Rom 3:21-22 NLT

To be accepted by God is what the Bible calls righteousness; we attain it not by our works but by faith, and that is why it is called the free gift of righteousness (Rom 5:17). So let us bear it in mind that we are not to work for God so He will love us, but we are learning how to do works as already beloved children. A good example is to say my children are not my children because of what they do but they only do things that are befitting of being my children. If my son misbehaves, someone may look at him and say, "That is not expected from a Pastor's son." The person already knows his father, and so expects a better behaviour. In the same manner, we walk in a manner worthy of being children of God, and we do works that were predetermined by the Father that we should do. This is the basic difference between Christianity and religion.

The practice of religion is interesting; it only serves the conscience so as to sooth it and to give it a *feeling* of righteousness. It makes one feel he or she has done something right for which there should be a reward.

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Unfortunately, there is what the Bible calls “healing wounds slightly” (Jer 6:14), and it implies that we tackle the emotional feeling of pain relating to a wound but we do not heal the wound itself. Once the pain is dulled temporarily, the wounded person is deceived into thinking that the wound is completely gone. But, of course, the day will come in which the effects of a deep unhealed wound will be felt.

THE PROBLEM WITH RELIGION

Religion heals our wounds superficially. We do what *we think* pleases God and actually assume that all is well, but our feeling about a situation does not at all dictate the wellness of it. If all is not well, then all is not well, regardless of how much we feel it is.

This is why many get utterly disappointed when they feel like it is time to be rewarded by God for all their service, and yet God refuses to come through. They feel like they have served Him, done His work, but all He appears to be saying is “*depart from me ye workers of iniquity.*” The Lord begins to appear like a bad boss who withholds the wages of His workers. The truth is that He never approved of their works; they served themselves, their communities, their pastors and their consciences, but they did not serve God. For this reason He is not obligated to pay them for their service.

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On judgment day many will tell me, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Go away; the things you did were unauthorized. Matt 7:22-23 NLT

This is why the question regarding how to work for God which this book seeks to answer is so important. We cannot afford to serve God in a particular manner just because it feels good to us to serve Him so, or because it is the popular way to do it; we must learn to serve Him according to the way He prescribes. The functional word here is *learn*. The proper way to serve God does not come naturally; it is something that we must make the effort to learn. He said to 'draw near to listen.' David said it this way:

Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Ps 34:11

He was saying in effect that the fear of God, the real fear of the Lord, does not come naturally but is something that we must learn. If we do not first learn, what we will be offering is the *sacrifice of fools*.

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THE SACRIFICE OF FOOLS

The sacrifice of fools kills. It was what killed Nadab and Abihu in the book of Leviticus chapter 10; they offered an offering that the Lord did not command, and it killed them. Please never get the idea that the fact that it is God you are trying to do something for means that you are acceptable before Him for trying. That is actually a dangerous thing. It is better that you do nothing at all than to do what is not according to the proper order. Again, we have an example in the life of Uzzah who died trying to *help* God.

When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. 1 Chron 13:9-10

Mere zeal is not sufficient with the Lord; He is not as in need of our help as we might think, and whatever we do for Him must be according to His desires and His due order.

My hope is that after reading this book each one will have a correct idea of what it means to work for God and be free from every kind of bondage to human ideas. I pray that no one will exercise himself or herself

needlessly thinking that they are pleasing God. I also pray that those who may have been going the way of the flesh in serving God will be humble enough to acknowledge it if the Spirit convicts them as they read this. There is a word of consolation for such people; I want them to know that there is mercy for them, for the Lord indeed understands the desire of their hearts, just as Paul testified:

...I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief. 1 Tim 1:13-14

You may have acted out of ignorance and for that reason will have mercy, but the release of mercy is dependent upon the willingness to repent.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent. Acts 17:30

One of the problems human beings have is that of pride. By this I refer to the fact that they often would rather continue in something that is wrong than to acknowledge that they may have been wrong all their lives. Few people will accept to lose the status in church which they laboured for and attained through serving

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human ideas, so they make up their minds that whatever it is, it must be the work of God for them, even though deep inside they know they might just be wrong.

It is sad but true that many will rather die in the wrong way than admit that the way is wrong. Pride is a killer. My prayer is that the Lord will grant each person reading this book the humility of heart to accept the correction that the contents might bring.



SECTION 1

THE WORK INSIDE



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CHAPTER 1



A PERSONAL HISTORY

While I was a student in the university, I was very active as a Christian. The fellowship I belonged to, the Light of Christ Community, mandated every member to belong to what we then called *ministries* or activity groups, and so shortly after I joined the fellowship I found myself involved in two of these groups. One was the Children's Ministry, which taught Bible lessons to children during church services, while the other was the Prayer Warriors, which did a lot of praying. I joined these two mainly because the senior people I associated with were involved in them, and Power Utho and Pastor E (as we called them) persuaded me to join one and the other. Later on I became a member of the Teaching Ministry, the group that taught the classes during our Bible Study meetings. Also, though there was no drama group then, my friends and I used to put together small drama pieces for our major programmes and during special variety days in fellowship. After a few years, I was elected as a member of the Core Group of the fellowship

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(a group of 6 or 7 top leaders) and finally one day I became the General Coordinator (or President).

My experience with preaching started sometime during my days as a member of the executive committee (the Core Group) of the fellowship. I started out preaching at birthday parties of brethren, and later I was occasionally asked to preach during the meetings of the main body. The frequency of my ministrations increased as time went on, and I preached quite a lot during the last part of my tenure as the president. I was, and still am, basically a teacher.

I have told this short history to highlight the fact that I was very active in my Christian group in my days as a student on the campus of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. I partook in all of the fellowship activities including outreaches, fastings and prayers. I think if working for God was based on activities, I did quite a bit.

Now, imagine what people who knew me on campus expected from me after leaving school (the name 'Pastor Bankie' was given me those days by my brethren). The fact is that my first year after campus, during my days of internship as a freshly qualified doctor, I was very active as a Bible teacher in the church I attended; many

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of the studies I prepared then were used for many years afterwards. I was quite diligent in my teaching ministry, that is if I am allowed to say so myself, but apart from my personal testimony, I have the witness of the Senior Pastor who severally testified of it.

The year following that was my year of the mandatory National Service, and I still maintain it was the driest year I had spiritually; there was nothing happening both in learning and in ministering. I even had to pray to get a decent believer to have as a friend. I served somewhere far away from civilization in the barracks of a battalion of the Nigerian Army in a predominantly Muslim part of Nigeria.

This story is leading somewhere and that place is of two different encounters I had with two ladies. The first was about four years after my national service, and I was in Benin City for a meeting (by this time I was resident in Lagos). Roseline, one of the sisters in the campus fellowship, was discussing with me, and she asked which church I was attending. I told her. Then she asked, "Are you actively involved in the church?" I answered in the affirmative and she went further to ask what exactly I was involved in doing. To this question I answered, "I am actively involved in listening to the Pastor." She laughed so intensely that she bent over.

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Of course she had expected me to speak concerning the physical and 'spiritual' activities I was involved in. She, like many other people, had high expectations of me (bear in mind my history in Christian activities); no one had ever implied to her that listening to the word in the church was a form of activity.

But was I joking?

Most certainly not! I was actually actively involved in listening to the pastor.

CHAPTER 2



A COMMON MISTAKE

They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." John 6:28-29

Let me explain a principle here, and I wish to start from these words of Jesus quoted above. The people had come to Him and asked a question. The people obviously expected to hear what they were supposed to do as outward works, but the Lord turned their attention to the place that the work of God really starts from — *inside*.

THE WORK IS BELIEVE

Jesus said that the work of God is to *believe*. Believing is something that has to do with the state of the heart; it is a work done inside. What I beg that you notice is that the work of God starts as an internal work.

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Just like the people that came to Jesus, even today, Christians are generally guilty of putting the cart before the horse by laying most of the emphasis on the physical work that is done. How much do you give? How many times do you attend church? Which department or activity group of the church do you belong to? We are more concerned about the outward than we are about the internal working of the Spirit on our hearts, when in reality the heart is where the main work is.

A man came to see me once (let us call him James even though that's not his real name); he was someone I did not know but who had been a regular listener to my radio programme, *The Way of Success*. He described to me his frustrations and lack of fulfilment in life. As this man was speaking I was praying. Usually when people come to me for counselling, as they speak I would be praying that the Lord might give me understanding into their issues and give me a specific word for them to solve the problem. So I was praying as he spoke, and until I had an answer for him in my spirit I continued to prod him with questions. The questioning served two purposes; one was to help me see more of the situation in his life, but more importantly it was to keep him talking while I connected in my spirit with the word of the Lord for him.

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As he spoke I realized he loved his profession, he was financially alright and showed no signs of family frustrations. He told me he had joined several charity organizations just to help the needy and had even gone to Bible schools in two different denominations just so he could do the work of ministry. Despite all of these he was internally empty and felt frustrated. The major problem was that he could not place his hands on what was wrong.

Suddenly I understood his problem; it became very clear to me as the Spirit of God gave me understanding, and I counselled him accordingly.

His problem was that he was trying to work for God. He believed, like many Christians, do that to work for God is the method by which we please Him. He was trying desperately to get his personal satisfaction from working for God.

I explained to him that there are seasons in life, and when it comes to working for God, the first season is that of getting to know God. He needed to realize that becoming acquainted with God is actually the real and fundamental work of God.

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FAITH IN GOD'S LOVE

Christians must understand that God does not require their works for Him to love them. He loves them as they are. I am not saying that every believer is perfect or that the Lord loves their imperfections; what I am expressing is the fact that just for each being a believer, the Lord is happy with them. A new born baby, or even a child, is far from being perfect, and the parents definitely want him or her to grow, but the father or mother is always delighted that they have the child. That is the way we are with our Father. By believing in Jesus you are accepted before God. When you repented of your sins and gave your life to Christ, there was much rejoicing in heaven, and that is a reflection of the attitude of God the Father towards you, just for believing in His Son. Like I wrote in the introduction, you don't need anything more than faith to be accepted with God, and this is the first thing you must know and understand. The work you are trying to do for God does not improve your situation with Him at all. It does not make Him love you more.

I spoke with another brother a while ago who told me he usually didn't ask the Lord for anything. When I asked him why, he said he did not think he deserved to be answered as he hardly did anything for God. That was a real surprise to me, and it was funny too, so I

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laughed very much. He was someone who knew me well, so I asked him to tell me what my sons do for me to make them worthy of receiving answers to their requests from me (then I had two little boys; one was a toddler while the other was an infant). Nothing, we both agreed. They get what they ask just for being my children. When they would try to do anything for me, I was mostly not interested because they were more likely to ruin things in their attempts.

That is how we are with God. We do things that are right because we are children of God, not so that we can get something from God or so that we can have access to His throne. That is the truth of Christianity. Good works are done because they are a part of us, because the seed of God dwells in us, and not so that we can become accepted before God.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Eph 2:10

Jesus taught the disciples that they should freely ask God for whatever they needed and expect answers simply because the Father *loves* them (John 16:26,27).

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The love of God the Father for the believer is the reason why things get done for him or her. This is the reason why I have never believed that a Christian is supposed to give so that he can get. A Christian gives because he is a giver by nature; that is part of what it means to have the Spirit of Christ. I am a believer, a Child of God, and I have the Spirit of Christ; the seed of God dwells in me and that is why I am a giver. I have my prayers answered not primarily because I am a giver but because my Father loves me. It is that love of God for me that is my confidence. Yes, my giving is an expression of my faith, and for every righteous act of giving there is a reward, but I do not give for the reward's sake; I give because I am a giver! It's in my blood.

Like we saw in the introduction, religion or legalism is not Christianity. Religion/legalism asks what I have done for God that He might do for me. Christianity says Jesus has done all for me; I have been reconciled to God and have the love of the Father on my side.

In legalism and religion, my good deeds are my bargaining chips with God. In Christianity, the mercy of God triumphs over judgment in my life so that I approach His throne pleading only the blood of Jesus. I do good works because it is my nature to do them. It is very much like a mother nursing her child; it is the

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nature of the mother, not because she is trying to get something from the child or the child's father. Any Christian who does not give or do the good works of Christianity is blind and has forgotten, or never realized, that he has been cleansed from his old sins (so says the word of God through Peter in 2 Pet 1:9). Such a Christian is earthly-minded and does not realize that his life does not depend on the material things that he has. For the believer, giving and doing good works have nothing to do with trying to get something from God.

People of God, this is why I have always rejected, and still do reject, the gospel of give-so-that-you-might-get. I believe rather in '*ask and you shall receive*' and '*you have not because you ask not*' as the Lord Jesus and apostle James taught respectively. Grace is supreme; it is based on faith and faith alone, as it is written,

For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace. Rom 4:16

THE WORD AND FELLOWSHIP

Please let us not forget my discussion with the brother who we called James.

I told him that apparently all he had been doing was trying to do something for God because he thought that

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was how to get His approval, not realizing that the approval of God, which is righteousness, is revealed from faith to faith. I explained to him, and I pray that you my reader will learn it too, that God was telling him to forget trying to work for Him and start getting to know Him. He wanted to learn to work for someone who he hardly knew. I charged him to forget all about church work and to begin to concentrate on learning, not for the purpose of working or preaching, but simply for the purpose of knowing God.

God was calling him to come closer to Him, but he had been coming closer to service; he had missed God's purpose. God was calling him for a close relationship as a son, not as a worker but as a son.

God does not measure our dedication to Him by our physical service but by the continual transformation of the inner man using His word, fellowship with Him and prayer.

Please notice these three things: the word, fellowship, and prayer.

CHAPTER 3



HOW MUCH OF HIM DO YOU KNOW?

I need to point it out clearly, that the first stage of working for God is that in which the labour is just to get to know God. It is that stage in which our participation in the work of a church is, most importantly, to actively listen to the pastor. The idea of pleasing God by listening and learning is strange to the flesh and is against the spirit of human religion, but it is the order of God. How much we love God is first of all indicated in how much we are getting to know and understand Him.

Martha was a typical person until the Lord corrected her. Before we read the story, let me say something about the relationship between Jesus and the household of Martha.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF MARTHA, MARY AND LAZARUS
Everyone has favourite people, and the household of Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus was one of such to the Lord Jesus. He would often stop by at their home

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to relax and to take His meals whenever He was in Bethany. John's gospel testifies of how He loved Lazarus.

On this particular day the Lord Jesus was around and Martha was up and about trying to fix a meal for Him. Her hands were full. Now, she was not paying attention to Jesus but to His food. Needing all the help she could get, she started looking for her sister, Mary. She found her in a short while in a rather annoying pose — sitting down, listening to Jesus teach. “How irresponsible,” she thought.

I think she probably tried by herself to get Mary to come and join her, but when she wouldn't listen she took the case to the Lord Himself. His response to the situation is quite a revelation that must be learnt.

“Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.” But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:40-42

For Martha, serving the Lord was primarily a matter of doing physical things for Him, when what the Lord

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wanted was the one who would *first* listen to Him. The foundation of working for God is to learn of Him, to get to know Him and become like Him. This is what is lacking most times among those who want to work in churches.

The Martha ministry is all over the place, and unfortunately they are actually encouraged by many pastors who do not discern the proper order of God. They love to see activities, money being given and many other outward shows of dedication even if there is no proof of character improvement and increasing godliness in the lives of the people. They are interested in the outward and little else.

Yes, it feels good to have people all around you running up and down at your command, but you are neither helping them nor yourself if all they are doing is getting involved in those activities. Activity, it has been said, is the *killer of sensitivity*. God does not want activity first; He wants us to sit down and learn, and that is working for Him as far as He is concerned.

Having been taught this divine order long before I founded Kingdom-Word Ministries, as a minister I find it absolutely unacceptable for people to hang around me, saying 'Yes Sir, Yes Sir' and not be actively involved

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in listening to me. If I find that you like to work with me but do not primarily come for the teachings, I stop you as soon as I can (believe me, I've done it before). I am not interested in those who will not carry the spirit that the Lord is passing out through me claiming they are working with me.

Many times I have had people who have been blessed by my preaching come to me asking that they be given the opportunity of working with us in the ministry. The answer I have for them all the time is that they are welcome to work but that the only work available at the time is that they be available regularly for the teachings which we hold twice a week at the ministry office, and that it is as they do this that the external work will eventually manifest. That is the way it works.

GOOD CO-WORKERS

I like the kind of men that I have, people who love the teaching more than the work. I have severally had to upbraid my co-workers because they were so engrossed while I was teaching that they forgot to attend to some technical issues, like turning over the recording tape at the appropriate time (in those analog days). I remember one of them who I gave the proofs of some new books from the press to go through; at a point I got concerned because all I was hearing were the

amens and sighs from imbibing revelation, so much that I began to wonder whether he actually was noticing the *typos* and grammatical errors he was meant to be picking out. Those are the kinds of people that make a work go forward without sowing seeds of evil, like jealousy and envy, all over the place.

Sometimes I wonder whether some pastors don't have understanding. They love to promote people based on their activities, which sadly is often a sign of their irresponsibility in other crucial parts of life. There are men who will apparently die for their pastors and churches but who don't remember to pay their children's school fees and have not bought their wives any precious thing in a long time. They are owing on their rent but are the most committed *givers* and chair carriers in the church. The sad part is that they are even sometimes allowed to give the testimony of how they took the money that belonged to their landlord and families and gave such in support of the church work. I have authentic testimonies about churches that promote people simply for such reasons. They think it is a sign of commitment but it is totally rubbish. These things offend the Lord.

Read here the verdict of the Lord Jesus on such things.

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But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I could have given to you.' You let them disregard their needy parents. As such, you break the law of God in order to protect your own tradition. Mark 7:11-13 NLT

You cannot disregard the order of God for your life in the name of church commitment ; if you do that you are not serving God but your pastor and your own confused conscience.

Please, the work of God is an all-round thing that is stimulated in you by spiritual understanding. It makes you effective all-round; it does not make you good just in church while rendering you useless elsewhere. God is not concerned only about what you do in church but also in every other part of your life.

As a pastor, if you focus on promoting and approving people because of their outward show of service, you *will* attract evil-doers around you. Many of these people may not even understand what wrong spirits they are carrying, but you would have encouraged them to neglect the proper refining of the Spirit because of your approval of those things which are not excellent in the eyes of God. You will partake of their judgement.

CHAPTER 4



LEARNING IS THE START

Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

Eccl 5:1

THE ART OF LEARNING

Learning is the foundation of real spiritual work; our first emphasis must be to learn. It must not be activity. Jesus said the way by which His yoke is taken up is by learning of Him. It is not possible to work effectively for the Lord unless we first learn. Zeal does not work by itself. As we learn of the Lord, His Spirit is transferred into our hearts so that we will be able to do the work that is pleasing to God.

God does not like surprises, even if they are motivated by what one thinks is love for God. Love for God is actually defined by obedience. The Lord Jesus said, *'if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.'* Everything we do for God must be as He commanded and as His Spirit

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inside us stimulates, otherwise it is not acceptable to Him. We cannot do just any strange thing and think it will impress Him.

As I pointed out in the introduction, those who just do things are running a great risk of displeasing God. In fact, Solomon says clearly in the portion of Ecclesiastes quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that what they end up doing is evil if there was no instruction from God in the heart beforehand. Uzzah died for trying to help God.

God does not want us messing things up because we think we are trying to work for Him. This is why the first emphasis is on the spiritual aspect. He wants to change us from inside so that we will become exactly like Him in character, in ideas and in our manner of doing things. The plan of God is to train us first before employing us outwardly, and the period of training is considered by Him as a valid period of working, howbeit spiritually.

Remember my answer to Roseline, the lady who wanted to know how involved I was in my church then, who I told I was actively involved in listening to the pastor? Well, I have not finished explaining the issue there.

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THE WORK OF LISTENING

When she asked whether I was actively involved, my answer was not at all a joke, though it came out funny. I meant every letter I used in the statement. The fact was that I was actively involved in listening to the pastor. I listened to him so much that once while we were having a discussion, this pastor of mine remarked that the problem was that I listened to him too much. There was a time that he visited me at home, and in the course of discussions we had different opinions about something; in explaining my viewpoint all I did was to quote several statements that he had previously made in many messages.

Another of those days I mentioned in his hearing that a friend had come to borrow 30 of his message tapes from me; he looked at me with surprise and said, “You have 30 of my tapes?” I said, “I did not say I have 30; I said I lent out 30. I have much more.” That was surprising to him as I had only been attending the church for a relatively short time.

Please I need to rewind a bit to just a few years before I started attending this church. See, after my national service, when I came down to Lagos, I went everywhere listening to the teaching of the word. Remember I mentioned earlier that my service year was

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characterized by not much happening spiritually for me. Well, that left me with such an intense craving for the word that when I got to where it was plenty, I just kept drinking it. I used to stop on the streets to copy addresses from posters advertising conferences. All I did was learn, learn and learn. I remember that I listened to Bishop David Oyedepo of Winners Chapel for over 500 hours in less than 10 months, and this is not counting the time I spent with other preachers. The Lord ensured that I did not have a job (I cannot start telling that story now); all I did was listen and read and study. I hardly preached to anyone. I learnt so much. I spend the little money I had buying books and tapes. I used to walk around feeling like there were clouds around me. My countenance reflected it. My gifts to people then were books and tapes. People would visit and while they sat I would make a copy of the *hottest* message I had at that time for them.

It was about this time that I had an encounter with another lady who knew me during my days of internship (recall that I mentioned that there were two encounters I was telling about; this is the second. Also bear in mind that I got to know this lady during the very 'active' days of my internship; she was a member of the church in which I was so actively involved). She also wanted to know what I was doing concerning ministry

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at that time. I told her I wasn't doing much. Why not? My answer was simple; I explained that everything has it's time and that God has made everything perfect in it's own time. As far as I felt then, it was not the time for activity.

Then I got one of the greatest insults of my life. She accused me of justifying my inactivity with the Bible. Here I was soaking in God, and being told I was lying. I left it as a matter of ignorance on her part, but I was seriously offended.

Anyway, as I mentioned, I learned so much during that season.

About 8 months after settling in Lagos, after my National Service, these months that had been spent doing nothing but listening to the Word, I finally got a job and then much afterwards started my post-graduate residency programme at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital. About this latter time I was beginning to get saturated with what I was getting from books, tapes and from going from one place to another, and something in me kept reaching out for more. I knew there was a new level to attain but I did not know how to get into it, nor did I even know what it was about. The

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old books I had were still good but they did not seem to fill the hunger.

Now, I am the type of person who reads and listens to the same materials over and over again. I believe that the word therein is always fresh. It is normal for me to listen to the same message more than 20 times over time, and there are messages I listened to much more than that. As an example, I think I must have listened to *The Gospel of Abundance* by David Oyedepo more than 70 times before I lost the tape. Yet at this time I was having a craving for something more. I did not even know what this something was.

It was about this time I told myself that I had to get involved in ministry work. I must have thought that was my problem. At that time, I had a locum appointment which earned me some extra money but which took up all my free time; I resigned it so I could get involved in the church I attended then. But the Lord would have none of it. I was instructed by a supernatural manifestation (I'll spare you the details) never to come back to that church. This happened the day I came to church with the sole purpose of commencing my active involvement, the reason I gave up my extra income. I left the place running as if for my life. By the way, events later showed me that if the Lord

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had not done that and I had gotten involved with them, I might have lost my own call and ministry entirely or the Lord would have had to use a very drastic measure to get me out. Also, please note that this was before I started going to the church concerning which I reported to Roseline that I was actively involved in listening to the pastor. During this period I was learning mostly by reading and by listening to tapes.

Anyway, I continued learning.

A NEW DOOR

Then one day in April 1997 I went with a friend to a restaurant because he wanted to eat. While he ate, I read a newsletter I saw on the table; in it was a kind of truth that I knew was deeper than I had, but it was so brief an article. The article was titled, *The Gospel, Light of the Nations*. I asked the restaurant manager where he got them from and whether I could get more, but he had none. Later I came back and saw another one with the article, *Manna, Food of Champions*.^{*} This time there was the address of the church on it.^{*} I copied it and later went searching for the place.

The first time I went there it was for a Sunday service, and I almost drowned, so to speak, in the depth of the

^{*}Pastor Poju Oyemade, Covenant Christian Centre, Yaba, Lagos.

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word that was coming forth. The message was titled '*The inheritance inside the new man.*' I still have the message and it is one of those tapes that I am sure I have listened to dozens of times. I still listen to it periodically. Oh, finally I had found it; it was my door into the next level. Believe me, it was.

It was in listening to him that I first unlearned some inaccurate things about interpreting the Bible that I learned from many faith teachers. For example, I understood the importance of the portion of the Bible called the Old Testament, that it was not just stuff written to the Jews, but is actually the document containing the issues of the gospel. I saw where both Paul and Peter spoke about the fact that the gospel was preached *first* by those prophets. We just need opened eyes, and we will see the truth about the Christ in everything in the Law and the Prophets. After this I read the book of Isaiah until the pages in my Bible became brown.

I learnt the role of sufferings in the life of the believer. I understood for the first time what Peter meant by the '*sufferings of Christ*' and '*the glories to follow.*' Also, I think it was about then that I began to understand that the work of God is not just church work but can be in what is generally called secular work also. It was that

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time I realized what it really meant to be in the world while not being of it. Most people understand what it implies to not be of the world but I doubt whether they know what it means to be *in* the world.

When I say it was the door to the next level, believe me because it is true. I did not learn everything then just from the pastor, but the things I learned helped me to start learning new levels of truth. It is a fact that knowledge helps you acquire more knowledge. In his book, *Christian Integrity*, R B Thieme Jr says it right that “the more you know, the more you can learn; doctrine is built on doctrine.”

It was about this time I began to read the likes of Oswald Chambers, who in turn taught me many things like the lesson of Ecclesiastes and many issues of Christian philosophy and Christian psychology. It was more than just teachings, it was a door!

Now, this was the situation I was in and this was the church that I was attending when I was asked what I was doing as my form of active involvement and I replied, “I am actively involved in listening to the Pastor.”

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CHAPTER 5



HERE IS WORSHIP

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

A fundamental order in life is this: once the spiritual realm is in proper alignment, the natural realm follows automatically.

TRUE WORSHIP

In my book, *Great Faith Can Be Yours*, I distinguished between *rote worship* and *true worship*. Rote worship describes when we do the service of God after a physical order only. It is when we do things because they are the norms in the eyes of everybody; we follow standards that have been laid by men. We are unconsciously more concerned with pleasing the leader by following human rules than pleasing God.

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Please note that *rote* worshippers can be quite diligent worshippers. They can follow the order of their church so well that everyone will be impressed, but the problem lies with whether God approves or not. This is why we really cannot assess someone else's life, and the aim of this book is to help each person assess his (or her) own life so as to be sure that he is pleasing to God and not just emulating others and pleasing men.

True worship, unlike rote worship, starts from inside. It is a product of the transformation of the heart so that the things that one does are done in gratitude to God for His acceptance. They are done as a natural manifestation of the new life in Christ. You are doing works you were created to do; they are not done to gain acceptance. Let me use the following story to explain.

Many years ago my friend and I attended the same church (that was the church I mentioned that the Lord drove me away from when I tried to get involved). In this church he was very active and visible. Together with some people he was in charge of a critical records department of the church. Then one day he called me up that we needed to talk; something was up.

What was up was that he had come in contact with some friends who showed him from the word of God that his

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faith in Jesus was all he needed to be accepted with God. He came to understand that Christ is everything and having Christ was his life. He saw from the scriptures that works do not make us acceptable before God and that no matter what we do, only the faith content makes life meaningful. In summary, forget trying to please God by works; faith is all that is necessary.

Now, I had learnt that before then and it was actually a surprise to me that he was just learning it. In fact, I thought everyone knew it.

The point I want to bring out is that shortly after this he resigned from the department of the church he was working in, but he continued going to that same church regularly and for a long time too. Some people began to wonder about his 'newfound freedom,' as they called it.

Now, am I saying that everyone who learns truth should stop working in church? No! But for him it was good he stopped because his former work was obviously not acceptable to God; the reason is that it was being done as a 'Christian duty' that would make him acceptable. He discovered the truth and his resultant actions were just natural. Of course, later he found the real service he could do for God and he began to do it. He is not a preacher but a diligent worker in his

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business and a diligent supporter of the work of the ministry. What he began to do afterwards he was doing as *real* worship.

WHAT WORSHIP MEANS

Real worship is what God seeks, according to the Lord Jesus. Real worshippers are those people who do things out of their correct understanding of God their Father. I wrote it thus in the book, *Great Faith Can Be Yours*:

Worshipping in the 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 the 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.

You can only worship in the Spirit when you have come to know God personally. It is that knowledge and relationship that provokes the work that you do. You do Christian work out of love for the brethren and out of the knowledge of your gifts and calling.

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As an example, I am a teacher and in most churches I have worked all these years that is the area I have served in. Of course I have taken up other responsibilities as occasion served and as was needed, but I have only found it possible to endure in the area of teaching. My current main work is to the whole body of Christ, beyond the walls of a local assembly or denomination, and I freely serve them the teaching of the word of God through my tracts, books, CDs, on the internet, in seminars, on radio and on TV. I also teach in local churches here and there. I do all these things because of love for the brethren and the knowledge of my gifts and calling. I do not use them to get approval from God (I am already approved in Christ, and my approval is by faith); the works just flow out of my spirit. For example, the more I fellowship with the Spirit of God in prayer and study, the more doctrine I have to teach and the more the unction I have to teach. That unction demands release; it is like pressure within my bones and I just have to release it. Before God gave me the platforms to do that, I used to pour everything on my fiancée who later became my wife, and in those earlier days of marriage she bore the whole of it. Many of the books I have published today were written in those days, and as at the time of writing this I still have so many unpublished materials from the same period.

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The point I am making is that the main work of God is inside you, and once that is being done, the outward one flows out easily. To try to focus on the outside is to put the cart before the horse and to totally miss the point. Never allow *working* for God get in the way of knowing God.

CHAPTER 6



BECOMING THE IMAGE OF CHRIST IS THE FIRST WORK

***B**ut seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Matt 6:33*

ROOTS AND FRUITS

There are two levels of human activities; there are *roots* and there are *fruits*. The term *seeds* is very similar to roots in this context and so may also be used.

Roots (or seeds) are small things, easy to do, often appearing as of little consequence, and therefore so easy to overlook. They are things that we often call, using the words of Solomon in Songs 2:15, '*the little foxes that spoil the vines.*' But they are the keys to the real things that we desire.

The things that we desire, on the other hand, are fruits. By this I mean that we are guided into them automatically once we have done things that are the seeds/roots. Remember that in the last chapter I

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mentioned that once the spiritual is in order, the physical follows automatically. It is the same principle. Now, it is not only good things that come as fruits, but also evil things we children of God hate. For example, no child of God wants to be a murderer, an adulterer or an evil-doer of any sort. However, these things do not come only to those who want to do them but also to anyone engaged in things which constitute their roots. This is what Paul was explaining to Timothy when he was warning concerning covetousness.

*For the love of money is **a root** of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. 1 Tim 6:10*

Evil has many roots, but chief among them is the love of money; Paul says that it produces all sorts of evil. People who never imagined that they could be liars, cheats, and adulterers end up as such because they, deliberately or otherwise, dabbled in the root. This is why I am particularly careful with the matters of money when it comes to ministry work.

I first learnt this from the man, Kenneth E. Hagin. He described how the Lord visited him in a vision, and after a long talk on various things ended with a strong warning about money. "Be careful about money," He

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said twice. Many have lost their anointing and done all sorts of evil because of this love of money.

On the good side, all the good characteristics of the Christian life that we are seeking do not come by much effort; they come just as we seek the right root.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness... Gal 5:22

When you sow the right seeds into the realm of the spirit, then these great qualities become yours.

This is my point: root, or seed, is easy to tackle, but fruit is outside our control. Whatever we desire, we must observe to tackle it from the root. So it is with working for God.

THE ROOT OF GOOD WORKS

In all endeavours of life, Jesus declared, only one thing is needful. It was that thing that Mary chose as she sat at the feet of Jesus, hearing His words. That is the *root* of success. All the other activities that contribute to and constitute success are fruits. Like I mentioned earlier, fruits are not within our control, and when we try to control them we labour only in vain.

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Having explained this point, I want to focus on what is the main work that the Lord commands the believer to perform. This work is the *root* of all Christian work; performing it is the foundation for every other thing, and anything that comes out as physical work in the process of doing this main one will be found to be pleasing to God.

Observe Paul describe this thing:

*...I **press** on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I **do**: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I **press** on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:12-14*

This quote from the words of Paul is lifted here as a summary of the whole of chapter 3 of the letter to the Philippians. I beg you to read the whole chapter so you can get the whole picture.

In Philippians 3 Paul was explaining where he came from, that is his background. He told of the experiences of his Jewish birth and his personal zeal in matters of the Law. In all of this he attained many natural advantages which unfortunately turned out to constitute stumbling

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blocks to his becoming anything in Christ Jesus. There is a goal that God has set for every single believer in Christ Jesus, and the attainment of that goal became Paul's primary objective in life. For this reason he had to make the effort to throw away those natural advantages so that the knowledge of Christ and His resurrection power may be his.

Please the key words I want you to note are 'press' and 'do' and I have placed them in bold letters in the quote preceding. These words indicate that someone is working.

From the teaching of Paul above we can easily see that the upward call of God for every believer is that they might be conformed to the image of Christ in their hearts and lives. ***The primary work of God for every believer is to work out this spiritual transformation into the image of Christ.***

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Rom 8:29

The image of Christ is the goal of the believer in Christ Jesus and we are to use every tool and weapon available to have ourselves changed into the likeness of Christ.

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That is the first work of God that every believer must be involved in. *This work is actually the root of all the outward work that we might ever do.* Once it is being well done, then outward works will come out without much effort and without the risk of running contrary to the order of God.

DOING THE MAIN WORK

To be transformed into the image of Christ is the main work which we have to do as believers. When we realize this, our approach to the things of God will be different. Please you must understand that what the Lord really wants from us is to see that everyday, *progressively*, we are getting closer to that image of Christ. It must be continual and we must see it as our main mission. Paul saw it as a mission, something to be pursued with vigour. Our main mission is not running up and down and being very involved with the work of ministry but that in everything we are discovering Jesus more and more and are being transformed progressively into His image.

The primary instrument that you use to become changed into the likeness of the Lord is His word. This is the spiritual reason behind the answer of Jesus to Martha when she wanted to take her sister Mary away from where the word of God was coming forth.

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Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

He was saying in effect that the way by which anyone can become anything is by this word and it would be very wrong to take that away from them. The strength to do anything meaningful for God comes by this very word and so we must not take it away from Mary or any other disciple.

The word of God transforms us as we sit in its presence. It is not about intellectual imbibition alone. It's not about learning the words of doctrine to be used in arguments. The word is a carrier of the spirit *and* power of God; it is the way by which God imparts His Spirit into us. Getting into the presence of the word of God is about the transformation that comes thereby. We are not even to approach the word of God so as to learn methods of doing things; we are just to get there to get transformed.

I remember years ago when someone I worked with was doing me so much evil and rubbing me very wrongly. I was gearing up for a fight so as to cut him down to size because I felt he really deserved it. Even while I thought so, I knew inside me that it was not the right thing for me to do, but there is a difference

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between knowing the right thing to do and having the strength to do it. Because of my understanding of the word I knew where to get that needed strength from. It was not to be a struggle but an infusion of the Spirit.

There is a book, *Love, The Way to Victory*, by Kenneth Hagin, which I had read several times before then, I picked it up again and began to read it. I was not at all trying to learn the methods to handle this fellow; I was drinking in the spirit of love by the teaching of the word. Believe me, it worked.

The word of God is interesting; it first shows us our shortcomings, where we are living below the glory of God, before it begins to transform us.

For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are. Nothing in all creation can hide from him. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes. Heb 4:12-13 NLT

The reason why it shows us our shortcomings is so that we might confess them out of our lives (I will explain this further in a moment). The Christian life is not a struggle; it is all about tapping into the spirit of grace. By this I mean that we allow God do His work in us. He

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does not want us to struggle; He wants us to allow Him do what He wants to do in us. Once we allow Him, He will take care of the issue of transforming us into what He wants us to be, which is the image of Christ.

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CHAPTER 7



THE WORD AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

When the Word exposes to us what we really are like and how far below the glory of God we are living in, what the Lord wants from us is that we bring that knowledge to Him in prayer, using the principle of confession taught by John.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Please I want you to notice that He does not only forgive but He also cleanses that tendency to sin away. This is the principle of growth as a Christian. Once the Lord exposes your wrong character and attitudes to you by His word, simply go to Him in prayer and acknowledge that you have a problem in that area. He said all you have to do is acknowledge (Jer 3:13), and He will take care of the spiritual healing.

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The problem with people is stubbornness; they start trying to justify or explain away their lack of glory in an area. Let me give a few illustrations.

The word may reveal to a woman that she does not respect her husband or highly esteem him. The Holy Spirit may also have allowed her see clearly by practical examples how she had been very rude and disrespectful. Now the Christian and godly thing to do is to just get down on her knees and say to the Lord, "I have seen from Your word that I am living below the glory in this area of my life." That is what is called confession of sin, acknowledging that God is right and you have been wrong.

Now there is another way, the way of Satan, by which most people respond. They begin to give excuses.

"It is not that I am a disrespectful person, it is just that my husband does some very dumb things sometimes." When the Holy Spirit helps her to see a case in which she was clearly wrong, she goes on again, "You know I have a problem with pre-menstrual tension" or "It was the day that my boss really gave me hell in the office." She says many things and explains away her deliverance. All God wanted was for her to just confess and not give excuses.

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Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God... Jer 3:13

A corrupt man who is taking money unlawfully uses the economic hardship of his times to explain away his actions. God says, "Only acknowledge your iniquity!"

The man committing adultery uses his wife's bad attitude as his excuse. God says, "Only acknowledge your iniquity!"

One major reason why people try to justify their actions is that they do not know how to stop doing it. So they employ what Freudian psychology calls rationalization in *ego-defence*. They do not totally believe the excuses, but it makes them feel better believing that they have a justification for what they are doing. Well, they need to understand that God is not saying that they should *try* to change; He says once you accept and confess that you are wrong without giving those excuses, then He will change you in His own way and by His own power.

This constant revelation and changing is what takes us closer to that image of Christ, and that is our primary assignment. There is no other way therefore for changing into the likeness of Christ than by being in the presence of the word of God. This is the real work.

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Friends, it is work — *the work of God*.

It will cost you time, energy and money. Notice that word, *cost*.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Oftentimes I encounter people who tell me how blessed they were by my ministrations and who want to know how they can get to know me more and be blessed yet more by my ministry (they had either read a book, listened to my radio broadcast, listened to my audio CD, *etc.*). Some have even asked whether I pastor a church because they would have loved to attend. These are people who reside in the same city I live in and in which I teach weekly.

Well, I always tell them that I do not pastor a church but that I hold teaching meetings weekly at the ministry. What surprises me is that many of these people simply dismiss the idea of coming to listen because the times are not convenient. Now I understand that they may have had previous engagements, but I maintain that the proof of desire is pursuit, that is quoting Mike Murdock. Nothing good really comes easy; it will cost you something.

Also, very many times people come to me that they want me to be their mentor or that they want to have the

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opportunity to be trained by me, and I tell them that the first thing about being their mentor or their being trained by me is to first hear the things that I say. I tell them simply that I teach regularly at certain times of the week, and that *that* is where training and mentorship starts from. Most of these people never have the time; they are too busy with other things. See, I understand that their lives do not have to revolve around me, but if they are not willing to make the sacrifice to come and listen to me, then they cannot be serious about what they are asking.

I have learnt over the years that you do not have to go and ask someone to be your mentor. If you listen to him and learn from his life, without any introduction, he is your mentor. The first two times I heard people introduce me as their mentor, it actually came as a surprise to me. One of them introduced me to a minister of the Federal Government at a function. Until that time I had not even thought about the idea; all I could testify of was that he drank of my teachings like water and took examples from my actions. The day I met his dad, the comment he passed was heart touching. He said I had made his son a better person, and that the effect had spread to the other people in the home.

The other young man introduced me to his dad as his

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mentor and the dad was quite surprised that I was so young then considering everything his son had been saying about me. Also in his case, all I knew was that he came regularly to listen to me and would often come just to interact with me and ask my advice. Now, none of these people ever approached me to be their mentor. It is not in the name but in the actions taken.

I am trying to explain that if you are going to take the work of God of being transformed into the image of Christ seriously, then you must take it really seriously. It will cost you money, time and energy. You will buy books, CDs and other learning materials with money that others would have used for more glamorous purposes. You will deny yourself certain pleasures and human promotions so that you can take hold of the Spirit. It is those things that are the real tests of your seriousness.

FAKE CONSCIENCE BALM

I have found out that many people use this working-for-God thing as a form of atonement for their souls when they are not willing to truly relate with God. For them it is better and much easier to sacrifice than to obey (1 Sam 15:22). It is easier to run up and down supposedly working for God than to sit down, consider your ways, and repent. It is easier to give to God out of the proceeds of bribery and corruption than to deny

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yourself that source of income in obedience to His will. Many crooks there are that are ever giving to churches; the reason is that they are trying to silence the voice of God. God does not want their money; He wants them — their lives and their means of livelihood. He wants them to repent and stop doing iniquity. It is so sad that for the love of the money they give, many pastors and preachers will not tell them the truth. I was present once when a preacher said crooks could give their way into salvation. No, he wasn't talking of giving up all and following Him, but he wanted them to give out of the proceeds of iniquity. That is so wrong.

The first work of God is to take the word, no matter the cost, and apply it to our personal lives daily for the purpose of becoming conformed to the image of Christ; this is so that we will walk in a manner pleasing to God.

The first work of God is repentance from doing evil.

The first work of God is to lay aside every weight and the sin that easily entangles us.

The first work of God is in our personal lives; it is the *constant* purification of our beings from all defilement of flesh and spirit. It is done with the instrument of the word of God which we pay the greatest attention to.

That is the first and primary work.

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SECTION 2

SECULAR WORK IS
ALSO GOD'S WORK



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CHAPTER 8



GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD

In the first section I laid emphasis on what is the most important thing that God wants us to do as working for Him in our lives. We have seen that this work of God which is so crucial is that of being constantly converted and becoming transformed into the image of Christ. We have seen that it must be seen as real work and that our energy as believers must be put into it. It is only as we do this that anything that we may try to do on the outward side will have any meaning and be directed by the Spirit of God.

THE THREE-FOLD PLAN OF GOD

Actually, in the life of believers generally, the Lord's plan has three parts. The first is what He wants to do *in* the life of the believer (which we discussed in the previous section). The second is what He wants to do *through* the believer in the Church, the body of Christ, while the third is what He wants to do *through* the believer in the *world*. Please note again that each one of these three things constitute the work of God. The first,

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and most important, is the internal work, and that is the foundation for the latter two, which are the external things as God works through the believer.

My purpose in this section is to help Christians understand that *secular work is the work of God*. Those things that we call secular are God's work if they are being done by a believer. The idea of dividing life into spiritual and secular is actually not God's idea at all; I am only using the term secular because it is common language and so is generally understood by people. In common language we tend to see religious activities as spiritual while every other kind of work is secular. We see preachers, pastors and maybe even charity workers as doing spiritual work, while all other forms of activities are deemed secular, and we take it that God is more concerned about the spiritual than He is about our secular things. The truth however is that as far as the Lord is concerned, *everything* we do is spiritual. Everything we do is a service unto Him even as a fire-fighter, a mother raising children, a politician, a doctor, a primary school teacher or whatever else one might be.

For the child of God, the service of God is done at all times. It is not just something that is done when he gets into the environment of a church or when he gets to the things which relate to the preaching of the word of God.

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Every work that we do as believers is to be the work of God. Real Christianity is not practised within the walls of a church but is effectively expressed only when we step into the world.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Phil 2:15 KJV

Please notice that the shining of the child of God is not in the church but out there in the world. What the Bible calls ministry is not what we do in church but what we do out there in our everyday work. The church assembly is the place we go so as to get fired up and energized that we might effectively represent our Lord Jesus outside. Church is like a service station where a car is refuelled, tuned and generally serviced, but the car performs it's effectual function outside the station.

It is true that there are people whose main duty for God is to serve the fuel and keep the station running, but the majority of people are there mainly to refill and be on the way out so as to do work out there. The workers in this figurative service station are those we have come to conventionally refer to as men and women of God. They are the ones we speak of as being in ministry (when in reality we are all in ministry).

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And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ. Eph 4:11-12

What these ministers (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors-teachers) do is to prepare the whole body of Christ for what they are to be doing for God. It is sad that many people think that all that constitutes the work of God is to work as a preaching minister or to support those who are such. The truth however is that these preachers do their work for God as they prepare the rest of the church for their own work outside the church. The real work for God for most Christians is outside the church. No believer can be effective for God in his or her own strength; grace to be effective is supplied as these ministers deliver spiritual substance into the believer through the preaching of the word and prayer. That is the relationship between the so-called clergy and the rest of the church. No matter what each one is, we are all doing the work of God. We are all advancing the kingdom of God.

TAKING KINGDOMS

Our outward job as Christians is to take over kingdoms for Jesus.

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And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." Rev 11:15

I want you to understand that it is this taking of kingdoms that is the work of God outside the church. We Christians must stop seeing our jobs merely as the means of earning money for other things; rather we must see those normal, everyday jobs as the mission fields in which we are working for God.

Many people have a limited vision of this mission field thing. They instantly assume, when they hear about the mission field, that their secular offices are the places where they preach the gospel and so win their unbelieving co-workers to Christ. Well, that is surely part of it but limiting it to that alone is to miss the complete thing. Yes we are to win souls in those places, but the work is not only a mission-field; it is itself a mission. The profession or institution is a territory that must be conquered for Christ.

Let me explain further.

As a child of God, if you work in the movie industry, do not think that you are there just to win the 'showbiz

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people' to Christ, maybe because you think they are greater sinners. No! The whole industry is a kingdom that must be converted for Christ. It is the work of God for you to work and pray effectively until righteousness permeates the place. It is a godly prayer, if not prayed out of covetousness and vainglory, to ask that the Lord converts great enterprises therein to your possession. It is actually a divine assignment!

*Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession.
Ps 2:8*

The lawyer is not to be in practice just so as to earn a wage, or even just to help people get access to justice; he is to work with the goal of recreating the entire justice system of his country for God, so as to fill it with the rule of righteousness. His mind is not just to work effectively in the system, but that the whole system will be changed to the order of the righteousness of God. He is to keep dreaming of ideas of perfection in the system, and praying that God will make it possible for him to bring those ideas into reality. Praying and working for the redemption of the legal system, not only the people therein, is what the Lord calls working for Him. I have a story to further buttress this point.

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The story is about Arthur Guinness, founder of the Guinness empire, who originally made his drink full of nutrients and low in alcohol as a means of delivering his countrymen from addiction to whiskey. The following is quoted from a web article concerning him (from www.iccc.net).

*He was elevated to the House of Lords because of his philanthropy and because of his wealth and he became Lord Iveagh. As Lord Iveagh, he brought about many, many changes in Britain in the legal system. We used to have dueling on the streets. You have seen it in the movies, take 10 paces and turn around and shoot each other- if you're in conflict. He said, "No." The Biblical principle is if you've got something against somebody, you have to talk to them; if they don't change or if they don't accept what you're saying, take somebody with you; legal representation, a lawyer as we now call it, and if they still don't listen, then you go to a public court and you get witnesses and before witnesses you then argue your case. And he hooked Biblical principle to the British Judicial System. **He was a young entrepreneur who changed the judicial system of Great Britain through applying Biblical principle.***

That perfectly illustrates what I am talking about.

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MORE EXAMPLES

The same goes for the school teacher. He is not just trying to earn a wage and get promoted; he is nursing the idea of being the redeemer of the nation's education system. He has plans which he prays God will help him bring to pass in the system.

A soldier-of-Christ medical doctor is not only a good doctor; rather he is one who is on a mission to create a channel for the health of God to be passed to this generation through the avenue of the health institutions and their outreaches. We must understand that it is not only by the laying on of hands and spiritual impartation that people get healed. There is a science that God can teach people, when He is set to bless them, by which they will ensure that they remain in health at all times.

The knowledge of God may sometimes appear scientific. I am a doctor and I believe so strongly that the science of medicine as it exists today is very much on a wrong track in certain vital areas, and I know that there is a ministry in there for those called of God to get it on the right track.

Please let me explain that some more. There was a time that the world knew nothing about the concept of immunization and of antibiotics. All kinds of methods

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were tried to cure different kinds of infectious diseases and there were varying degrees of success. The good Lord later kindled the spirits of men like Edward Jenner to understand the concept of inoculation, and that represented the beginning of the end of diseases like the smallpox.

Smallpox was one of the world's most dreaded plagues before then, but in October 1979 the World Health Organization officially declared it eradicated. The same principle has been applied with a great degree of success to the deadly and greatly disabling polio. For very little cost a child is rendered immune for life to the scourge of polio, and as a matter of fact, in a few years it will also be declared eradicated. The scientific knowledge is already at work. What the public health scientists are trying to achieve is what is called *herd immunity*.

A similar thing happened with infections generally and the use of antibiotics. Until a few centuries ago, the world did not understand anything about the existence of bacteria, and doctors would unwittingly spread infections from one patient to another. The simple idea of hand-washing and cleaning surgical equipment after use did not come to mind at all. A point came and God granted people understanding by inspiring some

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doctors and nurses, and the spread of infections reduced. Much later, antibiotics were discovered.

I have given these examples to explain the point that the generation of new light is a mission that the believer must understand is work for God. Like I mentioned earlier, I am persuaded that many areas in medicine are on a wrong track because of the lack of knowledge of certain issues, and 'ministers' of God will need to come into the field and transform it for God. These ministers are not preachers but scientists who understand that unveiling scientific mysteries is their own ministry.

As a pathologist I look at cancer and all the information available on it and I have the persuasion that the science of orthodox medicine regarding this problem is on a wrong path. In my opinion, this explains why it remains a deadly disease with very little advancement being made despite the huge human and material resources being poured into research on it.

The point I am making is that secular work is the work of God and actually constitutes the mission field for the majority of Christians. If we understand it, we will tackle our job with prayer and meditation and not with the crass un-spirituality that most of us are guilty of.

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TEACHER BY CALLING

The knowledge of this truth will cause a teacher to pray for inspiration on how to handle difficult pupils because he will understand that success as a teacher is success in the work of God.

I remember the first few years after I began to teach in the University; I used to enter my class many times praying and confessing the word of God. I would say, "I am a blessing to these students; I am patient with them; I am enabled by the Spirit to give them understanding." I did this most when I would feel a bit on edge and when I had a feeling like the day may not be productive. I delight in my students not only learning but enjoying the process of learning. For me it is not just about earning a wage but more about being an effective minister of God even in the lecture halls as I impart the understanding of medicine to those younger ones.

This is why it is wrong to be faithful in church at the expense of your job. It is as much against the will of God to be an unfaithful civil servant as it is to be an unfaithful church worker, if you are a Christian.

I think it will be perfect to end this chapter with a Biblical example of secular work as God's work.

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GOD AND POLITICAL POWER

We all acknowledge and take example from the life of Joseph, as being an example of a man of God. We however often overlook the fact that he never worked in the 'church' (or temples), but worked ultimately as a highly placed civil servant in Egypt. His work was never that of preaching the gospel; it was about preserving life. In his private life we saw a demonstration of his faith and his righteous walk before God. The main stay of his daily activity was however that of effectively governing Egypt. Now, that was very important in the plan of God for the whole of humanity, but he did not know that at the beginning. He was a man who understood that godliness involves faithfulness in all that is placed in one's hands to do.

I have heard it said again and again that politics is a dirty thing and no good Christian has any business getting involved. That is totally inaccurate. Politics is not dirty in itself, but anything can become dirty when it is in the hands of dirty people. The role of the child of God is to teach the new order of clean politics. He is to be there to allow the fruit of his clean heart of righteousness overcome the evil in the other hearts. He is to take over the kingdom.

Don't forget that Joseph and Daniel served in the kings' cabinets.

CHAPTER 9



THE LORD CHECKS AT THE BUSINESS OFFICE

***H**e who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" Luke 16:10-13*

In the previous chapter we saw that God has a plan for the world as we know it and that the work of ministry for the church is mostly out there in the world and not within the walls of the church. It is a matter of fact, we have seen, that the work of God is not limited to the preaching of the word of God.

Now if this is true, it follows that we must do our secular jobs with all seriousness. We are to demonstrate faithfulness to God in the way we handle the everyday affairs of our jobs.

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DILIGENT IN CHURCH AND AWAY FROM CHURCH

The tendency has been for Christians to be very diligent in the work of their churches but demonstrate the opposite in their secular jobs; the reason, of course, is that they have not understood that it is the work of God that they are handling slothfully.

Paul explained that we are to treat what we do for secular masters as if we are doing them for the Lord. I particularly like the way Col. 3:23-24 is rendered in the New Living Translation; in it Paul said, *“work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.”* The reason, he explained, is that what we are really looking for in life comes from the Lord (v24), and the real Master we are serving is Christ.

What I get from that is that the way by which our Master, Christ Jesus, judges us is first from what we are doing in our regular jobs and duties. We cannot feign faithfulness to God by doing well in church because He does not look there only. He would have first checked us out at our regular jobs before anywhere else.

One of the things we Christians must learn is that the Lord has a method for judging those invisible qualities of the soul. For example, God judges the love that

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people claim they have for Him by first judging how they love the people who they can see (1 Jn 4:20,21). This means that a man who claims to love God but whose attitude towards people does not exude simple love is simply a deceived person. No matter how much he supposedly gives to God, joins the choir or preaches the word, his professed love for God is false. In the same vein, we must understand that God does not judge our abilities to handle spiritual things by how we behave in church but by how we behave in our places of employment and in our everyday work.

One of the things that sadden me greatly when I hear people preach messages on giving and receiving is that, a lot of times, it is made to appear like whatever a person does at work is not as relevant as how he gives the money received from there to what they term the work of God. No, it is not so. No matter how much you give, if you are not faithful in that which belongs to another person, then you are not qualified for handling your own prosperity.

I think the fact that we have read some Bible narratives simply as Bible stories have caused us to lose sight of the fact that the things that happened in those accounts happened literally in the course of everyday life. Let us not forget what I explained earlier about Joseph, that he

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did not go to church but that his service of God was shown as he was distinguished everywhere he worked; from being a slave in the house of Portiphar to being a prisoner in the Egyptian jail, and then finally as a ruler in Egypt. His diligence and faithfulness marked him out everywhere.

Daniel is another example that we must follow. We must never forget that he was an everyday civil servant before he was a prophet. It is interesting that the Jews did not see him as a prophet; in their canon of scriptures, the book of Daniel was not included with other prophets but among historical books like Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah. I am not at all saying that his prophetic ministry was not important but I am pointing out again that what he did everyday was what we now call government work. It was only a few times in his life that he had major prophetic encounters. He was a gifted man, we know, but his gifts and anointing were seen in the way he went about his regular work. It was in this that he was found faithful. Most of the promotions he got in life came as he displayed the superiority of his spirit in everyday work, and not because of temple activities. This is the testimony concerning him:

Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an

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extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Dan 6:3-4

WHERE IT MATTERS

It is interesting to note that the place that the people around (the unbelievers, as we call them) first began to look for fault was concerning how Daniel handled government affairs, but the testimony was that *they could find no evidence of corruption, since he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him*. He was faithful in everything.

If many Christians today are to be examined, I think it is only in the affairs of their church that they would be found faithful as they never missed any group meeting or even the Pastor's birthday party. Their work place will hardly have anything especially commendable about them. It is worse if the person works for the government which, in my country today, most people see the business as nobody's business. Many of us have had this kind of attitude because of faulty teaching, and that is what I am trying to correct. We must have the right attitude.

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Whatever God places in your hands to do must be done as unto the Lord. The Lord is the Lord of all, both secular and religious. Any person who will not be faithful in that which is secular will not be faithful in that which is spiritual. Anyone who will not be faithful in that which belongs to another person will not have the opportunity of having his own. The Lord is watching and is judging us in how we are handling our secular duties.

And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

True riches is given to those who have proved faithful in what belongs to another person. In this light, I will like to pass a brief comment on the preaching ministry. Because of this need to prove faithful, I am of the opinion that if any person claims to be called into ministry, he should first work successfully somewhere for a while, in a secular job or under another minister. It is for his own good that he be found faithful in these temporary situations, so that he can take hold of his ministry later and make success of it.

Preaching ministry is interesting; it is often like a privately owned business in which the founder is the boss. In it people do what they like, how they like it and

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when they like it. They often hide behind the cover of spirituality to engage in acts of laziness and laxity. A lot of sluggards call themselves ministers, claiming to have a calling, because they are not willing to be subject to a boss. They oversleep, do not study and are not good when it comes to handling money, but they claim they are ministers. Unfortunately, unlike in business, it can be difficult to measure success in ministry (many gimmicks can be used to cover up many things), and for this reason this unfaithfulness persists in the life of many.

It is interesting to note that the people who Jesus called and made apostles were all doing something when he called them. They were not idle people who were supposedly waiting upon the Lord.

What I have tried to explain in this chapter is that Christians must bear in mind that God's work begins from their places of secular employments and it is necessary that they be found faithful in those places first before they can claim to be doing the work of God faithfully.

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CHAPTER 10



GROWTH IS A DIVINE ASSIGNMENT

*O*f the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. Isa 9:7 KJV

In the last few chapters I explained the fact that secular work is God's work and that faithfulness in them is faithfulness in serving God. I also explained along the line that secular work is not just a mission field to win souls for Christ but is actually a mission in itself. By this I mean that the field or profession itself is to be conquered for Christ. What I want to do in this chapter is to look into the issue of the increase of the government of God.

EXPANDING GOD'S KINGDOM

To work for God we must be in sync with what He wants to do, and what God wants to do is to take over *everything* in Christ Jesus.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the

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kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. Rev 11:15 KJV

Satan had showed off the kingdoms of the world in his temptation of Jesus, but God in His wisdom is honouring the faith which the Lord Jesus showed when He refused to bow down; He is doing that by handing over everything to Him forever.

Now, in everything the Lord wants to do on this earth He uses people, and to take over all the kingdoms of this world for Christ, He will use you and me who are believers in Christ. It is through us that He will administer the permanent defeat of the kingdoms of Satan.

...and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful. Rev 17:14

What I am explaining is that we are the ones who God will work through so as to bring about an increase in the government of Christ Jesus without end. Note that this will not come by any energy resident within ourselves or by any human effort coming from us; it will be by simple faith as we consciously agree with His purpose and seek to fulfil our parts in it. We will obey God in simple things as He gives us the opportunity and we

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will experience that power of God for effective results. This power, or grace, is always released once we agree with Him.

This overcomer's mind-set must be in the heart of every child of God as they seek to do any business in this life. We must forsake the doctrine of I-don't-want-much which we had held on to supposedly as a matter of humility.

In my book, *Grace to Prosper*, I explained that wealth and prosperity are not about self-pleasure but are rather matters of ministry. We must seek increase in our business empires because we are on assignment to take over kingdoms for God. Real worldliness is when we do not understand the divine purpose for things. A Christian who claims not to want much in life and who is planning just for a business that can bless him and his family is worldly and has missed the purpose of God. It is not humility and contentment to have a small dream; it is a product of ignorance of purpose.

I am trying to explain that part of the work you have to do for God is to enlarge your company, to increase your efficiency, to employ more people and to pray to God for promotion in your place of work. Set great targets and pray for wisdom from God to meet them. It is part

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of working for God when you seek to excel even as an employee.

Please let me go over it again: we must not limit God. It is the work of God to enlarge our coasts, to dream great dreams with God, and to pray like Jabez:

"Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me..." 1 Chron 4:10

Jabez was granted what he requested because it pleased God — He enlarged his coast. He increased his business and his sphere of influence. We all need this because there must be no end to the increase of the government of Christ; that is the only way by which peace, real and enduring peace, will come to the earth.

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

The hope that the world has is for the sons of God to increase and by their increase drive out the sons of the world and their influence of corruption. Many of the answers to our prayers for national and societal development are locked in the hearts of many believers; it is a divine assignment for you and me to increase so as to solve the problems that are plaguing our communities. It is the manifestation of the sons of God that will spell deliverance for the world (Rom 8:19).

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Don't let Satan and his agents scare you into accepting a small limit for your business. You can increase and become very great. God can make something great out of that small endeavour of yours. All I am preaching to you is that it is the work of God for you to cooperate with Him to bring it to pass.

The time you spend studying, incubating and praying for your business to increase is time spent working for God. *See, purpose is one thing which differentiates whether you are working for God or working for yourself, or even for Satan.* Why are you doing what you are doing? If you are doing it with a kingdom mindset, then it is for God; but if you are doing it for personal pleasure and glory, then it is not at all the work of God.

In whatever we do, we must strive to be better and to conquer more ground; it is part of ministry for the Lord. When the Lord gave small amounts of money to His servants in Luke 19, He commanded them to do business with it until He would return. The most faithful person was the one who multiplied it the most. "Look," he said to the Master, "your mina has made ten more!" And the Lord called him a *good and faithful* servant.

There is a danger in complacency; the servant who

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refused to work so as to multiply that which he was given was severely punished. To increase the thing the Lord committed to you is working for Him. Forget about calling something secular. In the life of the child of God, what is holy and what is secular are not to be distinguished; they are all merged in the service of God which his life has become. Your everyday work must increase in your hands as part of your faithfulness in service to God.

GRACE TO YOU

Now please let me make something clear. I am not at all implying that we will use our strength to bring the increase to pass. What I am saying is that we must expect great things and take the bold steps necessary toward greatness as the Lord would open the door, bearing in mind that growth is part of divine assignment. The fact is that once we are constantly faithful, the Lord will open doors of increase for us from time to time. We must boldly step into the doors of increase the Lord opens and not allow fear and complacency keep us from multiplying our talents.

God has prepared something great for each one of us. We must be diligent and faithful in everything, secular or church, and God will bring increase our way.

CHAPTER 11



MIND THE BOUNDARIES

There is one problem that exists in the body of Christ today, and which many do not realize is a problem, and this is the problem of breaking of ranks.

When I say breaking of ranks, what I'm referring to is when people who are not at all called by the Lord to the preaching ministry begin to take up posts as pastors and preachers. On the surface this may not appear wrong, and indeed it is commendable for an elder to be able to teach, but for one without the necessary anointing and calling to become a pastor, head a local assembly and sometimes even found a preaching ministry is going beyond that which is good.

The real problem is under the surface and it is that the people think that this is the only path to real service to God. The man is successful in his business, earns a lot of money, and someone asks him what he is doing for God in his life. The interpretation is that since he is not preaching he is not working for God. But this is not true.

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For such a man, to grow his business further may be the next assignment of God for him. To employ more people in his companies and to begin to run a scholarship scheme for needy young people may be the assignment of God for him. It is not necessary that you become a pastor if you are not so called. The good thing to do is to participate in church activities, give generously and maybe accept a position as a deacon (which in reality is only a part-time church administrative position. Acts 6:2,3); the so-called secular things are his primary assignment from the Lord, even though they do not seem so spiritual.

Oftentimes when a man works in church activities as I have recommended here, he is automatically promoted to ranks outside his calling. There are many 'pastors' I have met who are such only by promotion, and this was given as a reward for diligent service.

Many have been encouraged to forsake their businesses and professions to head church branches just because of their good habit of faithfulness, even when there is no gift for preaching ministry on them. That is not right; a pastor is one by calling, not because he is a serious church worker.

There are different callings in life and every one is useful in the church assembly. You can be an entrepreneur and be one by calling. However, a pastor is one who is called

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by God to shepherd His flock through the teaching of the word of God and is equipped by an anointing to do so; it is *never* to be by human promotion.

Many senior pastors actually see those promotions as reward for diligent service, but that is simply a distortion of divine order. You cannot reward someone with an assignment that is not his own. How can anyone think of that as a reward?

In these our days in which churches love to have many branches, it is obvious that there will be a shortage of manpower to head the branches, and diligence in church work has become the method of deciding who will be a pastor. If you do not have a calling for ministry, you simply do not have it; serve God in the capacity that you have the gift and anointing for. Let no one reward you with a title and a calling that is not your own; you will not please God more just because someone has given you a title.

Pastor, or Apostle, is not a rank, just like Prophet cannot be a rank in church; these things are matters of calling. Don't die before your time; abide within the realm of your calling.

IT'S A MATTER OF LONG LIFE

When I say 'don't die before your time' I mean it literally. One of the greatest teachers in my life in the matters of

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ministry is the departed Kenneth E. Hagin. He taught in many of his books and audio messages that the breaking of ranks is a major reason why believers die before their time. To break ranks means to deliberately occupy posts that are not yours and to claim an anointing that God did not give you. When a man begins to pastor and becomes a preacher without a calling and gift of God, he is setting himself up for early death. A lot of troubles and frustrations of life arise when people enter into offices that God did not call them into. Under the Old Testament, people who tried to do the priestly job not assigned to them, or offered what the Bible called strange fire, died. It is outside the scope of this book to go into details on this issue but a word, it is said, is enough for the wise. Please identify and stay within your calling; you do not have to be a preacher to serve God effectively!

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly. Rom 12:6

God judges faithfulness only with reference to what He gave to you and not what you took up yourself.

SECTION 3

THE MINISTRY



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CHAPTER 12



USE YOUR GIFT

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Rom 12:6-8

In the previous section, my emphasis was to help us understand that secular work is part of God's work and that the person whose work is within the church setting is not necessarily a more serious Christian than the person who works primarily within the business world, in the academic world or even in the entertainment world. Each person has his calling and must recognize it wherever it may be located; this is so that we may all walk and work in a manner pleasing to God.

We have different callings but the performance of all of them is so as to further the kingdom of God and His

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righteousness on the earth, and to output blessings into the lives of people. Whatever your calling may be and wherever it might be functionally located, what is important is that you exercise it to the degree that the Lord will call you faithful.

DO BUSINESS WITH THIS

Faithfulness is judged according to what you have been given to use and not according to what people demand of you. This is why it is not possible to impress God with preaching and pastoring if that is not where your calling and gifting lie. No matter how much and how well you perform so that people are impressed, at the judgment seat of Christ, before which we must all appear, you will be judged a failure. In all the parables of Jesus about talents and *minas*, the Lord always asked the servants to show what they did with what He gave to them.

In the New American Standard Bible rendering of Luke 19:13, the thought is so beautifully expressed. He said to them, “do business with *this* until I come back.” He gave something specific to each one of them and that was what He was judging with. He was not concerned about what they did with what they were able to borrow or invent; it was always about what He gave to them.

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Each one of us has something which He gave to us. The use of that thing is what describes faithfulness. A gift is the ability which each person has as an endowment from God, which makes something easier for him or her to do than it is for others.

...God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. Rom 12:6 NLT

Reading further to verse 8 in that Romans 12, we see a list of different ones. My opinion is that the list here is not exhaustive but that Paul mentioned those ones as examples and to give us a good idea of his direction of teaching. I believe that there are many gifts that are not listed there and that new gifts keep coming up as God introduces us into new stages in the history of the world. There were no believers with computer programming gifts in the days of Paul but there are now. There were craftsmen those days who could work with gold, silver and copper to produce beautiful things, but now we have added to artwork those with the ability to produce television programmes and movies. The emphasis is for us to recognize diversity and to employ them accordingly.

So, how do I know my gift?

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We'll answer that in a short while but first let me explain the meaning of these words: gift, calling, and ministry.

CHAPTER 13



GIFTS, CALLINGS AND MINISTRIES

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly... Rom 12:6

When the Bible uses the word 'grace' as above, it is referring to an endowment, or ability, that someone has. Grace is when the power of God is working with you to make the performance of a thing easy; and this is why the NLT explains this verse as '*God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.*' A gift therefore is something that you have the ability to do with ease; something that almost comes to you naturally. It is as if you do not have to try, you just find yourself doing it. Those days when we were in the university we would say, 'it's in the blood.' Your gift is something that is 'in the blood.'

Let us take singing as an example; many have to try and labour to sing a note correctly, while those with the gift just sing. There are those who are natural artists like

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Bezalel who God told Moses to appoint so as to craft articles of metal and wood for the tabernacle (Ex 35:30). Some just find explaining things to people very easy, and we call them teachers. The list goes on and on, and is partly listed in Romans 12:6.

THE INWARD PARTS

Your gift is a product of the way the Lord made your internal structure to be. You may be able to see what others can't see and create what others cannot even conceive, and this is because of some spiritual and physical structures, both in your mind and brain, which you have and others don't. This gift, though spiritual in foundation, affects your physical body. David explained it thus:

*For Thou didst form my inward parts;
Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.
I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully
made. Ps 139:13-14*

It is that formation of the inward parts that makes one person different from another, and makes a kind of grace available to one while another is to someone else. When God was making each one of us, He made the bodies according to the purpose for which He created each one. The Bible says concerning the Lord Jesus, that

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a body was prepared for Him (Heb 10:5). The purpose determines the kind of body.

Now, the fact that someone has a gift does not mean he will never require training; one of the features of having a gift is that even when such a one needs to be trained, he learns a lot easier and much faster than other people. Virtually any person can be taught anything with varying degrees of difficulty, but when it comes to the person gifted in that area, the training is just to unlock something that is already inside.

Identifying a gift is a very simple thing; all you need to do is to watch out and see what you have grace concerning. One must be careful however not to get carried away by what is popular. It is easy to misinterpret a desire as a gift. A desire is something that can be generated by association and by observation. Let me explain further.

DESIRE IS NOT A GIFT

There was a time I taught a 3-day seminar on a university campus on this subject of gifts, and on the last day I spoke on the topic, 'My call and my course.' After the teaching that evening I allowed people to ask questions and raise issues so I could help answer them. As one person after another spoke, I noticed that the

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greater number of the people claimed they had a gift of acting or of singing. For a while I was wondering why God had gathered for me only stage performers and musicians, but of course that was not what He did.

The reality is that since people pay attention to the activities of performers, and their lives often portray things that young people desire, such as fame, glamour and wealth, many young people in desiring to be like them begin to believe they are good performers too. Since acting and singing are things that people can easily imagine that they can do, it is easy to deceive oneself into thinking the gift is there.

What those people were mostly expressing was the desire for wealth and glamour, and not really their discovered gifts. If you bother to check you will notice that the group that has the largest number of volunteers in any church are the most visible ones, such as the choir and the ushers. I have been in leadership and I know this to be true. There are a number of reasons for this, and one of them is this thing I'm explaining about people wrongfully thinking that they have a gift just because they admire and desire it.

Many young people have not yet been exposed to the area where their gifts are and therefore cannot yet

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identify such a gift by experience. This is why I encourage people to stop trying to be intellectually accurate in the knowledge of their gifts and callings but to just continue to walk with God and be faithful in whatever their hands find to do. The Lord will lead each person into the right path for His name's sake.

David was gifted both as a leader and as a musician, but I wonder whether he had any other thing on his mind apart from the welfare of his father's sheep when Samuel arrived and anointed him king. He loved his sheep so much that twice he risked his life fighting dangerous animals, a lion and a bear, to free them from death. He was a true shepherd, and he became king.

LET ANOTHER PRAISE YOU

One of the things that will help you avoid being deceived by your desires concerning your gifts is to obey a simple word of advice from the mouth of Solomon in which he said, *let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips* (Prov 27:2). You cannot be the judge of your own abilities; you must listen out for the testimony of others.

If you are the only one who thinks you have a natural gift to do something (I am not referring to the desire to do it), then it is likely you are deceived. If no one else

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apart from you enjoys the sound of your voice when you are singing, then maybe you should go and pray that God would help you find the true gift that is yours, or at least that He would bring out the ability, because it is most certainly still buried. If you are the only one who thinks you can teach while nobody really learns anything from you or even wants to sit down to hear you speak, then you *cannot* teach.

I have seen many people, and some I have tried to correct, who claim they have a particular gift and I wonder who lied to them. That very thing that they are trying to do is what turns people off from them, and yet they think they can do it.

On a personal note, before I began to think I could teach, I heard other people, mostly my seniors, pass a comment on my teaching ability. Of course I knew I loved to teach, but that I could do it was testified to by others to me before I really began to notice it. Often, people would refer others to me that I might help them with explanations on a particular subject.

Kenneth E. Hagin advised that before you start bragging about your gift, you should try it out first. In his case he knew the day the teaching anointing fell on him. If I remember correctly he said it felt as if a cloak

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dropped on him and he just knew it was the teaching gift. In fact he said out loud, 'now I can teach!' What did he do after this? He told no one about it but started teaching a very small group of women who used to meet to pray. In a little time the news spread about the power in the teaching classes until the place became full of the large number of people coming to hear him. That was the testimony he needed to know the gift was real and was not just his imagination.

I'll still come back to this gift thing but let me just say at this point that it is with your gift that you will minister both to the church of God and to the world around you as you do the work of God.

Now, about calling.

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CHAPTER 14



WHAT A CALLING IS

Strictly speaking, the word 'calling' is used in the New Testament to reflect the life and purpose which the Lord brought us all into according to His plan. For example, all believers are said to be saints by calling, or 'called saints.' Sainthood is thus described as a calling. However, when we use the word *calling* in contemporary Christianity, we often mean the *specific* appointment or office that God appointed us individually to occupy and fulfil. It describes the sub-specializations within the body of Christ.

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers... 1 Cor 12:27-28

"...I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." Jer 1:5

So we see that a calling has to do with the office that we are appointed to fill. Though a person's gift is an indication of the kind of function he will be able to

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perform, it does not always easily tell what office he will fill. Of course, it indicates the *kind* of office that you *can* occupy, but there is the issue of the specific divine plan and purpose that must be put into consideration. A gift can have a wide diversity of possible areas of use. As an example, one who has the ability to teach (a gift) may be *called* to teach secular academic work, or to teach the word of God. The ability to teach is one thing; the field in which to use it is another.

IT'S NOT IN THE NAME

From what we have seen here, it is obvious that it is easier to identify a gift than to locate a calling or ministry. Before I speak on locating a calling further, let me quickly point out that it is not the name you call yourself that is important but that you perform a function in accordance with your gifts to bless the church of God and the world around you. I say this because many people spend so much time trying to place names upon themselves. There are many so-called apostles who do not even know the meaning of the word. We have even invented new words and expressions; things like 'prophetic evangelist,' 'apostolic pastor' or even 'prophetic teacher.' Please I am not implying that there is something wrong with these expressions; I only wish to point out that we must not be carried away by names and titles.

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Many people who call themselves apostles feel like the apostolic office is the highest office in the body of Christ and because of the pride of their hearts they assume the name. I see many 'pastors' who do not even have an anointing of ministry upon them. It is not the name that matters but that we are ministering in the area of our gifts, either to the body of Christ, the world, or both.

LOCATING THE CALLING

Having made this point, I want to go back to something I was explaining about locating your calling. I explained that a gift is easier to identify because of the nature of it; a calling, however, tends to be a passion to solve an issue relating to a situation, a people or a place. It may also be an assignment that is imposed upon you as you prove faithful in your all-round walk with God.

He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Ps 23:3

What the Lord does is to lead us in our everyday life until we find ourselves in our calling. That is the way that callings are identified by most people. But there are situations even today in which the Lord calls a man the way He called Moses, Jeremiah and Paul. These people were called by dramatic supernatural manifestations and given well described assignments, but most people

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are going to be in the category of Daniel and Joseph. These latter two were doing the jobs the Lord gave to them through the situations they found themselves in; they were faithful in using their gifts in those places, and eventually they found themselves in the place of God's eternal plan. The way they were called was not as dramatic as that of Moses and Paul, but it was the calling of God all the same. Even though Joseph had a dream as a child, there was nothing he could do about bringing it to pass nor did he even understand the real interpretation of the dream. It was after he had the opportunity of using his gift as a ruler in Egypt that he understood the calling of God for his life.

As I mentioned earlier, sometimes your calling comes to you as a passion; something that your heart *desires* to do, or to see done. Mike Murdock explained that it may come as a problem that infuriates you the most, so that every time you see the problem you want to do something about it. Moses, as an example, whenever he would see the children of Israel oppressed in Egypt, would deeply want to deliver them. It was something that was always with him. The zeal was consuming him. He initially tried by his own hands and failed; afterwards the Lord sent him with His mighty hand.

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Please note that the identification of a need and the passion that wants to see it done are just *possible* indications that you may have been called to do it; it is not always true that you have thus been called. The main thing to do whenever you see a need is to pray; if it is your calling, then the Lord will open the door for you to begin to do something about it. Recognizing a need is not necessarily a call. The fact that you notice the lack of a good church in a locality does not mean you have been called to be a pastor, but it does mean you should pray. I believe that it is when the need observed corresponds with a person's gifts that there is a strong indication of that need being the person's calling. However, all things being in place, a man will be passionate about his calling.

Now, whether He calls you by a supernatural manifestation or by the unfolding of daily events, if your heart is with Him, you will enter into your calling one day. Until that time, what you are to do is to exercise your gift.

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CHAPTER 15



EXERCISING YOUR GIFT

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly. Rom 12:6-8

My emphasis at this point is on the issue of exercising your gift.

THE THREE-FOLD PURPOSE

God has a three-fold purpose for the life of His children. First and most importantly, as we saw in Section One, is what He wants to do *in* them. Then there is what He wants to do *through* them in the Church, and number three, what He wants to do through them in the world. The way by which we do outward work for God is to use the gifts that He placed inside us so as to bless people.

There is something that other people need that is found in you alone and you owe it to them to use your gift to bless them. Your gift, even though it may oftentimes

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appear similar to that of someone else, is unique and must be used so that there will be a balance in the church of God, and so that the world will be blessed.

As I mentioned in the last chapter, most of us will not discover our callings or purposes in life by a supernatural manifestation but rather we will flow into them as we use our gifts diligently in serving others. What the Lord does usually is to here and there provide us the opportunities to help others with our gifts; it is as we use those gifts at such times that we flow into our callings. That is where the matter of faithfulness comes in.

See, gifts are often like fire in our bones, looking for avenues to express themselves. I like to use my personal experience here to explain this point.

I have always loved to teach, especially the word of God, and testimonies abounded from people who learnt so much from my ministrations. Just like I mentioned in the story I narrated in Section One, after graduating from the university, the church I attended during my year of internship was the place where I first operated my gift after school. The senior pastor of the church called me one day and asked me to choose where I would love to serve in the church. About four

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options were presented and I jumped at the one that was teaching based. I still remember that the pastor would have preferred me to take the one that involved more of visitations and pampering young believers, something I absolutely had no stomach for. Well, since I was allowed to make a choice I chose the one that fitted my gift. I laboured in teaching in that church for the next year.

After my national service there was a period in which I did not have the opportunity to teach, and during which time I was learning so much. The pressure to teach was heavy on my soul but the Lord did not give me any avenue for release, so I used to teach *nobody*. I literally would teach the empty air around me just to get ventilation for my soul. I wrote a lot of short sermons and articles those days, and several of those have since been published as mini-books. When I met my wife and we got engaged, and for the first many months after we got married, I taught her at every opportunity. Every opportunity I had, I taught. Even in secular things, I gladly gave lectures for free.

When I eventually began full ministry work and founded Kingdom-Word Ministries, all I did was create the avenues to teach people the word of God. I produced about 18 teaching tracts and printed tens of

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thousands of copies in the initial period of some months. The tracts were distributed free. The summary is that my guiding attitude was to exercise my gift as I am given the opportunity.

EXERCISE YOUR GIFT

This is the point where many people miss it, especially when their gifts are more secular than spiritual, the way people think of it; they tend not to understand why they should do anything for anybody for free. They do not understand that it is not about the person they are helping but about exercising their gifts. To exercise your gift means to use the gift as often as possible so that you get better in the use of it. It is the process during which you put skill into your raw gift. Just like in the case of physical exercise, the exercise of your gift is primarily for your good.

Gifts must be developed; the process of developing them involves exercising them and you should rather be grateful for the privilege given you for this, instead of trying to quickly turn it into an avenue for making money. The opportunities to use your gift abound around you if you are willing to use them. Offer to help people even when they do not come begging. If you are good at decorations, offer your services free to a friend or colleague about to move into a new apartment. You

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are good with organizing? Then offer to help someone organize his or her wedding or anniversary party.

This is one reason why you may take a poor-paying job at times, because therein you get abundant opportunities for exercising your gift. I remember the story told by Ben Carson, renowned American neurosurgeon, formerly of Johns Hopkins.' In his book *Gifted Hands*, he told of how he honed his surgical skills.

Immediately after his residency the Lord led him to Australia to work for a year. While there his skilful handling of a difficult case made the big people believe in him. This case was one which the chief had thought could not be done without serious complications. He handled it well and the patient turned out very well. After it all the other chiefs wanted him to handle cases for them. There he was, operating on people's brains, working for more than he was earning, but feeling absolutely good about it because it gave him the opportunity to really exercise his gift. Though he testified, as the title of the book reflects, that he was specially gifted for his work as a surgeon in the delicate field of the brain, yet the exercise of his gift was what finally prepared him for the success and fame that came to him when he led the separation of the Binders' Siamese twins. When he was recommended for the post

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of chief of paediatric neurosurgery at the foremost American hospital by his former boss, being but a young *black* man, it was not just about being favoured, but that the favour from God worked through the development of his gift. Solomon said it, "*Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.*"

Faithfulness is when you use that gift of yours regularly and properly so as to be of constant blessing to people; it is then that the Lord will move you into your ministry.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. 1 Tim 1:12 KJV

Ministry simply means that God has committed a specific assignment into your hands; it is almost the same thing as the calling of which we have been speaking. A man's ministry is the specific assignment that God commits into his hands. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ among the gentiles, especially in areas not previously visited by any preacher, was the ministry of Paul.

When the Lord said to Jeremiah, "I appointed you as My prophet to the nations," that was a calling. He said

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to him, “Look, I have put my words in your mouth,” that was a gift. When He said, “Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms,” that was a ministry. A ministry is the specific application of a calling.

EVERYONE HAS A MINISTRY

In line with all that I have been expounding, it is obvious therefore that ministry is not necessarily church related work; ministry for many people is in what is often called secular. Your ministry is your own work committed into your hands by God. Every person eventually must step into his or her ministry.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry... Eph 4:11-12 KJV

As we can see from what Paul was saying in this passage above, the preachers, or pulpit ministers as I like to refer to the group, have a duty to prepare *every* believer for the work of ministry. The apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers are not the only ministers. They are rather ministers for ministers; they minister to prepare ministers. Every believer is a minister, either in service or in training.

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Actually one of the major things I have been trying to get across to every believer is this fact that we are all ministers; that we all work for God in different areas of life, both secular and church. I accept that preachers, of which I am one, are particularly important in that they are involved in preparing the rest of the church for their ministries, but all believers are called to be ministers and each must recognize it. If you have followed me thus far in this exposition, you should by now understand that it is as you use your gift to bless people and help them see Christ better that you are doing ministry.

When we want to minister the word so as to win people for Christ, we often stay on the method of preaching the word of God in systematic theology; we analyze the scriptures, trying to use reasoning to persuade people. As much as that may not be wrong in itself, it reflects only one scope in the ministry of winning the lost. The wider scope is that each person demonstrates the excellence of God in his or her life through the performance of everyday work. We must learn as believers to see our jobs and professions as the means by which the glory of God is demonstrated through us. It is the work of God and the work of ministry to put excellence into all that we do.

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SOUL-WINNING TOOLS

A man came to see me once and he told me that until he started listening to my messages he did not believe in God. I do not say anything to try to persuade those who do not believe in God to believe, but this man was convicted. See, there is power from God to affect people when we use the gift He gave us to work and to minister to people. It is not only when we are preaching that God moves. A young man testified to me once that while he would be playing the drums people would be convicted of sin. Even if you are in construction business, just by doing your work with diligence and with honesty, multitudes can be converted. Ministry is in every field of life and not only in the pulpit.

In the book *The Happiest People On Earth*, Demos Shakarian, founder of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, described how the opportunity to witness for the Lord would often come. He was a dairy farmer and of course would visit the fairs in which special cattle were displayed and sold. The idea in those shows was to try and get animals with very good genes, genes which spoke of good milk production, resistance to diseases, etc.; animals which would have the ability to pass these qualities on to their offspring. I think bulls were the ones mostly so traded. Everyone wanted to get a bull that could come into the

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fold and pass the good genes it has to the offspring through as many cows as possible.

Now, to determine which bull would have these characteristics was not easy and so specialists in doing this had developed. Based on the assessment of these animals by the owners and their specialists, the prices at the fairs varied very widely, and each buyer would consult his own specialist adviser before committing his money to any purchase. At the end of everything, there were no guarantees; it was just a little better than a game of chance. There were times that people thought that an animal was good and so paid a lot of money for it but the animals turned out not to be worth a fraction of the cost.

For Demos Shakarian, he used no human adviser, and he consistently bought excellent animals, as shown by the results they produced in his herd. Cost and the history written on the tags of the animals were never his considerations for buying, but he consistently got great results. People soon noticed and began to ask questions about his secret adviser. There just had to be one, they thought.

Who was his adviser? Demos Shakarian used to buy based on a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. He had

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learned over time how to recognize the animal the Lord wanted him to buy. When he would look around at the animals, one would stand out in his view as if there was a glow upon it. Now, only he saw the glow but it was unmistakable. It was the same glow that used to be upon the people he would call to speak as the Holy Spirit directed him during the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship meetings. He learned to recognize this manifestation of the Spirit and would always buy the animal so indicated. That was how he always got a good buy.

When people came to ask how he did it, it became a witnessing point. In answering the question about his adviser, he would tell the people of the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, who knows everything about cattle since He created them, and who is still in the active service of cattle breeding. He would also speak about His Son Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour of the world. That is ministry!

GLORY TO GOD

Now that is how we give glory to God — to acknowledge the source of our skill and excellence. That is the point at which we must not deny Him before men so that He does not deny us before the Father in heaven. That is how we lift Him up before men so that

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He can draw them unto Himself. That is how we become the Bible for the world to read. Daniel got to such a point and he was careful to give God the glory due to Him. This was after he had out-performed, so to speak, all the specialists in the king's palace.

*Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. However, **there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries**, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. Dan 2:27-28*

The king was in trouble until Daniel came with the manifestation of God; all the people he relied on had failed and he was at a loss concerning what to do. Daniel became the only help, but he was careful to let the king know where the answer was actually coming from. That is how to testify about God.

For the world to see the gospel of Christ, we must be witnesses.

A witness tells of what he has seen, what he personally experienced, not what he read somewhere or heard

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someone else say. Your gift and the blessing of God that He placed in your life is your strongest weapon when it comes to reaching the world and preaching the gospel of God. Let the preachers preach but let every believer focus on being witnesses, that is people who have experienced God. The effect this has on the world can be seen from the response of the king to the ministry of Daniel.

The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." Dan 2:47-48

Notice that the king knew what God must be like when he witnessed what Daniel was able to do. "Your God must be the greatest since you have been able to reveal this mystery," he said.

Ministry is not only about healing the sick and raising the dead and shouting 'repent!' from the rooftops; there is ministry in every sphere of life. This same principle was demonstrated in the life of Joseph when he interpreted the dream of Pharaoh and gave him a solution concerning the soon coming problem. Several times I have been able to help people into the knowledge of Christ by reason of my secular teaching in the university, and that is by the Spirit of God.

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Opportunity to minister the word was produced as a result of teaching a medical subject.

A LIGHT SHINING

You see why it is ministry to live an honest and decent life, to abhor what is evil and to succeed despite not being crooked. How many men are there who have no reputation outside the walls of the church but who are thought of as saints by the brethren? No wonder Paul emphasized on outside reputation among believers when we need to choose leaders in the church.

And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be men of dignity... 1 Tim 3:7-8

So you see I am in ministry when I focus on putting excellence into my secular work and working with God therein until the manifestation of God appears therein.

You see that the inner working that I explained extensively in Section One is the most important thing, and this is because it brings out the glory of God in every aspect of our lives so that we can indeed be witnesses for Christ at all times.

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Your marriage and happy home can be a ministry through which God will draw many to Christ.

Your academic and business excellence, especially when you were previously a failure, can be a witness for Christ. Ministry is everywhere!

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CHAPTER 16



AM I IN THE RIGHT PLACE?

Having expounded on all the things that we have seen so far, there is an issue I'll like to tackle. If someone is already in something, how can he or she decide if that is the right calling, and if it is not, what can be done to change into the right calling?

To answer this we must first see why someone may be in the wrong calling in the first place. The reasons include the service of mammon, the service of men and general ignorance.

THE SERVICE OF MAMMON

First, let us look at the matter of the service of mammon.

In the sermon of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 6, the Lord taught us what mammon is. *A person is serving mammon when his faith is not in God to take care of him but he is rather concerned about "what shall we eat, what shall we*

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drink, and with what shall we cloth ourselves?" When this is the primary concern in life, that is the matter of security of tomorrow, then the person is serving mammon and will soon walk out of God's position for his life.

People tend to take on professions that they really don't belong in and work in places that they have no love for because of the level of income that comes out of it. The highest paying professions in any society will have the highest number of people who are outside the will of God for their lives. The desire to be materially secure is a major reason why we may not be found in the proper calling. The place that the desire for material and financial security takes in anyone's life is the very place that God will be missing; the reason, Jesus said, is *"you cannot serve God and mammon."*

If the desire for this security is the first in your choice making process, then God is second or maybe even last, and once God is not first, consider Him totally absent. In the words of Oswald J. Smith, "He is either Lord of all or He is not Lord at all."

Callings demand sacrifice, and if you are not willing to make the necessary sacrifices you will miss the call of God. To sacrifice means to let go of something you would have loved to have so as to fulfil a purpose and

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an assignment. Sometimes you will lose the companionship of someone you love, a painful decision for sure, just to be in what you *know* is the will of God. Sometimes it is a job you will refuse to take. At other times it may be letting go of a hard earned position or career. This was what Paul experienced when he said he suffered the loss of things.

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him... Phil 3:8-9

Callings demand such sacrifices. If all the decisions you have made in life have been for greater comfort for you, then you are most certainly outside the calling of God.

THE SERVICE OF MEN

The second reason why people miss the call of God is the service of men.

We are serving men when we allow their expectations dictate what we do. Sometimes people will tell us what is supposedly befitting of us and we foolishly believe them, and as a result we start pursuing things that only men approve but which are not of God. How many

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times have people tried to tell me how to run my ministry in a way that is 'befitting'? Kenneth E. Hagin in his days told of how at a point it appeared as if everyone he met was prophesying to him to go get a tent and start tent evangelistic meetings, a thing that was not at all in the plan of God for his life. At that time virtually all 'successful' ministers had such tents. It seemed like the way to make it in ministry. However he had been told specifically by the Lord to stay in the churches teaching, going from one to the other.

In the book *Gifted Hands* which I referred to earlier, Ben Carson described the character of his father. He had separated from his mother to be with another woman while Ben was still a little boy (actually he was a bigamist). It was heart breaking to the little boy when this happened, but he looked back as a grown man, a renown surgeon, and realized that if his father had stayed he would never have made it to becoming a doctor. The reason? He said the man lived his life to please people. He described him as a nice guy who everybody liked and who lived life in such a manner to make sure he was liked. If they had grown up under his influence, the man would have encouraged his sons to do the things that young men did so that they might 'belong;' things like hanging out, dressing to impress and dating. Those things would have prevented him

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from putting in the necessary effort into his studies to make him succeed. He was thankful the man left.

At other times we are trying to be something to please, say, our parents. Some are doctors just because a mother wants to be called a doctor's mother, or even priests so their parents can bear the title of 'parent of a priest.' These things happen. Fame, glamour and such things, apart from the desire for money, often dictate what people do. These are the things that constitute the service of men and they hinder us from being in the calling of God.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Among the other reasons that may exist why people walk in a calling that's not theirs, and I believe this to be one of the most important ones, is ignorance. The Lord once said, *"My people perish for lack of knowledge."*

Many believers are not even aware that life is an assignment; they do not know that it is not every job that is theirs or that it is not every place they belong to. They do not understand the concept of gifts and callings or that their geographical location is just as important as the kind of ministry they are pursuing. Many think that you just go in and "possess everywhere that the soles of your feet tread upon;" they forget that the God who said that

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to the Israelites first described to them the extent of their inheritance, where to thread and where not to thread (Dt 11:24). There were places He specifically warned them not to provoke the inhabitants thereof because if they did they were on their own (Dt 2:4 – 9).

People often do not know that God has a predetermined will for their lives or that it is important that they are careful to conform their lives to it. Many think that serving God is only possible in church and so they take on titles they have no calling for and become branch pastors because they desire to serve God. They do not know that only God can call any person into a preaching ministry; no man can. Ignorance can be a real problem.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

I believe these reasons I have discussed are about the most important of the many reasons why people are in the wrong calling. Now to answer the question of how one may decide whether he is in the right calling.

First, ask yourself, “Why am I doing what I am doing?” Is it because of the love for money and the things of this life? Would I even consider this job or profession if the money was not so good? Would I gladly do this same thing on a charity basis? Is it for the fame and glamour?

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These questions are to help you see if you are serving mammon or the lusts of men. The questions are to be tackled in the place of prayer with a heart open for the Holy Spirit to examine. This is important because without the help of the Holy Spirit one may deceive himself with false answers.

Now, there are signs that often are found with people who are in the wrong places. For example, if you simply do not enjoy the work that you are doing, and there is no real reason for this that a natural person should easily understand, it is possible that's a sign that you are in the wrong place.

When the Lord calls someone to do something, the passion for that thing tends to grip the soul so that even when there are reasons to be discouraged, the person still pushes on despite all the problems. If you look at the case of Jeremiah, his prophesying brought him a lot of enemies and consequent discouragement, but it was not possible for him to stop.

...For the word of the Lord has become to me a reproach and a derision and has brought me insult all day long. If I say, I will not make mention of the Lord or speak any more in His name, in my mind and heart it is as if there were a burning fire shut up in my bones. And I am weary of enduring and holding it in; I cannot contain it any longer. Jer 20:8-9 AMP

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In the place of your calling, there is a force inside your soul that keeps you going even in the face of adversity. A person who easily gets discouraged and quits on a thing is probably not called to that thing. If you find yourself always tired of what you do, with your eyes constantly looking out for an avenue of escape, then you are probably not in the right place or maybe you need to go and see the Lord about some other important issues. According to Oswald Chambers:

Watch the things that exhaust you, and you will find you are doing something outside God's arrangement for you. There are things for which His life supplies no energy and we get spent right out. If we are doing things inside God's arrangement for us, the natural exhaustion is so quickly recuperated by the resurrection life of Jesus that we do not feel the exhaustion.

There is a joy and drive that keeps a person that is in the centre of the call of God for his life. Even in the centre of trials and affliction, the person just doesn't want to quit. I am not saying that there will not be discouragements or times when one will want to give up, but even when that comes, *'the natural exhaustion is so quickly recuperated by the resurrection life'* so that the person stays.

That was the kind of thing that kept David Livingstone coming back to the jungles of Africa even though

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afflictions awaited him all the time. Paul went through the same thing. There was a time he and his co-workers were so tested that they despaired of life itself (2 Cor 1:8). So bad was the suffering, he said, that it was as if they had the sentence of death passed upon their flesh; but in all these things they rejoiced in the fact that it was for the blessing of the Corinthians and for the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus. As much as they were suffering, the power of God that was contained in their persons was constantly being manifested as lives were being transformed by their hands and much thanksgiving was rising up to God. This kind of result could only be produced through the release of divine grace, and for this reason he said,

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison... 2 Cor 4:16-17

So you see, people who easily lose heart are very likely in the wrong place (except of course for those who are just too irresponsible in the things of life to endure hardship). No matter the excuse the person gives for losing heart and wanting to quit, the baseline is that they are probably in the wrong place and the discontent is just a manifestation of that.

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Sometimes, like I mentioned earlier, the person involved has no reason physically speaking to be discouraged. The money is good, there are no troubles and everything just appears okay, but deep inside the satisfaction is not there; it is as if the fellow is gaining the whole world, as a believer, but suffering the loss of his soul. The soul satisfaction that makes life enjoyable is simply missing. Remember that Jesus said in the gospel of John chapter four, after ministering to the Samaritan woman at the well, that His satisfaction came from doing the will of God and from finishing the work assigned to Him by God. That satisfaction cannot be bought with money or any other material thing, and is what is lacking in the soul of those kinds of people at such times.

When one has everything and yet is dissatisfied, one major thing to check is the matter of being in the right calling. Kenneth Hagin said it feels like closing your eyes and washing your feet with your socks on; it just doesn't feel right.

I heard Kenneth Hagin use that expression as he narrated how God moved him out of pastoring churches into being an itinerant teacher and prophet. He had been a pastor for about twelve years and had pastored different kinds of churches. At this point he

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was the pastor of the best church he had ever pastored and was living more comfortably than he had ever lived, earning more money than he had ever earned. In short it appeared like he had 'arrived.' But the discomfort in his soul and the feeling of something not being right just wouldn't leave him alone. On the surface he had no reason to be dissatisfied, but he was. He said it was like washing your feet with your socks on. That caused him to begin to wait on God in fasting and prayer. It was while he was praying that the Lord revealed to him that he was never called to be a pastor, and eventually he resigned from there to pursue things that were more in line with the real call of God for him.

Like I mentioned earlier, calling often demands a sacrifice; the sacrifice in his case was that he had to let go of a secure income and comfortable living to go out without sponsors, like Jesus said, *carrying neither scrip nor purse and greeting no man on the way*. To accept that kind of life is most certainly a sacrifice, a sacrifice so hard he became discouraged, almost fainted and almost went back into what was not the will of God for him, and he almost died in the process.

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CHAPTER 17



THE ZIPPORAH PHENOMENON

When I said that he, Kenneth Hagin, almost died in the process I am referring to when he decided to pull out of itinerant ministry and settle down like 'everybody else.' Now this was in response to the persistent complains and prodding from his wife. She wanted to have a home and the stability that comes with having a regular income and a steady base, such as they had in the last church they pastored. This was after he had been in the itinerant ministry for a while and they had been facing the challenges of frequent travelling as a family, or the father being gone for weeks with mum alone to look after the two children. And there was the matter of having only just enough money to get by, or many times less than enough.

She complained repeatedly, and eventually he too saw things as she saw them and decided to 'settle down.' It was as he was making the final arrangements for that move that he had a heart attack and was about to die.

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His wife was called; she came in to where he lay dying, confessed everything to God and told Him she was willing to let him go without ever complaining again. At that time he rose up perfectly whole. It was like the case of Zipporah circumcising her son so as to keep Moses alive (Exodus 4:25).

SPANNER IN THE WORKS

This leads me to one last point, and this is still talking about how one may know he is in the wrong calling.

Now, sometimes God just throws the spanner, like we often say, into your works just to point out to you that He is not with you in what you are doing. It is like being chastened with pain in your bed, using the words of Elihu to Job (Job 33:19). Everything just starts going wrong. Where things should have worked relatively easily, they become complicated. Everything appears to be against you. It is the time that the typical African remembers his unseen enemies. It begins to appear as if these imaginary enemies of his are gaining the upper hand in his life. In the mind of the Jew, God has turned his face away from him, and in this he is more accurate than the African. Yes, there may be enemies, but they are only as strong as your relationship with God is weak.

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Yes, very frequently God uses the adversities and obstacles that come our way to signal that we are either in the wrong place or we are in the wrong time or even in the wrong method. Sometimes it is not the calling that is wrong but the time or the method we are employing.

Please we must be careful not to interpret every adversity as a sign that we are in the wrong place; we have already seen how our faith may be tested by adversity and how the power to persevere is in the heart of the one truly called. I have said that when things begin to go wrong, it is time to go and pray and get the assurance again that we are in the right calling. If that is certain, by various means, then we can check the matter of timing and that of method.

CALLING, TIMING, METHOD

In Numbers chapter 22 we read the story of Balaam. When Balaam went on a journey not in accordance with the perfect will of God, everything went wrong. The beast of burden which had faithfully served him for a long time suddenly went crazy and decided to run off the road, injuring the prophet in the process. It was a sign that he was on a wrong journey.

When David decided to carry the ark back to the city of God from where it had been abandoned by the

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Philistines after the capture during a previous battle, the calling was okay but, again, 'everything' went wrong (1 Chronicles 13). The oxen which were pulling the cart upon which the ark was placed stumbled, and one of the drivers, Uzzah by name, who was trying to save the ark from falling, following the stumbling of the oxen, suddenly dropped dead. Things went so wrong that David abandoned the ark at that place, in the house of Obed-edom. In this case the real problem was that of the method being employed. They were carrying the ark on a cart rather than on the shoulders of priests.

...consecrate yourselves both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. Because you did not carry it at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance." So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders, with the poles thereon as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD. 1 Chron 15:12-15

So we see that problems sometimes can be that of the methods that one is employing.

Once, I heard a message preached by a seasoned elder in the faith, and he was talking on this calling thing; he

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said he had observed many pastors and preachers, and that the failure that surrounds their ministries implies one of two things — either they are not called or they are hopelessly unfaithful.

We see that it is not just lack of calling that may be the problem but also that of attitude and methods, among other things.

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CHAPTER 18



RETURNING TO THE PATH

When a person has been faithful and yet receives unrelenting and 'undeserved' failure, then it is most likely he is in the wrong calling; the failure is because God has refused to pour His grace upon what He did not ordain.

You will notice that when a called man has challenges, things still get done. The challenges, studying from the life of Paul, tend to buffet his body but can hardly stop the results from coming. Progress tends to occur even if they are slow. Excessive struggle to get little or no result is a sign that something is out of order.

THE SOLUTION

The *only* solution is to go to God in prayer with sincerity. That is the beauty of Christianity — that we have a God so close who we can call upon to solve those issues for us. There is no hard-and-fast rule to apply to this thing so as to make prayer unnecessary; all the things I have explained are to help each person know how to

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approach the throne of God, as Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5. The Bible says you are to take words with you to meet with God, and the kind of words to take with you is what I am teaching in this book.

*Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. **Take words with you** and return to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, that we may present the fruit of our lips. Hos 14:1-2*

Having gotten these principles you will know what to say to God; your prayer will have focus and you will be able to receive the leading that the Holy Spirit will bring to you as correction.

Many have been unable to receive the message of God because of wrong concepts firmly grounded in their hearts. I remember when I counselled a friend of mine after much talking to resign the post he was holding in his denomination and follow what I believed was the call of God for his life; he agreed with me but remarked to me later that until that talk we had, it had *never* crossed his mind to leave that place. He just thought it must be in line with the will of God because it seemed so right outwardly. This is why we have to keep teaching the word of God thus, so that children of God will be

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able to approach God with open hearts and minds and then be able to receive direction *directly* from Him.

The interesting thing about walking with God is that He wants us to walk in His will more than we want to, and if we would have a willing heart without hypocrisy and the cares of this world, we will find Him leading each one of us automatically into the right place. That is part of what is meant by '*He leads me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake.*'

The Spirit of God will lead you concerning the steps to take so as to progress from whichever state you may discover that you are right now in. You must not be rash and too quick to make adjustments; pray until you have a full persuasion so that you will be acting in faith according to true knowledge. Remember that only the Holy Spirit of God knows exactly what you must do; be patient until your heart receives His direction.

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SECTION 4

PRAYER IS WORK



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CHAPTER 19



A PRAYER WITH REWARD

There are different kinds of prayers, all of them able to obtain answers from God and affect things on the earth. However there are kinds of prayers that not only get answers but they also get rewards for the persons who pray them. Of course, there is a difference between a reward and an answer.

A PRAYER WITH REWARD

Let me explain the issue of rewards a bit.

“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray... where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.” Matt 6:5,6 NLT

If I ask God for a new car, and I get a new car, what I would have obtained is an answer. But if I asked God for a new car for a friend, and the Lord gave me a pat on the

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back for praying for my friend while answering the prayer, that pat on the back is a reward. A reward is something that is given as appreciation for a job done. From the words of the Lord Jesus we learn that hypocrites who love to pray in the open immediately receive their reward, which is the praise of men, but those who would pray in secret, with sincerity, will be blessed by the Father in heaven for their labour in prayer. As disciples we are to pray in such a manner as to receive this reward of the Father. It is beyond the answer to prayer.

Now, the prayer that earns the praying man a reward is that which is prayed not for himself but for the benefit of other people. When the Lord Jesus was speaking in that sermon on the mount, He was speaking about praying for the nation of Israel and for the restoration of their kingdom. He was speaking about prayers people were praying for the redemption of the nation and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Praying for such a big thing in secret brings a reward into your life.

When you pray a prayer that is not for your own benefit but for the benefit of other people, for a nation or for the body of Christ on the earth, your prayer is added to the golden bowls upon the golden altar (Rev 5:8, 8:4) and is stored up until the fullness of time for the fulfilment of

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your request. You may witness the answer immediately or it may appear delayed; in many cases the answers do not even come in your lifetime. However, no matter the timing of the answer, you are rewarded by the Lord separately from the answer.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

"May they prosper who love you.

"May peace be within your walls,

And prosperity within your palaces."

For the sake of my brothers and my friends...

For the sake of the house of the LORD our God...

Ps 122:6-9

The prayer that has a reward is that which is prayed not for personal benefit but so that the mercy of God may be shown to someone else, to a group of people, or so that the plan of God may be established in the lives of many and on the earth. In summary, it is prayer for the establishment of the kingdom of God. It is the prayer of supplication and intercession.

Personal prayers will get answers, but no reward is attached since there is no sacrifice involved. It is personal prayer for personal benefit.

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CHAPTER 20



THE LABOUR OF INTERCESSION

So, why is there reward attached to the prayer of intercession?

There is reward attached to the prayer of intercession because it is a sacrifice you are making for someone else; you are thereby sowing a seed which must of necessity bear fruit. More importantly however, reward is attached because it is work — strenuous spiritual work! It is pulling of weight in the realm of the spirit. It is the kind of prayer in which you do not just claim something by faith but in which you persevere until you see a manifestation. It is the kind of prayer that may bring agony to your soul, remove appetite from your mouth, and actually sometimes cause you to physically feel the pain of the subject of your prayer. It is work, real work, for God.

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; And give Him no rest

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*until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
Isa 62:6-7*

Notice that He says through Isaiah here that the intercessors are not to take rest for themselves. Why would they require rest except that they are engaged in intense labour the end of which they do not know? They have a promise from God which they discovered from His prophecies, and they have a mandate not to rest until it is fulfilled. That is work!

Daniel engaged in this work until he became extremely tired. When he was praying about the deliverance of Israel from captivity according to the promise through Jeremiah which he had discovered, he prayed until he was tired. By the time the angel got to him he was exhausted.

While I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. Dan 9:21

It is real work to be involved in intercession and making supplications; to pray for people until the word of the Lord is fulfilled in their lives; to pray until the plan of God is established in the body of Christ; to pray until you see change in a nation; it is work.

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It is easier to comment and complain about what is and what is not; we all do that. But to look beyond the current circumstances and focus on the promise and plan of God, and determine to pray until something changes, that is work. It is work for God and He rewards it.

The promises of God are interesting, especially when it has to do with a group of people, such as a church or a nation, in which the wills of many are involved. Just claiming a fulfilment by a simple prayer of faith may not work under those circumstances. The promise of God and pleas for mercy are used in prayer, repeated again and again, as often as one would pray, until there is a fulfilment. The promise of God is the sword of the spirit; it is as if one is engaged in a spiritual battle.

Many of us, in some of our doctrines on the practice of faith, think that repeating a prayer is a sign of unbelief, but it is not so. When you are praying for other people and for nations, you cannot just 'claim by faith' and forget it. It is a kind of continuous wrestling which must not be relaxed until there is a fulfilment, or at least until the Holy Spirit indicates that it is enough.

SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

Derek Prince taught an audio message series titled *Spiritual Conflict*; one of the messages in the series is

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Aggressive prayer, and in this he described the use of certain words in prayer that may need to be repeated again and again. He called that kind of prayer “*specific, directed, persistent prayer given by the Holy Spirit.*” In this kind of prayer there is a specific point one is aiming at, and there is a specific action that is desired of the Lord. For example, as told by this man of God, there was a time that the Holy Spirit stirred him up to pray about the progress of World War 2 which was raging at that time and in which he was a soldier. The British army had suffered a series of defeats in the hands of the German and Italian forces and had to embark on a long retreat. Then the Holy Spirit taught him to pray a simple prayer: “*Lord give us leaders so that it will be for your glory to give us victory through them.*”

At the point of the revelation of this prayer the army he was in was demoralised because of the attitude of the officers. He prayed this prayer again and again until there was a manifestation. By the time the decisive battle of El-Alamein was fought, the British had been able to build up a great army that was under a new commander, General Bernard L. Montgomery.

Montgomery was the son of a clergyman, a man who obviously recognized that a great army was no guarantee of victory; it was reported that he gathered

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his officers and men before the battle that they might pray to the Lord, mighty in battle, asking Him to grant them victory in the battle ahead.

Derek Prince said when he heard the report about this prayer of the General, a cold shiver went through him as he recollected his prayer, and the Holy Spirit said, "That is the answer to your prayer."

It was not a one day prayer; it was prayer that was prayed again and again until there was a turn around. It is a *God-given persistent, unwavering, directed* prayer. Men who pray such prayers must not become weary but must be ready to persist until there is a manifestation. This is how we will pray against the operations of the devil in our nation, in our communities, our ministries, churches and families, especially in places where we are not physically in control. We are not permitted to just observe things and comment on them. The reason why we have power with God is so that we can come to the God who desires to avenge us speedily of our adversaries and obtain judgement for the works of the devil.

The Lord needs such warrior-intercessors to work with Him until there is a fulfilment of His promises in the lives of people. Even Jesus is still making intercession, a

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thing that He began in the days of His flesh (Heb 7:25). I used to wonder why He would pray all night or what He prayed about for that length of time. The things taught to me on faith made me wonder why He couldn't just 'claim by faith' everything. It was later the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see what it means that "*He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases*" (Matt 8:17).

We know that it was at the cross that He finally took those our infirmities and diseases away, but Matthew, in the reference above, was explaining things that were happening even before He died and went to the cross. This tells me He was already taking these infirmities and carrying the diseases in the days of His flesh. How was that?

He would pray all night for the sicknesses and the troubles of the people that were to meet Him the next day. He was literally carrying their troubles. Compassion for their suffering was upon Him so much that He wouldn't be able to sleep sometimes.

AWAKE ALL NIGHT TO PRAY

A lot of us try to keep awake at night so we can pray. Sometimes, during all-night prayer services in churches, drums have to be beaten and jumpy songs

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must be sung so the gathered Christians would not fall asleep. I wonder why pastors bother with those kinds of all-night services; it is obvious there is nothing to keep awake for, or the people do not yet understand. That is the reason they can't easily keep awake. Jesus did not keep awake just because he disciplined Himself to; He did because there was suffering upon Him. The compassion He had for the people had placed their sufferings upon Him. He was carrying the issues of people.

Even in natural things, when you have issues on your mind you find it hard to sleep. In the case of the Lord the problems of people were literally on His soul. In a similar manner, when you have real cause for prayer, you will not need any choir to keep you awake. You fall asleep because you do not yet understand what is going on; you came to church only because they said to come. Even if the choir were to succeed in keeping you awake with noise, there would not be much effect to your prayer because it is not being backed by a fervency of spirit. It is the earnest, heartfelt, continued prayer of the righteous man that avails much (James 5:17 AMP).

The Lord Jesus kept awake in intercession for people, and He is still doing that today. The Bible says He ever lives to make intercession for the saints (Heb 7:25).

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HEARTFELT PRAYER

Real heartfelt prayer for the nation is work for God. Once you discover the desires of the Lord for a nation and you begin to ask Him to fulfil it, in whichever simple words you can use, you are working for God.

If a friend of yours has issues that you know about, even if he has not asked you to pray, when you take the case up before God, then you are working for God.

When you see deficiencies in the body of Christ in the nation, or on the earth, or even in your local church, and you begin to ask for correction in prayer, then you are working with God.

When your boss and your place of work are taken to God in prayer for blessing and increase by you daily, you are working for God.

When you pray for a man of God, and for a ministry, that the anointing of God upon him might increase and that open doors will be given to him to effectively minister the word of God, you are working for God.

When you pray for peace of mind and prosperity for the man of God who has been blessing you and other people you love, you are working for God. You don't

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even have to tell any one of these people that you are praying for them (except just for the purpose of encouraging them that they are not alone in their struggles); do your praying for them in secret and you will have a reward before God.

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CHAPTER 21



THE RIGHTEOUS INTERCESSOR

I am explaining that the prayer of intercession is hard work, and a persistent one at that. When you walk with God until your life counts before Him, then you become one who can pray. A lot of us are mistaken by thinking that prayer is only a matter of methods and knowing which scriptures to use. Right words are important without doubt, but they are secondary to the matter of the person *who* is praying.

Let me say something about this *who* for a moment.

The power to approach God in prayer is called righteousness. It is the prayer of a righteous man that avails much in its working. To discuss the matter of righteousness in details is outside the scope of this book but a few points I'll still like to make.

In this dispensation, the beginning of righteousness is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important we get that point because there is a valid and necessary

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righteousness that Christian work adds to your life which John testified concerning when he said, “*the one who practices righteousness is righteous.*” Before we concern ourselves with that outward manifestation of righteousness we must have the baseline righteousness, which is that found only in Christ Jesus.

It is only in Christ Jesus that the righteousness of God is revealed. The reason is because Jesus purchased forgiveness of sins for everyone who will believe in Him. Believing in Jesus allows you to be called a righteous person, even though you are not perfect; all the shortcomings are covered by the blood of Jesus, as long as you remain of faith in Him.

Now, this righteousness begins to generate in your life the ability to do good works. Forgiving other people becomes easy for you; giving becomes easy for you; living in sexual and business integrity becomes easy. You stop being a liar, a cheat and a drunk without any special effort on your part; the Lord is simply doing His work in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. These outward works are the signs that you are actually living in faith in Jesus. Anyone who does not increase in the outward manifestation of righteousness is actually deceiving himself. Peter is so clear about this:

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*...applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence... knowledge... self-control... perseverance... godliness... brotherly kindness, and... love. For **if these qualities are yours and are increasing**, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 2 Peter 1:5-9*

Please note that these qualities can increase. The fact that we can increase does obviously imply that we do not start perfect, but despite our imperfections we are still called righteous by faith because there was a purification of sins when we believed in the Lord Jesus. It is these things that make us able to approach God for mercy for other people, having obtained mercy ourselves.

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CHAPTER 22



THE PRAYER OF DANIEL

In the first year of Darius... in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. Dan 9:1-3

In the passage above we see how Daniel was stimulated to pray for the deliverance of his people from captivity in Babylon and for the liberation of Jerusalem. Remember that Daniel was among the captives that came to Babylon from Judah; he was a young boy then. At this point he was an old man, having spent the last seventy years in the foreign land. In all those years, even though he must have desired to have his people liberated, it was never a point of serious prayer of faith until now. At this point he made a discovery — he connected the prophecy of Jeremiah with the experience of having been in captivity for seventy years

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and the conclusion was that the time for deliverance was at hand. To stimulate the deliverance, he began to pray, and that was when the work began. He began to labour with God for the deliverance of the people. It was not just a matter of desire but that of cooperating with God so as to bring His will to pass on the earth.

This is the lesson: when you are connected in your soul or spirit with someone or a group of people and you see them living below the experience that the word of God describes that they should have, you are to take that matter to God on their behalf, put the Lord to remembrance concerning His promises and request a fulfilment.

You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes...

It does not require the speaking of big words or much of praying in tongues (unless the Spirit comes by a special burden and pressure to so pray, which often happens). What it requires is a persistent coming to God with petition and thanksgiving on behalf of the people or person concerned. Here is an example:

"Lord I thank you for my friend Joseph, that he has believed in the Lord Jesus and that his dedication to the cause of the

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gospel is real. I pray for him that you will open his eyes so as to understand how to handle the issues of marriage to the end that peace will reign in his home and prosperity will come to him and his wife abundantly. As you have promised that peace is our portion as your children, I pray that the power of the devil in his life which has hitherto caused disharmony in his home and frustrations in his business be stilled in Jesus' name. I ask for Your mercy for him and that the power of God be poured into his life, in the name of Jesus."

What this prayer requires is persistence. Notice that I mentioned that it was after Daniel discovered the promise and plan of God that his prayer became a prayer of faith.

A prayer of faith is not necessarily that which I pray once and never have to repeat; rather it is one that is hinged upon a promise of God and the conviction that if petitioned He will fulfil. Elijah prayed a prayer of faith, according to James, and he stayed in the place of prayer until there was a fulfilment.

Give Him no rest until He establishes...

Pray for your nation.

Pray for your local church.

Pray for your friend.

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Pray for your husband or wife.

Pray for your fiancée.

Pray for those that you love.

It is difficult to pray this persistent prayer for those that your soul have not been joined to; in those cases you tend to easily lose heart if there is no quick fulfilment. I recommend you pray for those you are joined to in your soul, and you will not faint until there is a fulfilment.

Praying such prayers is working for God.

SECTION 5

**GIVING AND WORKING
FOR GOD**



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CHAPTER 23



MOTIVE COUNTS IN GIVING

In some of my other books, particularly *Grace To Prosper* and *So Who Will Pay For This?*, I discussed extensively on how to give to God and other matters relating to it; I recommend that everyone should read those books as there is plenty to learn from them. In this section of this book however, I want to discuss the matter of giving specifically as it relates to working for God.

I want to start by emphasizing that when it comes to the matter of giving, motive counts with God. Why we are doing what we are doing is very important when we are dealing with the Lord. In Jeremiah 17:10, the Bible tells us that the Lord searches the heart and examines secret motives before He recompenses any person for the work of his or her hands. I say this because the reason why many Christians give is actually very wrong and does not produce any profit with God. Unfortunately it is that wrong motive that is being taught in many places today.

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The practice of giving *so that* you may receive is not godly; it is selfish and is not acceptable before the Lord. I call such giving the '*labour of selfishness*,' and that is in contrast to *the labour of love* described by Paul here and there in his epistles. When people go out to deliberately 'sow a seed' so that they might receive, they have not given to God but they have given to themselves.

It is basic Christian understanding that it is selfish and manipulative to give because one wants to receive but people have heard this preached so much that they have come to accept it as right. People believe that it is the only way they can get anything from God, and so they give just so they can get from God. Luke 6:38 is a much misunderstood scripture in this regard; it was the Lord Jesus speaking.

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return. Luke 6:38

In interpreting this verse we must keep in mind what we have already seen clearly as the mind of God from the words of Jeremiah, which we saw earlier in the chapter, that motives matter with God as He is planning reward for anything that we do. Now, look at this verse

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of Luke; you will see that what the Lord said is “*Give and it will be given...*” and not “*Give, so that it will be given...*” There is a world of difference between the two expressions.

“*Give and it will be given...*” is describing a law of life while “*Give, so that it will be given...*” describes a self-centred motive. When the Lord Jesus made that statement He was not at all teaching a selfish motive for giving but was teaching the laws that govern life. The knowledge of the law of sowing and reaping was not given as an incentive for the selfish heart to start giving but so that the generous and cheerful heart may receive encouragement for it’s work of faith and labour of love.

That all you give is a seed which has an appropriate harvest is a law of life that is unchanging, but attempting to selfishly manipulate it for personal benefits only injects the spirit of death into an otherwise good thing.

A LAW OF LIFE

When we are talking about that law of sowing and reaping by which we know that we reap just what we sow, there are two sides to it. There is the *physical* law of sowing which the farmer employs on the farm, and there is the *spiritual* and mystical one which deals with

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our moral works and our spiritual works. The physical law does not accept spiritual seed; for example you cannot sow words into your farm, or good deeds or prayer, and expect corn to come to fruit. You must sow physical corn to reap physical corn.

On the spiritual side the same principle applies; you cannot sow physical things into the realm of the spirit; all seeds sowed into the realm of the spirit *must* be spiritual. It follows therefore that money and material goods cannot be sowed directly into the realm of the spirit. The seeds of the spirit are spiritual things like mercy, kindness, faith, love, forgiveness, obedience to authority and to God, *etc.* Now all these things *will* necessarily have physical expressions, but those physical expressions are not the seed.

A man showing mercy may give money, he may give food and clothing, but what is really being sown into the spiritual realm is mercy and love. For that he will reap exactly what he sowed — mercy and love. But his mercy may or may not return to him as money; it will be given to him as he *needs*. He may need healing, marital restoration, deliverance from death or healing for his family. God can return to him with any of these things. This was why Paul said, *“my God shall supply all your*

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needs..." When he said this, he was responding to monetary gifts (Phil 4:19).

So we see that the woman in Shunem gave accommodation to the prophet, in which the spiritual seed was that of *kindness* and *honour*, and she received a son as a reward (2 Kings 4). Please note her motive which is stated so clearly in the Bible.

She said to her husband, "I am sure this man who stops in from time to time is a holy man of God. Let's build a small room for him on the roof and furnish it with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. Then he will have a place to stay whenever he comes by." 2 Kings 4:9-10 NLT

She was not trying to get anything from the prophet; in fact when he called her to ask what she would like, she said 'nothing; I am very OK' (see vs 13). She gave to him because she recognized his office and she wanted to meet his needs; honour and mercy were her motives.

This woman did not have to give a son to receive a son. Peter gave Jesus the temporary use of his boat, and received a draught of fish as reward. The seed is spiritual; it is not just the physical things given. I'm sure you can easily see that the common teaching that says a man must give money to receive money is not as true as

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it has been made to seem. If the money was given for the purpose of receiving, then what was really sown was the spiritual seed of selfishness for which God will reward with nothing.

So please stop giving because you want to get something back; *you do not know what each act of giving will produce!* When you give to get, the real seed you are sowing is the self-centredness of your heart and that cannot beget for you a good reward before the Lord. The switch that releases God's power into your life is a *continual* doing of good works; you cannot tie one act to one desired reward; no you can't! All you can do is to continually do good without getting tired, having the assurance that in due season you will reap your reward (Gal 6:9). Solomon expressed it so well:

In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hands, for you know not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether both alike will be good. Eccl 11:6 AMP

Whenever you give there is a reward, that is if you do it with the right motive and in obedience to God's due order.

So, what are the right motives?

CHAPTER 24



MOTIVES FOR GIVING

Among the wrong motives for giving are giving to show off, giving to put the recipient in one's debt, giving to calm the conscience (like giving out of stolen money or to pay for other sins), giving to bribe people, and *giving because you think it is how to get something from God*. All these are *evil* motives for giving and every Christian must desist from them.

Now, there are many right motives for giving; I believe they all can be distilled out of the greatest and most important one, and that is love.

Love simply means that the desire to bless the person we are giving to is what is paramount in our minds and not what we will get in return. A detailed discussion on motives for giving is out of the scope of this book but let me just say that love for God and love for man underlie every genuine form of giving. My emphasis in this book, which is on working for God, is on how to give as a service to God.

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LOVE FOR GOD

The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word” (Jn 14:23). Love for God is actually defined by obedience to His commandments and His precepts; therefore a person who is serving God in the area of giving is using his money as the Lord desires that he should.

One thing many Christians do not realize is that the only thing that we can actually give to God is faithfulness! Faithfulness simply means to recognize the order of God and to obey that order in our lives. When it comes to money, God has an order and we must all strive to obey it. The motivation I am discussing here for giving is therefore that of faithfulness. It is a correct motive to give because you desire to be faithful and pleasing to God. If you desire a life lived in a manner pleasing to God, then one of the things you must desire is financial faithfulness. A Christian who is financially faithful is working for God.

You are working for God as you give as He commanded. Your giving is an acceptable sacrifice to God if you have a sense of purpose and a sense of faithfulness to His commandments in your heart as you give. I have noticed that impulsive giving is very common among Christians and many preachers

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depend on that weakness to get Christians to give. The preachers love to whip up sentiments and make passionate appeals for funds, emphasizing so much on what is to be gotten as reward. When giving is thus motivated, it is hardly the work of God. The giving that is the work of God is based on the knowledge of the will of God and does not depend on impulse and a rush for personal gain. Paul said each is to give as he purposed in his heart (2 Cor 9:7); this implies that the giver has had the time to think about the work, is not just acting on impulse and is not responding to pressure from a preacher who wants him to quickly make a commitment. If what you will receive is what is in your mind as you are giving, you are not giving to God but are essentially throwing away money.

A CHANNEL OF BLESSING

The basic understanding that every believer must have is that God has appointed each one of us not just as a subject of blessing but also as a *channel* of it. God does not only send money and material things to you but He includes things that He is sending through you to others. That is what is called 'seed for the sower.'

*Now He who supplies **seed to the sower** and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in*

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everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. 2 Cor 9:10-11

Generally speaking, everything that God gives to you has those two portions in it — 'seed for the sower' and 'bread for food.'

SEED AND BREAD

Seed for the sower represents the portion that the Lord is sending through you to other people. The plan of God for his people has always been that they will not only have enough but will have more than is enough so they will be able to generously give to other people. This was what Paul wrote to the Corinthians as being *enriched in everything for all liberality*. The real spiritual economics behind this is that it is not actually generosity on the part of the giver but generosity on the part of our Father God who is the One who supplies us with all things. What you actually see on the part of the giver is faithfulness. The giver who is working for God knows that what he is giving is not his own but something that was sent by God through him to the subjects of his generosity. The true Christian giver is just a messenger of God.

If you study the laws of Moses, you will see this principle underlying all the commanded generosity of

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the people. The Lord *instructed* the people to give. They had laws on giving. Personal generosity was always encouraged but God was not relying on that in the nation of Israel; rather He gave commandments about giving, and in them stated clearly what to give. He also indicated clearly that He was the one supplying the receivers with the gifts; the givers were just delivery-boys. Let's see the law of tithing as an example.

THE LAW OF TITHING

In Leviticus 27:30, as one of the terms of the covenant, Moses stated clearly that all the tithe of the land belonged to the Lord. Please note that there is a difference between when something belongs to somebody and when he is asking that you would magnanimously give it to him. Here was a categorical statement that the tithe belonged to God. What it meant was that the people would have harvested only 90% of what they were going to get, and that would have been enough, except that God needed people to help Him run some errands, so He included the extra 10%. That's why the tithe was compulsory under their covenant. That 10% was God's property and anyone who used it any other way apart from what God commanded was guilty of a criminal offence. He commanded that the tithe be given to the priests, strangers and poor people (Dt 14:28,29), and also to be used in celebration before

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Him (Dt 14:23). Anyone there who wanted to serve God had to run the errand of delivering the tithes to the proper places.

It is that *spirit* behind the law of tithing that Christians are supposed to learn. The reason is that the proportion is not uniform for everyone. For some Christians effective giving may be 90%, while for others it is far less. Unfortunately, many have become legalistic about it and have gone around saying that a Christian who is not calculating ten percent and giving to a local assembly is stealing from God. This is not at all founded on the grace we have in Christ and is definitely not true. The only time anyone was instructed to calculate a tenth and take to any place in the whole Bible was under the Law. Abraham's tithe was *freely* given by him to Melchizedec whom he met on the way from battle. There was to be no judgment for him if he hadn't done so. It was a free-will gift of honour. Read through the New Testament and you will see that despite the fact that money matters were discussed so many times, there was not one time Christians were instructed to calculate for God any specific percentage; rather, they were instructed to be generous and to be ready always to share. Even the Lord Jesus, when He spoke about it, said He was speaking about matters of the Law (Matt 23:23). What the Lord requires of a Christian is to be

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generous to the needy, to the preaching of the word of God, to the ministers of the gospel and to persons he is commanded to honour, such as parents. We will see more of this in the next chapter.

A similar law to the law of tithing is to be found in the law of gleaning.

THE LAW OF GLEANING

'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor gather the gleanings of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God.' Lev 23:22

The supply for the needy and the alien was God's responsibility, and He was here commanding the people to work with Him. They were to do it by allowing those who did not have land and farms to take God's portion of the harvest; they were to leave 'remnants' behind for those people. The remnants were those crops that were at the edges of the fields and those that would drop accidentally during harvesting. They were forbidden by the law from going over the same row twice. For the owner of the farm all these represented a lot of wastage, but God said they were for the poor who would come afterwards to glean. Recollect the story of Ruth and Naomi; it was those

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gleanings that sustained them when they first returned from Moab. It was in the field of Boaz that Ruth went to glean.

NOT GENEROUS, BUT FAITHFUL

The point I am explaining is that, when deep truths are examined, the Christian who is a giver cannot really be said to be generous but will be seen rather as a faithful person. He is taking what is not his own and giving it to where it belongs. A cheerful and generous giver is actually working *with* God and working for God. Therefore one of the major ways to work for God is by giving *diligently*.

Please note that I said diligently. It is a duty to be generous and we must diligently pursue it. Our giving must be as instructed in the word of God. You are working for God when you give as He instructed in His word.

So, how has He instructed us believers to give?

CHAPTER 25



WHERE TO GIVE TO GOD

In talking about *how* to give to God, let us first see the places *where* we are to give to God as this will help us determine what portion of our income is seed and what we are to give to each person.

A lot of Christians are under the impression that the only way to give to God is to give to a church or a ministry work. While giving to such places definitely constitutes giving to God, it is pertinent that we understand that God also receives His offerings through many other channels. I think it necessary to emphasize this as I emphasize the fact that giving is the work of God; the reason is because I have encountered people who are diligent givers in church matters but who are absolutely useless almost everywhere else. That is not the spirit of Christ and we need to go beyond that level. On the other hand, I have seen Christians again and again who do not understand their responsibility when it comes to giving to the gospel and the ministers thereof. They are only 'charity' givers.

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They only give to the needy; the only way they will give to a preacher is if they can see he is poor. No, that also is not right. What we need is balance.

There are many different ways of giving to God but because this exposition is on how to work for God I have chosen to outline five places and people that we give to as a matter of working for God. They are as follows:

1. The work of the ministry of the Word.
2. The ministers of the word of God.
3. Those who God commanded us to honour, especially parents.
4. 'Widows of your household.'
5. The poor and needy.

When you divide the portion of your money that is called seed-for-the-sower to these places, then you are giving to God and so working for Him.

Now let us look at each in some details.

THE WORK OF MINISTRY

I recommend that you get a hold of my book, *So Who Will Pay For This?*, if you want more insight on giving to the work of the ministry and the ministers of the work. In this book only a brief discussion is possible on the subject.

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It is the responsibility of all believers to finance the work of spreading the kingdom of God. My experience is that a lot of believers think that there are unseen forces that pay bills or that ministries don't have to pay for things. I remember a brother and friend of mine who expressed shock when I told him the monthly bill for the radio broadcasts we had on then. He had thought that the radio station was airing my messages free since I was providing them content to broadcast. At that time, Kingdom-Word Ministries was just starting and he so could not see any organized setup backing me with the funds. The man was surprised I was paying to preach the word of God.

I came to the conclusion that many Christians think there are unseen forces paying bills for ministries when I saw people approaching or writing to collect from us. Also I saw many others who claim they are being blessed mightily by the ministry and they just say 'thank you' by mouth and do not concern themselves about how the thing that is blessing them is being funded. I thank God that it is not all Christians that are like these ones I have described. There are many blessed children of God who give regularly to the work and who the Lord has used to support what we have been doing over the years. I bless God for such faithful believers and I continually make prayers to God for

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them, but the majority of believers still have the 'mission project' mentality.

The expression 'mission project' is one I heard from Babbie Mason, the gospel musician, who said that we are either missionaries or mission projects. I believe that a lot of Africans, including my fellow countrymen, Nigerians, have not yet recovered from the days when the gospel was new and almost all mission activities were provided free, being funded by Americans and Europeans. That was the season of being mission projects. Unfortunately many have refused to accept that *that* season is over and that we should now be the missionaries. Many still unconsciously assume that Bibles and tracts are free by nature and that the gospel is supernaturally funded. Many preachers have, out of desperation, turned to always putting pressure on people to give. I think that is also another extreme which we should be careful not to engage in. My opinion is that what we preachers need to do is to explain the truth to our brethren while not presenting the gospel and the ministers thereof as beggars. We must be careful also not to appear as tricksters. With prayer, balanced teaching of people and with personal and managerial discipline on the part of the minister, we will discover that begging is not necessary.

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This is why I never push for offerings or make pleas for donations either for myself or for Kingdom-Word Ministries. During our meetings we don't even have 'offering time;' all we do is to inform the people that the ministry is funded by free-will gifts and anybody who is so moved in his or her spirit to participate in the work is encouraged to make use of the basket provided or send money to our bank account. This is done as part of the announcements. My reason is that I believe that Christians should learn to give with dignity to the work of the ministry and not as if they are giving to a beggar. It pains my heart when I hear pastors moan from the pulpit about their lack and that of the church and virtually beg for crumbs from the people. No, it is not right!

I must add that the situation is definitely improving as more and more Christians in this nation are learning to be financial missionaries instead of mission projects. We must know as Christians that the responsibility for the sponsorship of the gospel is ours. The preaching of the gospel costs money and that money is supplied by God into our pockets as His people; it is a divine commandment that each one of us take a good portion of the money in our pockets and make the sponsorship of the gospel a project.

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LET US PREPARE

Notice that I said it is to be a project. One of the reasons why we don't have the so-called offering times during our ministry meetings is that I want believers to understand that they are to prepare to give to God. We know how to prepare to buy a car, a house or any other valuable thing, or to pay our rent, children's school fees and settle other such responsibilities. We prepare for these things because we understand that they are important. I believe that in the same manner we should prepare for giving to the work of the ministry and the minister of the word of God; it is not something you do with pocket change at the end of the church service. The fact is that giving at every service is not necessary, unless it happens that you earn new income before each service. Make giving to your church a planned thing; it must be a part of your budget.

*“Now **I have prepared** with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver...” 1 Chron 29:2 KJV*

That was David expressing the passion of his heart for giving to the work of God, and we should learn from him. He was not just spontaneous, rather he took time to prepare. Let us follow this example of David.

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Set an ambitious target for your giving. Say to yourself, “This year I will like to give a million to the preaching of the gospel,” and then plan towards the realization of it. That is what real givers do. If you decide to wait till you'd have plenty, you probably will never get to that point. I never take anybody serious who talks about what he will do when he would have 'arrived' if he is not doing anything right now; the Bible says that he who is faithful in little is the one who will be faithful in much.

A SPECIAL REWARD

Let me add that there is a special blessing attached to being actively involved in the financing of the gospel. My reason for believing this is that Paul explained that those who labour in word and in doctrine are worthy of double honour (1 Tim 5:17). The same principle will apply to the support of that work of preaching if we consider the principle of the prophet's reward; this, the Bible tells us, is shared with those who sponsor the prophet. God attaches a very special blessing to the support of the preaching of His gospel which is not found in other forms of giving. This is well illustrated from the story of Haggai.

“You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the LORD of hosts, “Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house. Therefore, because of you the sky

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has withheld its dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands." Hag 1:9-11

If you read the whole portion of that book of Haggai you will see that the people were suffering all kinds of things because of this lack of attention to the house of God. In this dispensation the house of God is not a building. The days of looking at a building as the house of God are definitely over. Every church building today is just a hall to help Christians gather and be protected from the elements of nature as they do. There is no church building that is the house of God. The people of God now constitute the house of God. For this reason we must understand that the support of the house of God stands for us today as participating in the spiritual development of the body of Christ through all the means necessary, including when we need to have a building to use. We, the members of the body of Christ, are actually the ones being built up as the true house of God.

...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Tim 3:15 KJV

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...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:5

Anyone who supports this process of building the body of Christ, a process which is by the preaching of His word, receives a special blessing from the Lord. That was why Paul prayed that special prayer for the Philippians in Phil 4:19.

Every Christian who has anything must be actively financially involved in the propagation of the word of God as one of the fundamental things in their lives. It is the work of God!

Next, let us see the second way of giving as working for God.

THE MINISTERS OF THE WORD OF GOD

Again I recommend that you read my book, *So Who Will Pay For This?* for more on this subject, but let us emphasize a few points here.

One of the very important ways you give to God is to give to the ministers of the word of God. Remember that I explained that the motive for giving matters; well, as part of being faithful towards God, there are two

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reasons why you are to give to a minister of the gospel. One is simply because he is a minister; and two, because he has been a blessing to you.

Like we saw earlier, the Shunemmite woman gave to Elisha because of the first reason.

Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food. And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually." 2 Kings 4:8-9

That woman understood how to work for God in this area. Elisha never came to her to beg; she saw him, recognized him as a minister of God, and she did what God commands especially for persons of means. Giving to a man of God is the work of God and it is both necessary and wise that every Christian participates in that.

In divine order, the ministry of the word is a job; the person doing it is working hard, just like every other worker in other areas of life, and he deserves to be paid. But he is forbidden from charging for his services (even though some have resorted to charging, for various

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reasons); God expects Christians to voluntarily pay the people for the service they are doing to the body of Christ; you will be working with God if you help Him pay those servants of His who work in the ministry of the word.

THE SECOND REASON TO GIVE TO A MAN OF GOD

It is good to give to a minister of the gospel for the simple reason that he or she is such a one, but also as important is the second reason there is for it. You are to give to the minister because he or she blesses you or has blessed you. The truth in this regard is that you actually owe him, and when you don't meet your obligations you are indeed a debtor in the eyes of God.

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. Gal 6:6-7

For it is written... "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? ... for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? ...those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar? So also

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the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. 1 Cor 9:9-14

If a man of God blesses you with the word of God, it is your duty to share material things with him. The fact is that most decent ministers will not demand their rights, just like Paul wrote in that first letter to the Corinthians, but Christians must still recognize their duties and do them.

Some only give to preachers like they would give to the needy, that is because they are poor. No, it is not right. He does not have to be poor to receive your gifts, just like a businessman does not have to be poor for you to pay him for his goods and services. If the word that a man preached produces material results in your life, do not neglect to give him his portion of the fruit. This was what Paul meant when he said that *the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops*. It is actually his right; you are not doing him any special favour deserving of special commendation when you do this. All you would have done is to deliver yourself from indebtedness. It is very much like the statements that the people of Israel would make after paying their tithes (note that the word is *pay*).

'I have removed the sacred portion from my house... I have not eaten of it... Deut 26:13-14

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What they were saying was that they had done nothing especially commendable; they had only done a basic duty and refused to withhold what was due.

There is a divine principle of *turning back* to the channel of your blessing to say 'thank you' to God. Remember, unlike the businessman who you owe an agreed and expected amount, in the case of giving to the minister of the word, it is acceptable according to what you have and as your spirit leads you.

Again, this is something you must do as a habit, having thoroughly planned it. Make it a part of your budget, just like you budget for your other obligations. Don't wait till a special offering is being collected. The man blesses you or has blessed you; go to him and settle your debt.

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CHAPTER 26



MORE PLACES TO GIVE TO GOD

THOSE TO HONOUR

The next persons that we are to give to as service to God are those people He commands us to honour. Yes we are to honour the ministers of the gospel but I wish to speak specifically here about those who are not ministers of the word but who we are also commanded to honour. Chief in this group are our parents and anyone who has stood in such a position in our lives.

Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. Eph 6:2-3

The Bible says to give honour to whom honour is due; one of the ways by which you honour people is by giving to them. Your parents are deserving of your honour, and this is not at all related to whether they have been good parents or not. You are not exactly

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repaying them for the good they did for you when you were young; rather you are fulfilling your role as a son or daughter as commanded in divine ordinance. Also this is not dependent upon whether they are in need or not. It is a fact that many people have parents who are well to do and who really do not need the material resources of their children, but that does not excuse the children from giving to their parents. Gifts stimulated by need are different from those stimulated by honour. When you are honouring God by honouring your parents, it has little to do with their need.

Of course if you have parents who are in need, it means your responsibility now has a double-barrelled stimulus. It must not be heard of that you are comfortable but your parents are in lack. You are not to give them what is left over from your abundance but a choice substance of what God blesses you with. It is a God-given duty and the person doing it is serving the Lord in doing so!

To the Lord Jesus, this was so important that He used it as an example for the Pharisees to see how they had nullified the word of God by their traditions.

Then he said, "You reject God's laws in order to hold on to your own traditions. For instance, Moses gave you this law

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from God: 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.' But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I could have given to you.' You let them disregard their needy parents. As such, you break the law of God in order to protect your own tradition. Mark 7:9-13 NLT

I mentioned earlier that we are to divide each person's portion to him out of our seed; you cannot take what belongs to helping your parents and give it as an offering to church and expect God to bless it. It is still the work of God to take care of your parents. We'll see a bit more about this as we examine the matter of 'widows of your household.'

WIDOWS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD

This expression, widows of your household, is derived from the instructions concerning church administration that Paul wrote to Timothy in his first letter (chapter 5). He explained to Timothy concerning the criteria for putting widows on the church's support. Now bear in mind that those were days in which most women were purely dependent on their husbands for everything so that a widow was essentially a woman without support.

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Of course it is easy to understand that the fact that a woman had become a widow didn't mean she'll definitely have nobody at all. It was possible for her to re-marry, especially if she's still relatively young; or she may have children and even grandchildren. It was for these reasons that Paul excluded young widows from being supported by the church and also those widows that had close relatives, specifically children and grandchildren, who were supposed to be believers and who had the means to support them. He instructed those children to *practice piety in regard to their own family*, and to make some return to their parents; and this, he said, *is acceptable in the sight of God*. It was in this context he made the famous but mostly misinterpreted statement:

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Tim 5:8-9

We usually quote this to instruct men to take care of their wives and children, but that is a misinterpretation. Though it is right and commanded for a man to provide for his wife and children, that was not specifically what Paul was talking about here. He was instructing that believers should take part in assisting their close relatives (especially their parents). The culture (which

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is still well-preserved in Africa) in which young people take in their parents and close relatives to help them get through their old age is of God and has a ton of blessing attached. Paul said it is acceptable in the sight of God, and he only used that expression with regard to offerings. He was, in effect, saying this is an offering to God — it is a work for God.

When you examine the spirit with which Paul wrote, and noting that he said 'household,' you will notice that though he specifically mentioned widows and poor mothers and grandmothers he was essentially implying a spirit of responsibility towards close relatives who are in need. It is all those poor close relatives that I refer to as 'widows of your household.' Please bear in mind that we, as Christians, are to *practice* piety in regard to them.

It's not an accident, or the fact that you are smarter than all else, that made you richer and earn more than them; it is because God has a responsibility he wants you to undertake. To deny yourself of some pleasures so that your cousin can go to school is working for God. To send money to those of your relatives who have nobody else caring for them is the work of God. To assist your niece attain a good level of education is the work of God and any money you spend for these is considered an acceptable offering in the sight of the Lord.

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THE POOR AND NEEDY

In addition to helping the needy of your household there are times that God gives each one of us the opportunity to help someone who is in need and who we are not related to. The same love we are commanded to show to the people of our households should also be extended to those who God brings our way and lays upon our spirits to help. There are many situations in which all that is required is a one-time help, but there are others in which you take on a case like you would take care of your child or brother. In all these cases, be aware that it is God that you are working for.

He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed. Prov 19:17

In the book *Grace to Prosper* I discussed much on how to give to the poor and needy and I recommend that everyone tries to get a hold of it and read it. I explained about how to give *crumps* to beggars and how to meet a real need when it is presented.

CHAPTER 27



HOW TO GIVE TO GOD

I have outlined the people we should give to as channels of giving money and material things to God; what I want to describe next is how to decide what to give to different people.

Contrary to what is popular, the Lord has not placed a fixed rule on everybody as to what proportion of their income is seed for the sower and where to give what; the true spirit of Christianity is the freedom to do as the Spirit leads each person within the context of the revealed word of God.

FREE-WILL SPIRIT-LED GIVING

When they hear the expression 'the Spirit leads,' many people assume that you are saying that a supernatural voice will come from heaven and tell each person what to do. Well, that is not what happens most times. Each Christian is supposed to cultivate a giving culture that is derived from understanding divine order and from the knowledge of the demands around him. The

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situations in the life of each person differ and for that reason it is not possible to have a one-size-fits-all structure for giving. The Spirit of Christ inside each one of us will guide us individually into making the right choices and help us in the allocation of resources according to the situations we are faced with. This is as long as we consciously put the knowledge of truth into our hearts (which is what you are doing right now by reading this book).

As I mentioned earlier, many insist that every Christian *must* give a tenth of their income to their local church otherwise they could be guilty of robbing God. I have studied and researched extensively on the subject and I want to warn again that we should be careful as such an opinion is not accurate and only leads to legalism. If I *choose* to give a tenth of my earnings to my local assembly, it is supposed to be a free-will decision and not obedience to any commandment, otherwise it would be legalism. The use of the word storehouse in the Bible shows that it stood as a place to care for the poor and for the priesthood. A believer who is a diligent giver would have so fulfilled all those commandments.

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law... love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. Rom 13:8,10

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Giving for the Christian is a free-will matter. (I discussed in details about this in my book *Grace To Prosper*). I do however have some guides that I believe will help people in this life of giving.

A FEW GUIDES TO GIVING

One of my most important counsels to all Christians is that giving must be a priority matter. I say this because a lot of people leave it to the last, trusting that they have an excuse before God when they don't give; the excuse is that they don't have enough. Believe me, that excuse is not acceptable. Once you have any amount of money at all, then you have enough to give. The only reason you are not giving is because you have not made it a matter of importance. I believe that is one of the ungodly attributes of the natural man which every Christian must strive to overcome with the Spirit of God.

That same depraved human nature is expressed often in life in the fact that most people do not understand that settling a debt is supposed to be a matter of priority. They want to pay what they owe when it is convenient. There is a landlord I heard of, when some of his tenants would come to him to explain that they have not paid the rent due because they have had problems, he'd promptly tell them that they should understand that

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the due rent is also a problem. If we see giving as a 'problem' we will do it. You cannot afford to give only when it is convenient; remember that it is a matter of faithfulness and the money is actually not yours, so that you can't use it for another purpose and be excused.

It is important that every believer plans his giving. The portion that goes to each zone of offering should be planned ahead and should be delivered as soon as the money comes. Most people who say they do not have enough to give are only selfish people who have made other life's matters more important. If you truly love people and love God, you will give. You can give little if you have little; don't forget that it is acceptable only according to what you have.

I was teaching a class of medical students once and at the end of the lecture one of the students made an interesting request. He requested to ask a Bible question even though it was a pathology class. He wanted to know whether students should tithe since they do not earn a wage but are rather dependent on their parents or whoever else their sponsor is. (This is the problem with legalism; it easily entraps in arguments about letters of the law which nobody can truly win.)

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I explained to the person asking that I do not believe in the sanctity of giving away of a tenth of your income so as to attract prosperity and rebuke the devourer; so that was beside the point. However I challenged the men in the class to tell me whether they had never spent their money to take a lady out, or bought a lady a present. The ladies also do spend some of their not-a-wage money in buying dresses and cosmetics. The point is this, if you truly love something or someone, even though you might be broke or have little, you will still find the avenue to give towards the object of your love.

Now, part of the guide I give is that Christians who are just learning the culture of giving should endeavour to give away at least a tenth of their income (please this is not at all speaking of tithing. It is just a simple guide I recommend; the person can start with eleven percent, twenty or more if he so chooses). Those who are ready to go further should endeavour to give *at least* a tenth to the preaching of the word of God and another similar proportion to other charitable causes. These should be done as priority and not when there are no other private needs to meet. It is a good culture. Experienced givers go far beyond these proportions I have suggested and actually do not calculate proportions – they just give.

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THE GIVING MINISTRY

There are persons whose specific ministry from God is to give; Paul described this ministry in Romans 12:8. Such persons must give with as much seriousness as a preacher would preach. For such a person, proportion is not even to be discussed; the Lord will continually pour more than usual amount of resources in his direction and he must be faithful in giving more than an average Christian. I discussed at length about this in my book, *So Who Will Pay For This?*

What I have tried to do in this section is to help everyone see that giving is the work of God. We must realize this and make sure we are found faithful in doing it.

Remember these words:

It is more blessed to give than to receive ...for God loves a cheerful giver (Acts 20:35, 2 Cor 9:7)

SECTION 6

THE WORK OF REST



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CHAPTER 28



COME AWAY BY YOURSELF

And the apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. Mark 6:30-32

The passage above describes what happened upon the return of the twelve apostles of the Lord after the missions they all went out on. They had gone to many places on the commandment of the Lord Jesus preaching repentance, casting out many demons and anointing with oil many sick people and healing them. This was their return and they were very excited. Many people were still coming, needing ministrations, and I believe these apostles were just too eager to continue to see results. But the Lord of the work understood that there was a certain work that must be done if the ministrations were to continue to go well for a long

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time, and that is the work of *rest*. For this reason He called them aside saying, *“Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while.”*

To take time out to rest for the refreshing of the spirit, the soul and the body is an important part of working for God. It is a work that does not quickly seem to the non-discerning mind as important. We tend to look at sitting down to do nothing in the face of so many things to do as a reflection of laziness or lack of zeal. We think a diligent person will use every opportunity to get something done. However, the truth is that rest is like vitamins in the body's nutrition; the lack of it will eventually show in our inability to do many things even though we might be willing still. It is so easy to overlook imbibing your vitamins, but the effect will eventually manifest.

LIKE VITAMIN TO YOUR SOUL

Just like vitamin deficiency in the body, the manifestation of lack of rest is often not so quickly tied to rest-deficiency as the cause. We tend to blame everything else when simply taking time out to rest periodically would have prevented all the troubles. The manifestations of this deficiency are diverse. I was listening to a message once and the preacher referred to problems that some great ministers of the gospel had

SECTION 6: The Work Of Rest ◀

experienced then, and these had to do with moral failings. The preacher mentioned that all that happened to those men was that they got tired. I never forgot that.

People are most vulnerable when they are tired; stories here and there in the Bible testify to that. I believe that Satan knows this and that is why he brings a lot of temptations at those points. Jesus was tested when he was very hungry. Esau sold his birthright at the point of hunger. We generally are more vulnerable to attacks of the enemy when we are tired. Ahithophel was an extremely wise man who the scriptures testify concerning that the counsel he gave was as if it was spoken directly from the mouth of God. When this man was to advise Absalom on how to conquer David his father, here is what he said:

*Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Please let me choose 12,000 men that I may arise and pursue David tonight. And I will come upon him **while he is weary and exhausted** and will terrify him so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king alone. 2 Sam 17:1-2*

Notice that he understood the fact that David was most vulnerable in the time of tiredness.

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This was a strategy of physical war but which also applies to the warfare our lives are in as Christians. In warring this warfare we are advised not to give any opportunity to the devil. What he is looking for every time are those opportunities to make us fall. We give him plenty of it when we do not take the time to rest.

CHAPTER 29



WHY GOD KILLED MOSES

Many years ago the Lord allowed me to understand the spiritual truths surrounding the death of Moses. On the issue I taught a six-part sub-series titled *The Survival and Death of Moses* as part of the *Learning from Moses* series; the whole set of audio messages is available free from my website (pastor.ng).

Without proper understanding we would think that God took Moses out because He was angry with him; the truth is that God took him out because He was sorry for him and wanted to prevent the worsening of an already bad situation. If you understand the character of God you will know that He does not react impulsively out of anger the way we men do. Anytime you see the scriptures make it appear so, it is just trying to communicate the work of God through feelings and experiences we can identify with (so-called *anthropopathism*). The truth is that all the actions of God are well thought through, are based on His

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righteousness and are the best for everybody even though they may appear to hurt some. Concerning our God the Bible testifies,

He is the Rock; his work is perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is! Deut 32:4 NLT

The decision to kill Moses and take him completely out, including his dead body, was made when he made a blunder before the people in that he struck the rock to bring out water rather than speak to it as he was commanded. The rock poured out water but things did not go well with Moses afterwards.

Now Moses was a man who had served God faithfully for so many years and who the Lord Himself had testified concerning their friendship. He rarely got angry and would rather pray when the people would murmur against him. He literally prayed for his enemies and was not known to make any blunder when it came to obeying God. He was known to be the meekest man on the surface of the earth (Num 12:3). This Moses committed *only* one offence; a thing that was obviously done due to the pressure the people had put on him. It was not at all a premeditated disobedience. And yet he got the biggest of all judgements.

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The usual thought is that it was because the Lord was angry. No. What really happened however was that Moses was tired. He was such a *near-perfect* man that he wouldn't normally err on such simple instructions, but he was spiritually exhausted and had literally given his soul-life for the children of Israel.

He had spiritually carried these people, prayed for them, judged their cases and led them; he had used up every ounce of energy he had to sustain this nation before God. It was the diminishing of his spiritual strength which became manifested as disobedience to the direct instructions of God. He had begun to forget; the flesh was beginning to gain the upper hand in his life. His disobedience was the symptom of a deficiency disease that was beneath the surface.

The Lord saw that and decided that a radical treatment was needed. His favourite man, Moses, had to go. It was painful to God but Moses had to go now or things would get worse. If he's left to carry on thus, eventually he would build his own calf and call himself a god to Israel. Sounds incredible, but such things happen all the time. Moses was too precious; the Lord wouldn't let that happen. In the depths of spiritual truth, the death of Moses was a critical rescue and not an angry judgement.

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WHEN MEN ARE TIRED

Men get tired all the time and make heavy blunders. Eli was so spiritually tired that when God sent a warning to him about the coming doom of his family and the end to his lineage as priests, all he said was, *"It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him"* (1 Sam 3:18). A lot of us had wondered why he did not pray to ask for mercy. I think the man was tired; he had no strength of spirit left. You need strength to be able to make petitions before God. Situations sometimes come in life when you are just without strength even to pray. Like David once said, the heart can be overwhelmed (Ps 61:2). Eli was tired.

Spiritual exhaustion was what led Solomon to support idolatry in his latter days. He was never an idol worshipper at heart; he simply became a permissive follower. He was too spiritually exhausted to stand against the demands of his young wives from strange lands. This is why men sometimes become sinners after doing much exploits for God in their yesteryears. You may have seen or heard of great men who went into all kinds of error and who all kinds of sins began to be named with. Men begin to engage in what they formally condemned. No, they did not deliberately become sinners; it is that they became depleted of spiritual energy. Sometimes the Lord takes away his servants in death to prevent some of these things from becoming worse. They are like wounded soldiers who are withdrawn from battle.

CHAPTER 30



A PLACE OF REFRESHING

The place of rest is the place of refreshing. When God ordained rest for men and even their land, it was so that there could be refreshing — so that men may acquire strength again. The time of rest is the time that our war wounds are dressed so they do not become infected and spread decay into the rest of our beings.

Our bodies need rest; our souls need rest; our spirits need this rest for refreshing.

THE SABBATH

In the place of rest we allow God do things that our very presence hinders. There are things that God cannot do unless we have left the scene.

...for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. Ps 127:2

The productivity of the earth is tied to our allowing the earth to enjoy sabbath. Everything in life must enjoy its

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sabbath-rest. If we do not allow things enjoy sabbath we soon lose them. The Lord gave the Promised Land to Israel, but they lost it after a while partly because they did not allow the land to enjoy its sabbaths.

*And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, **until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths**. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete. 2 Chron 36:20-21*

Our lives must enjoy sabbath otherwise we lose our health, ministry, families and we may even die prematurely. A lot of people who God blessed and who the blessings turned to curses brought the curses upon themselves by not observing the principle of sabbath.

For the nation of Israel as prescribed by the laws of Moses, sabbath was a literal seventh day in which there was to be no work, both for man and for animals. The Christian sabbath is more than just the observance of days and years; it is an everyday attitude that does manifest in observing the taking of time to rest, among other things.

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A person who never takes time to rest and give rest to those around him is one who is not of faith but is depending on the arm of flesh for his success and victory. As much as God has not laid a commandment on the Christian to take a compulsory seventh-day rest, the principle of rest will manifest in your life if you are of faith by your taking specific days to rest. *It is part of the work of God.*

After God allowed me the understanding concerning the death of Moses that I shared in the previous chapter, I made up my mind before I started out in ministry that I must regularly take time to rest. My resolution was that out of seven days there must be at least one day that I do no preaching and no work. Also, I close ministry work every year for one full month. In that month I do not go to preach anywhere and our ministry office is closed. Only pre-recorded broadcasts continue on air. It's just the principle of sabbath in my personal practice. The aim for that period is first and foremost to come aside to a quiet place and simply rest. It is also a time of reflection, study and prayer. It is a time that I get to meditate upon the adjustments to make concerning ministry for the coming year. It is a time of refreshing.

I read in one of his books that Rick Joyner closes his church for one full month in each year. That is wise

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practice. He encourages his people in that period to visit other churches. Many pastors are there who do not understand that a man can receive nothing except it be given to him from above; they think that closing your assembly for a month and encouraging the people to go visit other churches may mean the membership will reduce. But they are wrong; *a man can receive nothing except it is given to him from above*. If God gave them to you, they will be back.

Let me conclude by saying that there is a duty to rest as you do the work of God. Plan a restful holiday even though it costs money. Please note that there is a difference between adventure and rest. The money you spend to go on a holiday so that you can truly rest and get away from the hustles of life is not wasted money; if well spent, it is actually a form of offering. Without understanding and the proper purpose in mind, others may go on the same holiday and it is for them just a waste of time and money, and an expression of vain-glory in their lives.

CELEBRATIONS

Spending on rest is one of the reasons we cannot be legalistic about giving and offerings; there are just too many diverse things that one may do as the work of God. Let us even look at the matter of tithing under the

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Law; most people overlook the fact that the main tithe mentioned was one in which the whole tithe was to be spent eating and drinking in celebration before the Lord by the family, friends and local priest of the tither. It was all supposed to be spent in a celebration.

And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town... Deut 14:26,27

Many times when we celebrate in thanksgiving to the Lord (like when there is a new child), and we spend money to entertain ourselves and other people, we are actually giving to God. We must not think that it is only the one that is dropped into the offering basket during the church service that was given to God; no, it is not so. The money spent on what guests eat and drink are also seen by God as an offering to Him if we offer it so. It is good to declare loud to everyone present that the feasting is organized as thanksgiving to the Lord. One thing the Lord Jesus warned however is that we must be careful not to limit the invitation only to our circle of friends. Don't forget to take something to the ministers and to invite the poor.

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Then Jesus said to the man who had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite only your friends, your family, your other relatives, and your rich neighbors. At another time they will invite you to eat with them, and you will be repaid. Instead, when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then you will be blessed, because they have nothing and cannot pay you back. Luke 14:12-14 (New Century Version)

THE MESSAGE

My message in this section is simple, and it is that to observe the principle of sabbath is part of working for God.



about

Kingdom-Word Ministries

- **Pastor Bankie** teaches from the platform of **Kingdom-Word Ministries**, a non-denominational teaching ministry based in Enugu, Nigeria. Activities of the ministry include weekly Bible classes at the ministry office, publication of free teaching tracts and books, radio/TV broadcasts and organizing teaching seminars in various towns and cities.
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12. Secrets of Increase & Breakthrough
13. Beyond Gifts & Talents
14. Don't Quit the Army
15. The Righteousness of God
16. Prophecy!
17. Your Greatness Has Been Prepared
18. What is God's Will Here?

Dr. Bankole Olusina, fondly called **Pastor Bankie**, is a teacher of the Word of God. He teaches from the platform of Kingdom-Word Ministries, a non-denominational teaching ministry based in Enugu, Nigeria. The emphasis of his teachings is the separation of the church from the world by obedience to the truths of Christ. He is a member of the Light of Christ Community Alumni Fellowship (LOCCAF) Ministers' Forum and is happily married to the wife of his youth and partner in ministry, Ufuoma.

Bezalel Enlite

The Bible says to guard your steps when you go to the temple of God so as to be careful to offer the right sacrifices. Many of us may be doing things supposedly in the service of God but for which He really has no pleasure. In this book, Pastor Bankie teaches the ways by which we may serve God in a manner pleasing to Him. Among the things explained are:

- **Transformation into the image of Christ as the first work of God for everyone.**
- **How our secular jobs relate to the service of God.**
- **How to pray as a service to God.**
- **The true role of giving in serving God.**
- **The place of resting as part of serving God.**

The aim of this book is to provide liberation for the people of God who may have been bound to man's religious ordinances, and who are therefore labouring under a heavy burden without actually being pleasing to God. Jesus said His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Serving God can be sweet and without undue burden to the conscience. It is full of reward if properly done. We can all experience the pleasure of serving Him if we take time to learn the proper way.



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