

RAISING THE
**STAN
DARD**

JACKSON ADEBISI

RAISING THE STANDARD

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DEDICATION

TO MY CHILDREN (ENIOLA, ADESOLA & Adeola). I pray
you will be an accurate representation of God in your
generation if the Lord tarries.



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EBERE OWETE & PATIENCE SUNDAY did a good work with the original manuscripts. Your work does not show the marks of a first timer.

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To my wife Kaine Adebisi for always allowing me to do all that

God puts in my heart. I may be the author, but you are the real writer.

INTRODUCTION

“YOU CAN REPRESENT ME HOW you want, how people have told you I want without checking with me; or you can represent me the way I want you to. I must be honored and nothing honors me more than when my children represent me accurately. You are my epistle.”

When the Lord told me this at the outset of my Christian journey March of 1996, little did I know that “Raising the Standard” will become more than a phrase to me but the thrust of my life assignment. Over the years, I have diligently sought to represent God accurately anywhere I find myself.

We are at a crossroad in the landscape of Christianity, we have many churches and more people professing Christ than any point in history. But we are yet to see genuine impact like saints

of old. This is not me asking for the days of Elijah but rather asking that we use lessons learnt from Elijah's experience to affect our generation with its unique challenges.

Evil seems to be getting bolder, our light can't afford dimness now, our salt must not be trampled upon. We need to stand up and be counted, we need to represent God accurately. The instrument that measures and determine standards cannot afford to tolerate error. If secular organisations have standards and products need the approval of standard organization, the kingdom of God can't accept less. In fact, we are meant to raise the bar and play life at the highest level, displaying integrity and a lifestyle that glorifies God.

Walking in love is not ground for tolerance of wrong. The bible is clear about us not keeping company with a believer that is living in sin, and not to have anything to do with the unfruitful work of darkness. The truth is what binds us together not love. We have no business judging an unbeliever but we must challenge our brethren to honor God with their life.

As you read this book, let it challenge you to decide to be a pacesetter. Don't think of your friend not measuring up, focus on yourself and let the Holy Spirit use the experience shared in this book to push you to a point where your life will be a description of the character of God. It is not our preaching, buildings no matter how grandiose that reveals Christ. It is our life and we must live such that we can hear the master say, "well done, good and faithful servant". May you enter into the joy of the father in Jesus' name. As for I have lived my

life daily striving to please God and I am determined not to settle for less, until the glory of the knowledge of God takes over the earth.

Jackson Adebisi

Port Harcourt,
Rivers State, Nigeria
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1

GOD'S STANDARD & YOU

EVER SINCE THE LORD STARTED imprinting His assignment for my life, the word “standard” has always been all around everything that He said to me. For me, “raising the standard” is not just a catch phrase, but a simple phrase that defines my life’s assignment.

Raising the standard is the entire summary of the vision and assignment God gave me.

The phrase itself is akin to the military. Some of the world’s most spectacular events have taken place on the battlefield. Physical events where you have people fighting for territory, with countries trying to overthrow countries.

Even Jesus said, **“There will be wars and rumours of wars.”** So, the concept of war is not new and if there are people on earth, there will always be a reason for people to engage in war.

When you look at a standard battle formation, you will see people set up in different formations; everybody to his leader. Some are leaders of 100, some 50, but there is something significant to every battle. There is a flag bearer. Most of the time, the flag-bearer does not carry weapons. However, the flag he/she carries tells each infantry the division they belong to and tells each country who is on their side.

And if you look at documentaries, after the war, people go to pick up their flag because it is important to them. Historically, when a country takes over a place, the first thing it does is to hoist its flag almost immediately. That is a symbol of honour and strength; a symbol that shows that you have brought everything about you to dominate that area.

When troops don't have someone carrying their banner, they scatter; there will be no formation. In the book of Joel chapter 2, the Bible was describing something similar concerning God's end-time army.

Joel 2:7–8

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

8 Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

The prophet was invariably telling us that there will be an insignia; a standard, (and I believe this is Jesus) that we all must lift. This is done when we pattern our life after Jesus' example. Something must be lifted for everybody to follow, and He said even when the Son of Man is lifted, He is going to draw people to himself.

If you don't have something you are looking up to, especially in the case of a Christian (being Jesus), then you will have a problem. Once a battle begins, the order, ceremony or whatever they do can be scattered. It can turn into chaos in which everybody becomes disoriented because there is no flag and standard of formation to follow.

The concept of lifting a flag was where the word "standard" was derived from historically and it is very important. Most soldiers find it honourable to make sure they don't disgrace the flag they are representing. That is why when countries come for their dead after a war, you see people dead on the battlefield, holding the flag of their country because to them, it's honourable; a way of showing their allegiance to their country, even in death.

When you don't have standards to follow, the chance to do the right thing is very limited. You will not have a model, focus or what you can use as a template to run your life. In conquest

of nations, the first sign of victory is to bring the flag of the conquered nation down and hoist the flag of the conquering nation. By so doing, they are passing a message of conquest and instituting the standard of the conquering nation. And once you conquer a people, the first thing introduced is the way of life of the conquering nation, from culture change to language, food and even social life.

Remember the children of Israel in Babylon. The first thing they did to them was to lower the standard of their God that was given to them. Because in the Israel's tradition, everyone is expected to have a family standard based on the law that God had given them. So, when they came to Babylon, the first thing the king did was to change their diet; a symbolic way of changing their belief in God (*Daniel 1–10*). You will see a consistent battle by the Babylonians to change, not just the orientation of the children of Israel, but their belief altogether. From the furnace to their diet, style of worship and their language.

Get this. If you are part of God's kingdom, there is a standard that is already set for you. You don't set or improve on the standards of God. It is already set, what you need to do is align. Even in life, we don't make the rules, we inherit them and do our utmost best to live by them.

There will be things that will want to derail you from following that standard. Pressure of life, hunger, lack, pride of life and the likes. When Apostle Paul asked the believers in Rome, **"What shall separate us from the love of God?"** He was

essentially asking what they will adjust the standards of God for in their life. He mentioned quite a lot of things that will try to make us adjust the standards of the kingdom. To think of it, Christ didn't promise us we won't face these things, just that we have the assurance of victory.

Your standard shows your pride and purpose. That is why a soldier needs to make sure the standard is kept; the colour cannot be stained. I have seen documentaries where people are bleeding, yet they go back for the flag of their country, and they also ensure that their blood does not stain the flag.

The standard of God is such that you will have to drop your spear, guns, bows and arrows to maintain that standard. As believers we will be actively involved in spiritual warfare, but we must wage a good warfare if we are to experience the victory promised us. For a warfare to be good, it must be fought within the confines of kingdom rules and guidelines.

Have you not wondered why you keep praying against your enemies, yet they keep multiplying? The devils we have been killing, in the light of effective prayers, ought to be dead by now. It seems the more we bind them, the more they come back because we can't fight this battle based on our man-made standards, feelings or tears. It must be by the standard of the Word. The devil is going to be around for a long time. He is a spirit, and spirits don't die.

You may need to drop all the wrong concepts of battle you have believed and practiced and start embracing the Word. The

Word is the standard, the SI unit and the basis for effective spiritual warfare. Make no mistake, there is a war to be fought, but it must be a good fight of faith.

First, for your battle to be strategic and effective, the standards of God must be your rally point; It must be the pivot. When I want to go into battle, what is the Lord saying? Bible kings and saints of old waged effective warfare by always finding out the mind of God concerning their war campaign through the office of the prophet.

We have the Holy Spirit; we have the Word. But how many believers in present day seek the Lord before we endeavour to do a thing, embark on a project or migrate? We are too busy to stay and listen to Lord which accounts for the abundance of struggles we go through. This could have been reduced or even averted if only we engage biblical approved ways to solving our problems.

For example, Einstein's law of relativity is $E=mc^2$, which is the standard for most scientific discoveries. You can't make new strides without accepting that formula as the foundation for your work. If you don't, you will struggle in your scientific journey. Our struggles are numerous because we don't understand that everything in this kingdom starts from the standard that God instituted by Himself. He laid it down for us so that it becomes the fulcrum and the focus of what we are doing.

Isaiah 59:19

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift a standard against him.

The enemy is going to come no matter your disposition, spirituality, holiness, or carnality. As a Christian, the enemy will come. But according to scriptures, the Spirit already has a standard. There is a response to every attack from the devil.

There is a commensurate response that you will find in the word of God for anything the devil brings to you. You hear people say, “these are modern times, you may not understand.” But we serve the ancient of days. He may be old, but He is still relevant today. The word of God has relevance even now and if Jesus tarries, it will still have relevance no matter the age and time, artificial intelligence notwithstanding.

When the standard of Christianity falls, the light of the gospel is diminished, then darkness is given liberty to cover the earth unchecked.

What the darkness and fallen standards have done to us is that everybody wants to be socially correct, politically right, and wants to preach and say things that will impress people.

Many young believers fresh out of the university don't prioritize

training. They put performance above becoming. A young man once came to me after his national youth service to discuss his calling. I told him a calling does not start with the pulpit but a need to sit down first to learn in order to become. Ministry is not a performance of one hour on Sunday, but an outflow of a life devoted to Jesus. You can't preach about a God you don't know.

Miracles don't validate God's power because the devil can do the same. But do you know what he cannot reproduce or re-enact? It is the standards of God because the standards of God set the people of God apart. He can fake everything but not the standards of the kingdom. Justice, holiness, righteousness and others will floor the devil quickly.

That is why when I see Christians that miracles excite, I know they are not growing. Because healing, and miracles belong to the children. If you are growing, that should be the norm in your life. You should get to a point that, if you apply the standards of God in healing, sickness will be strange to you. You can't forever be an anointing oil project. You can't continue that way because you need to grow beyond that.

That is what is happening to the body of Christ at large today, and the answer for most people is to hide from the darkness, saying "I don't want to hurt anybody, I just want to live my life and go on." No, it is not possible because the solution is for you to raise the standard and lift the banner of Jesus in your life; let men know you are a Christian.

I don't mean your weakness or shortcomings; nobody is perfect. It is only God that does not make mistakes. But you cannot hide who you are. That is a serious problem compared to you falling into sin; one denies your identity, the other talks of your shortcoming.

During a civil unrest and protest, there is a possibility that the policemen on duty would be attacked and in some cases, killed. The real policemen that love their job and country should not pull off their uniforms. But some are the first to take off their uniforms and become civilians. Now, he has not only denied the duty, but he is worse than an untrained civilian. And in the days when there were standards, such fellow will be court-martialed (to be tried in a judicial court for offence against military law) for abandoning his duty post. When your ship is sinking as a sailor, you don't jump out until your captain says abandon the ship and if they say we are all going down with it, that is what everyone will do.

Today, we have a Christianity of convenience where some believe 8:00am is too early for church service.

Others want to replace the physical church gathering with online services. There is no distance in the spirit; but there are still some things you will not get online totally. Paul said, **"I long to come to you so that I can impact you with spiritual gifts."** Some things come by physical contact, yet, when you cannot truly be there, the Holy Spirit can make sure the grace reaches you.

Don't run away from darkness, instead bring the light of God's standard against it; stand your ground. We are expected to keep raising the standards of God in our lives until our lives align with God's will. The instrument that measures standards cannot tolerate error; if a ruler is crooked, it is no longer a ruler but a stick. That is why we must keep lifting the banner of Christ high for people to see. You are not improving on it, you are only enforcing and displaying it with your lifestyle.

In ancient Israel, every man was responsible to align his family and his service life to the standard of God. The standard of God differed from tribe to tribe. That is why what the Levites could do, the tribe of Judah could not do because that was not the standard God gave to them.

Numbers 1:51–52.

51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts.

How it applies to us is what people call denominations, different local churches akin to different tribes within Israel with different emphasis. But there is the general standard of God in every local assembly; no matter your anointing, if

these three things are not there, the standards of God are not being promoted, it is just a human agenda. We are not saying somebody has or knows it all but by the uniqueness of God, we can also tell what to expect.

Like Paul said, “*I magnify my office*” I know my calling, I know my office and I don’t joke with it. That is why what is attainable in some ministries is not attainable in another. Like the debate on comedians, my ministerial father once stated his stand on this issue. It caused an uproar but the truth is comedians have no place in a church service.

We have a way of making things look blurry so that we can satisfy the flesh, that is classic carnality. Things that can’t be tolerated in secular places of authority are being celebrated in the house of God, the ground and pillar of truth.

There is a lack of honour and understanding of divine distinction going on within the body, and it has limited divine manifestation among the children of God. He that said not to cast pearls before swine will not release his pearly things to children with swine-like attitude.

You can’t call common what God has called holy. The church is the ground of truth, it is the house of God and if you want God’s best, you must honour Him.

Psalms 18

25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself

*merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;
26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;
and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.*

That is why it will seem as if God blesses one of his children and leaves the other. God loves all of us equally but not all of us are pleasing Him. You can't be a slimy hypocrite and hide from God. It's like going to see a doctor and hiding your problem.

It is the same way when you come to God pretending; when He knows your problem. There is no secret before him; all things lay bare and clear as day.

You can't be silent about your stand while raising the standards of God. The ancient prophets spoke of God's standards being lifted to the people, for the people and in the land. You don't lift it only when it is convenient, but you do that for the people and in the people, which is yourself and in the land.

A brother forwarded a message saying, "I know this is your stand". The scenario was that of a politician that went to an orthodox church and demanded to mount the pulpit and address the congregation. But to his surprise, the leader refused. He said, "When you get to the reception you can address the people, but this is the house of God not a political platform."

It was a glorious sight to see someone lift the standard of Christ. He could have considered the donation the politician

was capable of giving and allow him to use the platform of God for political gain.

Believers need to uphold scriptural standards in all things. For example, when we give bountifully, it frees the clergy to work with no excuse for compromise and chasing politicians for resources.

You can't say you are keeping quiet in the place of raising the standard. Know your stand and be ready to defend it anytime. Paul said, "you should be able to have an answer to them that ask you what your hope in God is." If you are asked your belief regarding masturbation and you reply, "we are all trying, nobody is perfect," it shows you are either compromising or making plans to. Instead say, "even though I am having challenges, I am trying to maintain and perfect it but masturbation is wrong." That is how you raise the standard of God.

Isaiah 49:22

22 Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

The standard of God should not be lifted to the people alone but also to the Gentiles. These are cardinal scriptures that form the basis of my calling.

Isaiah 62:10

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones lift up a standard for the people.

Standards require the right philosophies, personnel and attitude. That's why Jesus chose the 12 disciples that they might be with Him to learn the standards that they might later go out to lift it up with their preaching. If secular companies, run by mortal men, can build organizations to standard, how much more the body of Christ.

It is in the church that we behave like children in the marketplace, and we do things like rascals. There is an order that raising the standards of God compels.

The Bible says in:

Obadiah 1:17

17 But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

Deliverance means you are bringing problems and issues of life to God for solution; holiness implies you must understand how the nature of God affects your conduct, before you start possessing your possession. What most believers want is the

deliverance and possession devoid of the holiness. Deliverance plus inheritance minus holy living will bring you to ruin.

As a young Baptist church member, I observed you couldn't move around the church when the word of God was being preached. It was considered a dishonor, but today's saints are so familiar with the word of God that we focus on other things except the word.

Jeremiah 51:27

27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars.

Regardless of our denominational differences and doctrinal bias, we all must agree on a thing—the standard of God must be raised to the nations. Our lifestyle must not bring disrepute to the kingdom of God.

God's standard is something we cannot be quiet about because it is the rallying point for God's people. You can't hide the standards or do it in secret.

Jeremiah 50:2

2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and

*set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say,
Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach
is broken in pieces her idols are confounded, her
images are broken in pieces.*

1 2

THE THREE APOSTOLIC STANDARDS

THERE ARE THREE APOSTOLIC STANDARDS that the church must lift and maintain if we want to push back the hordes of hell in our homes, cities, nations and the body of Christ at large. Every ministry or service we give to God must be built around these three. It is not peculiar to me or anyone's uniqueness, it is the cardinal apostolic standard that if you don't follow, you will not just have issues but your entire Christian practice becomes questionable.

THE SCRIPTURE

The Bible is the word of God: "Unto the Lord shall the gathering

of His people be.” Where the Lord is, His Spirit is there, and the Bible tells us that God and His Word are the same.

John 1:1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

When you are carrying the Bible, you are carrying the Word of God, and by extension, God himself. Call it scripture, rhema, word, logos etc., it's the same as God. These are terms that have been used to describe the Bible. When you are dealing with the words of Christ, you are also dealing with words of life, truth and faith. You are dealing with Jesus both in the written and in the living form.

That is why it is difficult to read and study it for most people. Just like fasting, which is a spiritual exercise. A lot of people go about their daily routine and forget to eat, but when a fast is declared, they wake up feeling hungry. Everything spiritual will be contested by the world, the flesh and the devil.

Don't take it lightly when you cannot read the Bible the way you want. It is the devil that is trying to stop you from what will deliver you because the Bible is the written and the living Word. The devil knows that it is in the written word that you will find the living word revealed to you. When the written word is revealed to you, it becomes living. You can now say, by experience, that the word of God is quick, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword that can pierce anything

because the word written on paper has been energized by the Spirit and becomes living.

The written and living word must be one. Any revelation you get outside the scripture is from a familiar spirit. It cannot be the Bible regardless of the method or specialness of the word received. And you know we are so careless at times that we take methods to be the Word of God. When Apostle Babalola started blessing water in the 1930s and 40s, it was a move of the spirit that God gave him at that time. Soon after, everyone turned every well into the water of life. Some still do same even after God has moved on. Methods and moves keep changing because God will not allow anything to replace faith in His Word.

Such acts and methods are faith extenders at best and not the source of faith. The just lives by faith and “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Crisis of life can be handled by the anointing, but that is a divine lottery, and it does not guarantee permanent solution. Jesus spoke about returning demons seeking to come back to where they were ejected. The only condition for their second stint as tenants is when they meet the place empty. The anointing may eject them, but the word must fill the empty space. The practice of the word will give you permanent deliverance.

The word guarantees that you can repeat a process and get the result but with the anointing, it is not guaranteed. The anointing is a spiritual lottery; it is at the discretion of divinity. Have you ever asked why sinners receive miracles in a crusade?

It is the donation of God. However, God expects the just to grow their faith and live by it. Stop looking for handouts and bailouts by the anointing all the time. You can stand against the wiles of the devil, you can resist him, cast him out, banish sickness when you grow your faith. Signs follow those that believe; not the other way around.

There are more sinners than believers so God needs his anointing to help them. You are already born again so, read the Bible! I believe you can't preach for 30 minutes as a pastor and raise thorough Christians. It's impossible and you don't have to accept my belief. If lecturers don't use 30 minutes to lecture and other academic endeavours don't play down on time invested to become, how then can we explain the shoddy preaching that has many contents except the word?

How do you now think what has to do with your life, living and eternity, will be taught to you in 30 minutes? Some persons don't read the Bible all week until they are in church. They make everything else primary in their life apart from the Word. Then, they come to service of motivational words and no word content. How do we expect them to stand in the face of challenges? Little wonder we have more scandals now, even with our supposed boom in knowledge.

We need to start reading the Bible and studying scriptures, so that when someone comes to give a lie in the name of truth, we will be able to respectfully decline. In my former church, my pastor invited his friend to minister since he was not around. The pastor told us to drop seeds and a lot of people went out

to do so. Of course, some of us remained because we knew better. My pastor came back to hear what happened and was not happy at all.

The guest ministers put the gift of money above the word of God. Seed cannot deliver to you a manifestation that is tied to time, faith or God's sovereignty. In the fullness of time, God delivered the children of Israel no matter how much they prayed. They were suffering yet nothing happened. I am not saying don't sow seeds but let the spirit of God lead your seed sowing.

The word is like a seed, and it produces in us.

1 Peter 1:23

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

Also read Mark Chapter 4: 1–20, make sure you read it i am only going to highlight the verses i want to emphasis.

Mark 4: 10–11, 13–20

*10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.
11 And he said unto them, Unto you, it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but*

unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

14 The Sower soweth the word. 15 And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

In Mark's account of the parable of the sower, the disciples told Jesus that they didn't understand the parable. Jesus did not only tell them they had been given the ability to know the mysteries of the kingdom but that they won't understand other parables if they don't understand this one (vs 13).

Simply put, the parable of the sower is the master parable to unlock other parables. The parable is all about the word, so it is safe to say that the word is the master key to unlock all issues in the kingdom.

Verse 4 talks about the state of people's hearts. Stay long for the word of God to germinate because every seed will be tested. Increasing economic hardship and the general darkness that covers the earth can choke the life out of you.

God doesn't give a hundred-fold result at once; it is not the way of the kingdom. You must be tested and proven. Remember He told the Israelites, ***"I took you into the wilderness to test, prove you to see what is in your heart."*** That is why He starts with thirty, to see if you will appreciate what you have received or approach divine results with the mind of a gambler. And when God realizes that your heart is still not right, He keeps you at the 30-fold result until you pass the test of gratitude at least.

An unbeliever cannot understand kingdom principles. They will see but won't understand and hear but won't be able to comprehend because perception and understanding comes with the new life in Christ. You must first become born again before you start to think of collecting from God.

He didn't say you won't be forgiven but you can't get a solution without getting to know the person offering the solution. The parable of the sower is the master key to everything a Christian need. If you understand the parable of the sower, your Christian life will be easier. It is the master of all parables.

The word is a seed, and the seed is always small, but stay with it: It is often said, “You can count the seeds in an orange, but you can’t count the number of oranges in a single seed.” Plant the right seed and see a glorious harvest. The word of God is a seed.

The word of God is milk: It nourishes you as a Christian whether you are new or old.

1 Peter 2:2

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

The word is like meat: It gives strength. It is for mature saints.

Hebrews 5:14

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

The word of God is also represented with water: it refreshes; it cleanses you.

Ephesians 5:26

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Psalms 119:9

9 shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

The word is like bread: Ever fresh for daily consumption.

Matthew 4:4

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The word of God is priceless: It is as priceless as gold; you can't exhaust it. The more you dig, the more you get.

Psalms 19:7–11

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

The law and testimony are analogies of the Lord. Confirming Paul's word to Timothy, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished for all good works. Do you value the word of God like you value your trinkets?

The word of God is fire: It purges sin and it is like a hammer that demolishes evil. What is hard in your life? Find the word of God for it and see it break into pieces.

Jeremiah 23:29

***29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD;
and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in
pieces?***

The word of God is a lamp: It chases away the darkness and gives direction. if you don't have direction, you are in darkness, and it is probably because you have not eaten the word of God enough.

Psalms 119:105

***105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light
unto my path.***

The Word of God is like a mirror: It reveals to us what we are and what we can be in God. It tells you where you are, what you are, who you are and where you can be.

James 1:23–25

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The key is not reading it occasionally but all the time. You must read it, listen to it as it is being preached and choose not to forget it. How? By doing it. If you don't do it, no matter what, nothing will happen to you because it is in the doing that you get blessed.

Don't you think it will be unfair of the Lord if someone who is constantly practicing the word gets the same result as someone that does not practice it. I reiterate that seed sowing cannot deliver to you what obedience can.

The seed mentality destroyed everything sacred in our faith. Nobody wants to wait and believe anymore. Everyone wants instant miracles. People glorify their short but light affliction so much that they think it should force the hand of God even when they refuse to obey the word.

I was looking for a document. Suddenly, I stumbled upon an

old letter I wrote in the year 1996, looking for aid from my school. I didn't receive it, so I had to wait until 1998 to write again. I saw the way I constructed my English beautifully and I said to myself, "suffering can be a good teacher".

Read the Bible every day. Even when you don't understand, keep at it. My wife asked how understanding comes to a believer? The first step is by reading. It is what you read that the Holy Spirit will give you understanding in. Continuous reading will make understanding dawn on you. That is why the scripture says, "*until the day dawns, and the day star arises in your heart.*" Until you get there you will not see it. So, you must keep reading.

Don't let the devil rob you of the word of God. That is what is happening; the word of God is getting scarce. What we have are sound bites and quotes that excites the head but adds no vitality to the spirit.

Understand that he that passes knowledge, can pass error. That is why I uphold myself every time to the standard of God's word because everyone is prone to making errors. God does not honor quotes of man but His word.

Ask yourself, since you have been going with the quotable quotes, what has changed in your life? Because I get testimonies from people, and it is the word of God that bring about those testimonies. A member had a skin scalp problem, one day while I was teaching, he said it dawned on him that there should be a word of God that will work for him. This is a medical

condition that they said his hair may never grow again. When my wife noticed the hairs were growing, she had a word with him, and he confirmed and said he found a scripture for it.

Those excite me more because I know that now you have found it, you can repeat it. This is the reason why miracles are scarce in our lives because it is the word of God that sustains any miracle. That is why Jesus said don't labour for the meat that perishes. "I am the word of light, the bread of life and he that drinks of me will never thirst again".

The word of God is like a sword: It separates the flesh from the spirit.

Hebrews 4:12

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

It is the word of God that will let you know if someone's plan is good for you. When someone is praising you too much and you have read the scripture enough to know that the person praising you very early in the morning with a loud voice is tantamount to a curse, you will call them back and ask why they are unnecessarily nice. Though they may ask if there is anything wrong in praising you, you know it doesn't feel right in your spirit. Remember the girl in the Bible that said these

are the men of God, listen to them and they will bless you? She was prophesying accurately but even the apostle was not having it.

It is not all praises that come from God. Test all spirits; the Word of God helps you to test all spirits. Being wordless is the reason why you have issues with manifestation. When you are taught something, don't just take it, compare it to the word of God; that is the standard. If it doesn't align, throw it away.

God will not honour anybody's word except His word. You can say, "He performs the counsel of His messenger." But it is actually his counsel in the heart of a messenger that has delighted himself in the Lord; or the counsel of the messenger in His will. When Elijah said there will be no rain, it was for the glory of God's name to be restored in Israel not for him to be a notable prophet in Israel. That is the difference.

When you do miracles or ask God for something, for example, you say, "God, there should be no rain today because I will be late for this appointment and I don't have a car." When God honours your faith, keep quiet. What are you posting it on social media for? Is it because you prayed, and He honoured you? God will know you haven't matured in the things of the Spirit.

That is how we mess up our faith because we have tied God to stupid manifestations. Living is different from interjection. It is not every word that the Lord honours but the words that promote Jesus, God is bound to back up. If it is going

to promote your ego, be assured, if it happens, it is not the Spirit of God.

The word of God is also an anchor: It holds you down in stormy situations.

Hebrews 6:13–19

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

The word of God should make you stable. Don't be a Christian that when you have problems, it is a different manifestation. To some persons, when it is time to dance in church, their mood reveals what God is doing. You can be like that at the

beginning but get to a point where you know whether he slays you or not, you still have to wait to get it.

Sing, worship and do things that you do the same way. Your problem doesn't change who God is and your victory does not increase Him. He is God by Himself; He swears by nothing but Himself unlike man that can swear by everything both living and non-living.

According to the scripture, His word is that anchor and God cannot change, so you are already blessed. Wait for it to manifest and stop jumping or running up and down; stop chasing what isn't lost. **Wait!!!**

Isaiah 55:11

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

The word of God is supernatural: It carries power. That is why you need the second standard for it to work.

THE SPIRIT

Because the word of God is supernatural friends, it will not operate properly except in the climate of the Spirit because the Word of God is aided by the Spirit of God.

To raise the standard of the word, you need to raise the standard of the Spirit. However, if you don't do that, it is going to leave you or the church in carnality, chaos and disoriented on the battlefield. We will have empty words because we will not have the Spirit's backing to see the effect.

John 4:23–24

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The truth is there in the word and to help activate that word, the Spirit is needed. You need the Holy Spirit to help you with the Word of God. The word says death and the law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Christ.

There is nowhere you will see grace mentioned in the Bible, unaccompanied by truth. Because grace is of the Spirit; the donation of heaven while the truth is what keeps you in the way. If you have the Spirit without the word, you are going to be a very lascivious Christian.

And if you have only the Word of God without balancing it with the Spirit of God, you are going to be a legalistic Christian. That is why it is the Spirit that balances the truth in our life.

The truth tells you what; the Spirit shows you how it is done. When Mary asked the angel, ***“How can this thing be, seeing that I know no man?”*** Then, the angel told her how it would be, that the Spirit will come over her. Why? Because it is the Spirit that will show you how the word will work in your life.

You need to balance the truth with the Spirit because the Spirit is what gives you the truth and the Word is what gives you the strength.

Isaiah 54:2

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

If you want to lengthen anything, you need the Spirit. The length there talks about how far, and how deep it can go. And it is the Spirit that searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

But if you want to strengthen what you are building, you need to do it with the Word of God. Remember Jesus said, “He that hears these words of mine and does it, is like a man that builds on the rock.” When the storm comes, it doesn’t fall because the building is strong.

Why is the building strong? Because it is built by the word. Anything you build by the word with the Spirit is going to

last. You need to understand why we need to balance the Spirit with the truth.

The truth gives you strength and the Spirit helps you to continue. You would have given up since if not for the Holy Spirit that is gently keeping you on. The Spirit of God is within you when you are overwhelmed, leading you to the rock that is higher than you can climb.

It is the Spirit that helps you even when you think that you are encouraging yourself because no man can do anything except by the Spirit. You may say you encouraged yourself but, what is the thing that made you do so? The Bible tells us that God is at work in us both to will and to do.

He gives you the willingness then He brings the ability to do. God doesn't do half measure; what you think you are doing by yourself, it is God doing it through you.

The scripture or truth is your defensive weapon, but the Spirit is what you use to fight offensive battles. You hold the truth of God's word; then you go out in the spirit of that word, guided by the Holy Spirit, energized by Him to fight the battles of life. If you go with empty words, without the Spirit, you will be defeated.

Isaiah 61:1

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of

righteousness;

Ephesians 6:14

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

The Spirit is upon him, but it is the word spoken that brings people out of bondage.

Zechariah 4:6

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

Not by might (might of the scriptures) and not by power (the power of the word which is sure), but you need the Spirit's intervention to make the word work.

Why do you need to balance the truth with the Spirit? Because the truth gives you salvation, but it is the Spirit that gives you relationship. And you can't be saved without having a relationship; it will not work. (*James 1:21, 1st Peter 3:21, Act 2:40, Roman 12:2, Titus 3:5, Matthew 10:22, Proverbs 28:18,*

Luke 7:50, Acts 16:31, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 10:13, Romans 8:24, Mark 16:16, Romans 10:9.)

These scriptures show you different ways by which the Bible mentioned being saved and you will see that some are a combination of words, while some are the work of the Spirit. But if you ask which of these things saves you, it is all of them, put together.

You can't be saved without the Spirit of God, yet you need to hear the Word of God for the Spirit of God to bring that salvation to you. So, you can't take one and leave the other.

You are saved when you obey the Word of God which is His truth. God's grace saves you when you confess. His mercy and love are what brought the gospel to you in the first place so, you must obey God's word to even enjoy the benefit of salvation because His Spirit is what will ultimately save you.

The truth will save you friends because if you don't know the truth, you will not be free. Truth saves, but it is the Spirit of God that will help our relationship because when you are saved without spirit-aided relationship, you will be an insecure Christian. Any small thing, you'd think God is against you or the world wants to end because you don't have a relationship with the Lord even though you are saved.

That is why Paul mentioned the need to work out salvation with fear and trembling. If not, our new life experience will be unfruitful because we didn't push further in relationship

with the Lord.

Don't just say you are saved. No, you move from salvation to the things that accompany salvation and then to a relationship given by the Spirit of God. It is as you fellowship with the Holy Spirit, minister and fast, waiting on the Lord, spending time praying in tongues, spending time with the Holy Spirit to know the mind of God, that you develop your relationship with the Spirit.

Romans 8:15

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

If you come to Christ, you are not expected to walk in fear. God is not a tyrant that wants to kill you and is not angry with you. He saved you because He wants you to have a loving relationship. If you are still in Christ and you are afraid of God, then there is a problem.

Abba is the same word for father. It is being able to call your father twice or as many times as you please. And I pray you understand the father and know who He is and what He can do. He provides, sustains, loves and protects us. Some of us have not enjoyed it from our earthly father so, we always use that to judge the goodness of God.

But you can call Him your father. Jesus teaching them to pray

said, “Our father who is in heaven” He is your father. You can talk to Him.

Even though you dwell in the secret place of the most-high, you can’t have a secret there. It is a secret place because it is between you and God; not that you are hiding things. So, tell him how you feel. When David said, “The lot of the wicked shall not rest on the righteous lest the righteous use their hand to commit evil.” Do you think he was giving revelation alone? He was saying if God doesn’t do something about Nabal, he will kill him and take his food with his wife. Then, on his way, he was told Nabal was dead. He exclaimed truly God is good because He prevented him from doing what was wrong.

There is a time when you pray and shout. That is what we have all been taught. But what you should be doing now is communion; where you discuss with God and tell him how you feel. For example, I don’t like this marriage and you say you hate divorce, what are you going to do? Are you going to change him, kill him, or kill me?

The reason why you are carrying that burden is that you don’t know how to share it with the Lord. When He says, “Cast your burden upon him; He cares for you”, He was not telling you to be strong. You don’t get strong in God’s presence because God is the strongest tell Him.

You need a relationship with the Lord, build it now and speak to Him. He is your father. God doesn’t hate you, so forget whatever condemnation you feel “There is therefore now no

condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Because the law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death. You can go to your daddy and speak to Him, that “Lord this is how I feel, I want this done, I want you to help me, Lord I feel weak, I feel like giving up.”

If suicide victims had learnt to speak to the Lord, maybe they would have been saved because a lot of us use physical strength where spiritual strength is needed. You can show your strength to men, fine! But don't do it to God. Men might not be able to help you as much as God will do.

You can't get before God, and you are hiding; Relationships don't work that way. Even for a husband and his wife, you must be naked and not be ashamed. It is a template for us; when you are with the Lord, don't be ashamed. Men condemn, God doesn't. Jesus asked the woman, “Where are your accusers?” and said, “Go I don't condemn you either, because I want you to change.”

God doesn't condemn, what He does is to transform. Everything He does for you is to make sure that happens so that you can become who He wants you to be. And may your life give God the glory in Jesus's name, Amen.

Why do you balance truth with the Spirit? Because it is the truth that gives you freedom, but it is the Spirit that gives liberty.

John 8:32

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Scientifically, it has been proven that you have two hundred and six bones in your body. Your skull has twenty-eight bones, your torso has fifty-two, your upper body has fifty-four and your lower body has sixty-two bones. The bones fitted together look rigid and structured like nothing can break them. But if a bone breaks, you know it is very painful. The skeleton was not given only to cage you but to aid your movement.

See the word of God as the skeleton, the Spirit as the muscle and every other thing that helps you to move because the concept of freedom and liberty are not the same.

Freedom means there is no more condemnation, no restraint and nothing is holding you down, but liberty means you can decide and choose. The “truth” work is going to give you freedom, but it is the “Spirit” that will give you liberty. And the liberty to choose must be guided by the Spirit so that you don’t choose what is not good for you. That is why He said, “I place before today life and death but by the Spirit, I am counselling you to choose life that you might live.”

The Lord is the Spirit-friend, and wherever the Spirit is, it represents freedom and liberty which means that the truth of God frees you from sin, but the Spirit of God allows you to enjoy that freedom from sin.

2 Corinthians 3:6

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Because where it is just the letter alone, it may lead to restriction and you being rigid but when the Spirit comes into it, you will be free. The letter kills but the Spirit gives life. And may you find expression of the light of God in your life in Jesus' name, amen.

THE VIRTUE OF SACRIFICE

Regardless of the truth that we have, and the liberty that the Christian life gives us, we will never be able to enforce the will of God and His standards, without sacrifice.

Now, some of us have the truth, the Spirit but why are we not winning the battle? Because the required sacrifice is not there. You must put the Spirit and the Word together and sacrificially put it to work.

If you must do well in this Kingdom and raise God's standard, you must learn the concept of sacrifice. That is the third strand. Solomon said, *"A threefold cord is not quickly broken."* That is the word, the Spirit balanced with sacrifice in your life.

Romans 12:1–2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Now, you realize that if you want to be transformed, it must be that you present yourself as a living sacrifice. You must be sacrificial in following the Lord. You cannot do anything in this Kingdom with whatever you know without putting the required sacrifice. You know the prayer, you know the scriptures on prayer, you know all kinds of prayers but are you praying?

It is praying that is the sacrifice. You know the secret of fasting for a Christian, but when was the last time you set apart the food and fasted? I understand we can convert hunger to fasting, God accepts it, but you must present it to Him. That God I am fasting because I don't have food, let it be acceptable.

But the reality is, when you have food and you deny yourself of it, it shows that you are fasting. You can't technically say you like fasting when you know you don't have food but when you have food, have the money to order from anywhere and you decide to set time apart to wait on the Lord and not eat anything, then you are putting the sacrifice.

It takes sacrifice to advance in this kingdom. You love sleep, but when you remember what is at stake, you should be awake lest you sleep the sleep of death.

The sleep of death is not that you are dying, but you are leaving serious issues unattended to. So, if you say you can't stretch yourself, you can never be part of this kingdom. Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Working with the plough is hard work. Remember Elisha when he was called, he was ploughing with twelve oxen.

God doesn't call lazy people. That is how I know a lot of this younger generation become pastors and apostles for popularity. He didn't even call half or 90% because the basic thing that speaks about a calling is not in their life. You don't have a job and you say God has called you. No, He doesn't call jobless people.

Everybody that God called had a job that they were doing. Because when you are working and you understand the call, having to leave your work to step out in faith is one of the sacrifices that comes with the calling. So be ready to make sacrifices.

Psalms 50:1–5

***1 The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken,
and called the earth from the rising of the sun
unto the going down thereof.***

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. 4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. 5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Each time you say, I have the covenant of peace, but is it matched with sacrifice? Are you willing to sacrifice for the covenant that God has given you? He gave you freely, but it takes effort for you to push it. He says, “Whom ye resist, standing steadfast in the faith”. The one whom you resist is the devil.

Resistance means there is an opposition and it is by sacrifice that you can overcome. You can't have a problem and be sleeping like someone without a problem. You need to be awake to pray. And a lot of us do it. When you want to write an exam, you dip your legs in the water, drink coffee and chew kola nut. Some even smoke Indian-hemp saying it helps them to stay awake. But that is you making a sacrifice (though questionable) because you don't want to fail an exam.

How come you are comfortable when things are not going well in your life, when the devil is giving you options that are not of God? Kenneth Hagin in his book, said, he was with the Lord in a very open vision, and they were speaking and

suddenly, a demon like a monkey started moving up and down, he was ignoring it but after a while, he could not hear Jesus very clearly again. And the demon was still moving, but he was expecting Jesus to do something about the demon, yet Jesus kept talking. He got angry and chased the demon out and could hear clearly. Then he asked Jesus why He didn't do anything while the demon was jumping about, Jesus replied, "I can't do what I have given you power to do."

That is what you are also doing when you say you will send Jesus on an errand. When He says, "My cities through prosperity shall be spread abroad." He has blessed you, yet you say, "Lord if only you can give this rent." No, you will say "I can't pay my rent now, but I see myself paying for other people". It is only going to come by sacrifice. Put work in. "Seeth thou a man diligent." It is not just to stand before Kings alone but also to push the agenda of your life.

You need sacrifice. Do you have a template for what you want to become? Do you have templates for your academic pursuit or your marriage? Do you know to even run a marriage successfully takes a lot of sacrifice and effort? Each spouse will sacrifice, scatter the sacrifice, come back again and re-sacrifice. But you want everything easy and cheap, it is not the gospel way.

In Matthew's record, Jesus rebuked Peter saying, "Get thee behind me". We focus on that but what Jesus was doing, was rebuking Peter because he was looking for an easy way out for Jesus. There is no easy way to push the standard of God.

It is going to be sacrificial.

Matthew 16:23–26

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The things of God work by sacrifice. Jesus was not just telling him to get behind Him as Satan's emissary, He was making it clear to us that in this journey, on this road, everything is sacrificial. You deny yourself. If you have planned to buy something for yourself, God can ask for it; you may use it to buy something or pay for something in the house of God. That is sacrifice.

We can discuss everything about the Spirit and the Word of God, but the real question is, are you willing to give it all up to push the Spirit and the Word? Are you willing to make all the sacrifice that is required? Or are you willing to sacrifice your desires, goals and priorities to make your life count for Him?



1 3

WE DID NOT SO LEARN CHRIST

THE CALL TO CHRISTIANITY is not the call to fun-fair, popularity and it is not even a job because I have heard people say my job is a pastor. Being a pastor is not a title, but a responsibility and being a Christian is not a cloth you wear to look beautiful or tattered on some days. Being a Christian is a call from God to represent him to humanity. As we received Christ through foreign missionaries; so also, the Lord is raising men from Africa to go back to the nations of the world as missionaries. And you need to understand that the Jews brought Judaism with Christianity because that was the first practice in the Old Testament and Jesus came to put an end to it. You will see that in Peter's dealings with the brethren, to the Gentiles, he was trying to impose the law of Judaism

on them, and Paul had to withstand him, understanding that the Law of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death.

Christianity became an entity that everybody receives, but you receive it with the taint of the person bringing it to you. That is why the Christianity of a lot of us does not make sense. Not because God has failed but when you got born again, the person that preached to you did not give you Christ, in some cases, he/she gave mixtures. You see people say because you don't smoke and drink all you need to do, is to add Christ to your life and you will be better. That is not Christianity; Christianity is a complete exchange of who you used to be for the life of God.

Secondly, you need to understand that as you walk with the Lord, it is not about you or your needs. This is the second aspect of Christianity that we have all been given—the need-oriented gospel. So, people come to Lord based on wanting a child, a job, and a solution to problem etc. Does Christ save from all that? Yes, He does, but that is not the primary reason for salvation or Jesus' coming.

If it is money, you are looking for, the devil can give you; the richest people on earth are not believers. If it is a house you want, you don't need God to get it. I once knew a man who is now late, his houses were so uncountable. Some were even abandoned because he didn't remember to tell his family. He could not carry it away yet, he didn't know the Lord and he had all those things. In the book of Genesis, the Bible told us

that when Cain departed from the Lord, he went far into the land of Nod and he built cities, he didn't need God to do that. As we enter these last days, the time is short. We are in the third hour; Jesus will come back at any time. Our salvation is nearer now, than when we first believed, and everyone needs to sit up and start practicing authentic Christianity. Let's stop all this madness.

You are being sold what is not real, you have been sold a Christianity that is far from what God wants. Are you even born again? Because nobody wants to ask such questions, but you need to ask yourself if you are sincerely born again.

The church seems to have visibility with less impact. At a ministers' conference, a man of God asked if we think a nation can be better with a Christian president. The natural answer should be yes! But most of us hesitated to answer. Knowing what I have seen on the road as a travelling minister and as a pastor, it is difficult to see light at the end of the question's tunnel.

What kind of Christianity did you receive? I am not talking about sinlessness, but assuming responsibility for a change. Jesus is the only one that will not make mistakes, and not improve. We all must improve. So, I am talking about the very thing that drives your life. Is it what God wants you to do? You need to answer the question of being born again, because at times, I think a lot of people are not genuinely born again. It is not about who is the president or who is not because when an election is about to commence, politicians wear the toga

of Christianity to gain the church's endorsement.

It cannot get better for a nation where the people are wicked. It is impossible! Go check the Bible; every time God punished the Children of Israel, it was because of the sins of the people, not just the leaders. Who asked for a king when God wanted to lead them? The people did. They felt tired of hearing prophecies, they refused the word for prosperity, they needed a king that will fight as other kings do for their people and bring back the spoils of war. God told Samuel, ***“Give them what they want; they did not reject you, but they have rejected me.”*** So, every answered prayer is not necessarily from God.

Jesus wants to save you and make you before giving you things. But most people want things at the expense of their soul and transformation.

There is no way Jesus died for you to just have money. Do you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? For your sake, he became poor so you can become rich. It is not the prosperity of money first, but spiritual prosperity which is your soul ***“I wish above all things that you prosper and be in health even as your soul is prospering.”*** You can have money and your soul is deteriorating. That is what is happening today. In one of the local flights, we all were given a simple instruction to be ready to disembark row by row. Upon landing, everyone stood up and disregarded the instruction. The place became rowdy in a matter of seconds. I was shocked, these were people praying and acting like believers, yet they couldn't obey a simple instruction. I was forced to ask, “What is wrong with

everyone?” You complain about the politicians not following the rule of law; yet, this is simple instruction you all couldn’t follow.

If you cannot obey the law of the land, your Christianity is questionable. Any Christianity that is teaching you to disobey the law of the land is not a follower of Jesus. Romans 13 tells us there is no authority given that is not from God, so we are expected to raise the standard as noble citizens. Even in the kingdom of God, there are protocols to follow. The younger generation needs to decide about their practices and conduct. The Bible must set the standard for your conduct and not your popular mentor. Are you following your mentor because he is following Christ or because he has a following? We need to start asking these important questions.

When you come into this kingdom, the first thing you get right is the definitions that you want to live your life by. Your philosophies for Christian living must be clear. How do you define prosperity? How do you define increase? What is success to you? Do you believe in the supernatural? Do you believe in the reformatory powers of the gospel?

Testimony of a changed life is as important, if not more important than miraculous interventions. Healing is among the basics of our faith. As beautiful as the miraculous is, having your name written in the book of life is better.

My fear for the younger generation is that we are handing over a gospel riddled with compromise and controlled by mammon.

We have limited everything gospel to money and now pastors speak unadvised with little or no knowledge of what they are saying. The depth of scriptures can't be seen in their messages so there is a breakdown of doctrinal purity. Most pastors are either not saved or don't understand salvation. We are building on the wrong foundation, and the strength of any building is in the foundation, not in the structure. So most believers cannot withstand the pressures of life.

Don't let them sell you what doesn't work. I am telling you things I have seen, heard, and practiced. People mocked me when it seems nothing was working, and then when God started confirming His word, they opined that I was pretending all along. I was vehement with my refusal. The simple truth was that all those periods I was practicing everything that I am saying now but like a seed planted, the time for manifestation was not at hand.

All kinds of people have joined the ministry. You know when the devil cannot stop you, he dilutes what you are doing. That is what he did to the pastoral ministry. Now you see all kind of charlatans, fake and false ministers destroying the essential doctrines of our faith.

No other foundation can any man lay apart from the one that is of Christ that has been laid. Like Pastor Udu Okiemute once said, *"Any church not preaching Christ, is a business center."*

A minister I respect erroneously said, people should not bother with standards that are being preached as much as their

response is coming from a sincere heart. While I understand he is trying to give people the right to use their liberty in Christ, one still needs to be careful about issues of doctrines. With all your parents love for you, there are still standards set by them in the home that will attract premium punishment when flaunted.

Same thing with God, He doesn't lead from the congregation, He leads from the leader put in place. It's like the oil that ran from the head of Aaron down to his skirt, not from the skirt to the head. Some believers try to use supposed prophecy to dictate to the local assembly and that is nothing short of falling standards. We take opinion poll on how to run the church and basically do things the way people want. No hospital takes a patient's procedure on a delicate matter. While you can discharge yourself, you can't determine hospital policy. If a secular organization won't allow that, why would you want us to do same? Both the laity and the clergy running the affairs of the church this way are lowering the standards of God. Some say messages should be shorter, yet they can watch a 3-hours movie and/or a tv show with 7 seasons. I was advised by well-wishers and some members to reduce teaching time so that the church can grow rapidly. Of course, I didn't and the church is growing because some people want the truth. If you don't want the truth, you won't find the truth. When the Bible says, ***"They that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled."*** It means, it is what you look for you will find. As at the time of the writing of this book, Pastor Poju Oyemade of the Covenant Nation just concluded a conference in the UK and he had this to say: ***"London Summer Word Camp. I***

loved this meeting. Taught the word for 90mins each session and took questions for about 30mins. Puts combined sessions of teaching to about 3hrs 30mins. I miss teaching for hours. I am going back to the days of teaching this way”.

Truth is no serious work can be done with shoddy preaching. If you like lies, you will find lies. Stay where you can learn Christ, stay where you are helped to get it right with God and serious matters of life. When the problems of life come, you will realize that the just shall live by his faith and not by the faith of his pastor. The anointing on ministers can take you further in the things of the spirit, but you will still need faith to sustain what the anointing brings to you.

How much of the word of God is inside you? You have a beautiful face, you are elegant, yet your head is empty, devoid of the scriptures. Your body looks well-nourished but your spirit is malnourished. The things you have inside of you are things to share on social media for people to think you have the knowledge and not necessarily things you have proven in your life. When we first got born again, people were very afraid to talk about issues they didn't know of but today, the standard is low. We have people who now talk about issues they know nothing about. The scripture says, *“What we have seen, heard, and handled of the word of life.”* Not what we have gathered via google. There is a rise in the number of consultants in the marketplace, and most of these guys read motivational books and come to speak beautifully, yet they don't even have a business; let alone built anything tangible. Doctors read, but they must do clinicals to become certified doctors.

I want you to ask yourself what you want, because it is what you want that God will give you. Don't make a mistake because if God doesn't want something for you and you do, He will allow it. He didn't want a king for Israel, but He still gave when they persisted. A blessing can do the work of a curse if it stops you from growing in the knowledge of God. For instance, the Bible says, ***"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; every other thing shall be added unto you"*** Matthew 6:33. He was telling you first, ***"A matter of principle."***

The first thing after you become born again is to seek the kingdom of God which is understanding the king's domain and His way of doing things. For example, if you enter the United State of America, there are laws that guide their way of life that you must obey. You can't operate with the attitude of your country of origin, you will be violating the law. There is a structure and commensurate response to their way of life. Same with the Kingdom of God, there are rules, structures and laid down procedures for living. You can't invent your ways, your old life must be done away with and your mind must be renewed by the laws of the kingdom.



4

THE PRINCIPLE OF WHEN- GIVING

LIKE I SAID IN THE previous chapter, the kingdom of God has its own standard, you simply align with it. The application can vary from time to time, but the standard can't be adjusted or modified.

You must follow what the king has said as the rule of law for citizens of his kingdom. God has what He wants, and he made them clear in the BIBLE. One of the foundational standards is what I call, “*The principle of first and when.*” They are namely:

When you fast, when you pray, and when you give.

When you give:

Matthew 6:2–4

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Because God himself gave, you can't be in this kingdom without giving. And when we say giving, it is not giving for prosperity, that is what you have been told, but giving according to the acts of the Apostle standard. They all were together in one accord and did not lack anything. Does our giving help in that way? Do we give to oppress the brethren or to ensure that the love of God extends to them. People have myriads of reasons for giving, some want recognition, while others want a position and some just want the church of the living God to be in their debt. God favours us but he doesn't owe us any favour. Some even give to ensure that the pastor is compliant and loyal. But the early saints gave in such a way that selfish giving was judged and those that didn't have were grateful to God to be among the saints. Such giving does not encourage the laziness of those who don't have neither does it sponsor

the irresponsible lifestyle of others.

You must ensure that your motive is pure and you are committed to giving. The Bible says, “when you give.” Giving in this context is not a get-rich quick scheme. We don’t give to get or to prosper. We are already blessed; we give to honour God and obey his commands. Your hard work in the physical, response to divine promptness and timing will bring that blessing into physical manifestation. Some persons will be sorry when they get to heaven and see all they would have become but laziness, foolishness, keeping up with the Jones’ and trying to impress everybody stopped them from becoming all that God wanted them to be.

You will need to curb your party appetite and wanton lifestyle. I was on my way to meet with the brethren in Lagos, and the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart, “*As it was in the days of Noah, so it is when men were drinking, eating, and giving in marriage.*” It seems there is an unusual emphasis on marriage even if it violates God’s will. God wants us to marry and marry we shall, but we must know it only ends here on earth. Though you will be judged for your marriage conduct; thus, a believer’s marriage must help him/her to fulfill God’s plan. There is a surge in relationship coaches of late and we still have more divorces than any time in the history of the church. It is one of the signs of Noah’s time which means Christ is close, don’t be distracted from focusing on important matters of destiny. When you read your Bible, look at it in the context of how it applies to the days you live in. The Bible is a book that gives ancient answers to modern questions.

Matthew 24:37–38

37 But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The ark there is a symbol of Jesus Christ, the flood is a symbol of judgment. So, when you are in the ark, you are in Christ. When you are in Christ, your experiences are supervised outcomes, so you don't live for pleasure but for Christ.

Don't let what drives your life be things of comfort, we have placed so much emphasis on it in the body of Christ that we forget that we are to seek first the kingdom and not worry about what to eat or wear.

When I got born again in 1992, there was little emphasis on materialism in the name of prosperity and giving was a way to honour God primarily. Today is different as believers have brought a different mentality to giving and ministers are equally guilty. Ministers use administrative strategy to encourage people to give more by tying blessings and manifestation to monetary seed.

When Jesus collected the fish and bread from the boy, he didn't pray for the boy. It was the food he blessed. It's simple; obedience in prayer and responding to God, releases his blessing. The way of obedience is a sure access to divine provisions, not giving to reap money.

We need to start raising the standards of the Lord not just in giving but all areas. Some things are being done and everyone is quiet about it. The more we keep quiet, the more we jeopardize the future.

You must understand that there are all kinds of people in church and God has all kind of children, Rev. Areogun always says church gathering consist of people, problems and devils. Some of the problems are young men of the next generation that have learnt wrong patterns and are not willing to change. When it comes to standards in the kingdom, wrong knowledge is worse than ignorance. A young member of our church came to me, requesting for my sermon note. I simply ignored and moved on. After salvation, your need for Jesus puts you in a local assembly under a pastor that will train you for destiny. He is not your friend though friendly; he has the God-given right to discipline you. You can change the church if you want, but he will not be guilty of failing heaven concerning you. Ministers must consider this when they handle the people of God. Don't let the drive for growth make you lower the standards of God. Let the Kingdom of God grow inside of you and by extension the people of God. We are salt and light, it's our responsibility to let Christ be felt by all men, not just among ourselves during services.

Christianity is a changed life, not just a confession. Stop advertising it on your social media handles and statuses where your life will make your viewers mock God. We all don't need to be part of the five-fold to make a positive impact. The end time move of God is the move of saints. The five-fold ministry is supposed to train the saints to do the work of the ministry. And the work of the ministry is not preaching, being nice or docile. It is allowing God to change you so you can change others for Him.

Be a good man. The Bible says, ***"A good man out of the goodness of his heart brings forth that which is good."*** Why can't we be like that? Why can't we bring the life of God to people? You fight, then go to church to speak in tongues; the kingdom of God isn't formed in you. You can be in church and the kingdom of God is not in you. That is why God said, ***"These people draw close to me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me."*** The kingdom is formed in the heart; God's way of doing things must be our pursuit. Know how God wants you to treat your spouse, children, colleague, neighbor and perceived enemies. God has a guideline for every situation in life. Grey areas are where you need the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

Have you been properly guided before? My late father-in-law was a good guide, he knew road details that Google maps might miss. No matter the location, he will guide you; not just to beat time but with accuracy, giving you landmarks and symbols along the way. Now, that is a mortal man guiding, imagine the Holy Spirit guiding you. You are not guided

because you are not asking Him for direction. And when we ask, our focus is on what we can have and not Him guiding us to what we can become. What we can become is greater than what we can have, and where our identity is skewed, what we have can destroy us. Don't ask for jobs that can give you more money, ask him to guide you to a job that can enhance your relationship with Christ. I was once offered a contract job with an oil & gas firm that would have paid me 10 times what I was earning that year. I turned it down because the work hours would effectively kill my service to God. To everyone, it was a blessing but I knew better. God's blessing is not more money but you being in control of your time to do more. If you want to know if you are blessed, check how much free time you have for personal growth.

I tell some youths around me that are going through tough times to calm down. That when all the things they want comes, they will be tired. Don't let anybody pressure you. The Bible told us to provoke ourselves unto good works; not compete with ourselves to our destruction. You want to have what others have, then you get into trouble because you don't know the source. You don't know how deep some pockets run, so, you don't have to compare yourself to them. I am not saying don't look or wish for those things but let the kingdom of God form within you first. Let it show in your conduct; be a Christian. Emphasis here is to keep improving daily; when you make mistakes get up and go again.

God's kingdom must grow in you and not just church work/activities. Our area of service in the kingdom can be church

work or kingdom work. Singing in the choir is church work, but ministering life to people is kingdom work. If some of you take your job or service in church seriously the way the pastor does, the move of God will be evident in our midst. You can't start preparing close to service and expect to see the move of the Spirit. For instance, you are to lead worship or bible study in service, but you spend your entire free time on reels and movies. You won't be able to minister to people, at best, you will just entertain them. A pastor that I met said, ***"I have been seeing you online so, I went back to look for your messages. Where do you find those things that you say?"*** I replied, ***"I don't have anything I am saying, those words are not from me but from the person that sent me. I try as much as possible to listen because the work I am given primarily is to listen to God."***

Branding is good, but we must be careful not to brand the Holy Ghost out of our lives. Since you got saved, do you spend time in prayer and the word consistently? These questions are important, though some pastors don't like to ask because they want people to feel comfortable. You can't be a responsible member of this kingdom and live in disobedience. Jesus said, **"If you were the children of Abraham, you will do the works of Abraham."**

What are the works of Abraham?

The Just shall live by faith.

Leave your father's house and follow me.

I will take your child from you.

Train your servants; let them go and deliver the land.

The above, though physical in the days of Abraham, hold principles for us as New Testament saints.

Sacrifice, labour and living beyond yourself are some of the principles we can imbibe. For some of us, all our hopes, vision, dreams and goals in life is all about ourselves and not about Jesus.

Ask yourself why you want to prosper. Is it for philanthropy, which is giving without Christ's will or for the kingdom? The Lord will ask any of us asking for financial prosperity what we need it for. So, have you settled why?

It is the same thing when your son comes to meet you for a PS5, you ask him for a justification. You don't buy things for a child because you have money but for what it will contribute to his destiny. The PS5 can contribute to his destiny if you tie it to academic performance and moral excellence. And as a father, you must keep your promise if he keeps to the terms. That is how you teach children the virtue of their word being their bond. One day, my elder son described me in school on one of the open days. He said, "*My daddy can do anything.*" I replied, "*That is God, not me.*" But it was because I have tried not to fail him. If I don't have it, I don't promise it.



1 5

THE PRINCIPLE OF WHEN- PRAYING & FASTING

BOOKS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ON prayers and we teach about prayers. But when it is time to pray, believers are full of excuses. The best way to know how to pray is by praying. The best time to start was yesterday and the new best time to start is now.

The disciples asked the master to teach them to pray, not just how to pray. Effective teaching on prayer must make you pray. You must have personal prayer schedules and also be part of corporate prayer. Don't neglect the gathering of saints, there are battles you can fight alone and there are battles you can't fight alone. Paul wrote, "*We wrestle not against flesh and blood...*"

there is a “*We battle*.” If you are dealing with principalities and powers, that is not what you alone can deal with, it is “*We*”.

Paul also said, in

1 Thessalonians 2: 17–18

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

The “I Paul” signifies personal battle. There are personal and collective battles. The church is not as powerful as it should be because we have turned prayer to a tool of personal aggrandizement and self-loathing. We have so much faith in our prayers than in the God that answers them. The inexperienced members of the kingdom now aspire to pray to impress people with the length of prayer, not the time spent with God.

We must learn to marshal our resources depending on the nature of the battle. Moses would have dealt with the battle all alone, but he had to carry Aaron and Hur to hold his hands in prayer. Do you have such experience in your life where you can come together with the brethren and pray? I understand the uniqueness of your job and the metropolitan life may

hinder you from making 100% church attendance, yet your job must not keep you away prayer. Don't let the devil isolate you to destroy. You need the brethren to stand with you in some battles of life.

The church is the university of heaven; where you are trained in the ways of the Lord, the ground and pillar of truth, where you will know what to do and then practice. Once the devil keeps you away from the gathering of the saints for long, he is only isolating you to destroy you. It happened to Lot, don't let it happen to you.

If you want to be a bona fide citizen of this kingdom, you must give, pray, and fast; fasting is not a periodical event e.g., January 1st–21st. We bless God for the general fast, but outside that, do you have a personal fasting regimen, where you deprive yourself of food and want to be with the Lord? It will help you build your life in all areas.

Don't just know your pastor or spouse because you spend time with them, know the Lord too. Pray till His desires become your heart's cry. Prayer is a must for all believers.

At the arrest of Jesus, he said:

Luke 22:53

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

There comes a time when it seems the power of darkness is strong, constancy in prayers will make you shock-proof just like the master. Things should not catch you unaware. My wife once asked, “How come you are hardly surprised?” I said, it is because I spend time with the Lord in prayers and I live a fasted life. So, my spirit is always aware.

Learn to fast; have a personal regime for fasting. People wonder why the ministry I operate is different. It is because I have been a church boy since the year 1992, and I know once the January fasting is done, most people don’t fast again until next year or when they have problems. But that is not what God wants for you, you have to convert it to a lifestyle.

It doesn’t mean you go without food; it may just be to reduce the quantity of your food. The essence of it is to spend time with God. . Your mind must be focused on Jesus as you commune in your heart. When you are fasting, let your heart stay on Him and not on the hunger pangs.

This is to challenge you to go back and ask yourself why you got born again in the first instance; what are the principles and practices of your life, and what are you building your life upon? The Bible says, ***“No foundation can be led except through that which is laid first which is Christ.”*** He is also the chief cornerstone; He is not only the foundation but the support at the edges. Whatever you want to do, if it is not built on Christ, it will not last; don’t let anybody deceive you. What we are buildings will be tested because Jesus told us that the rain and flood will test the integrity of what we are building. There

will be a test but if the foundations and the cornerstones are strong, the boundaries and the fences of your life are intact, the devil will not be able to enter. This is the standard. The standards of God are meant to give us the best of God. To see it practically manifest, you must push for it in the place of prayer and fasting; it does not come by discussion. The Bible says, ***“Right from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing and it is only the forceful that push it.”*** You must be forceful in the spirit; fast and pray, it affects every area of your life. If you want to live a good life in peace then, those are the “when” you need to follow; when you pray, when you fast, when you give, you cannot escape those three things.

You will give yourself first, before your substance. You will give to the Lord, to people; you will give your time and energy. You don’t have money to give yet, then give what you have—time and energy can be given. You must be doing something at church level to minister to the body and serve the saints of God at the local assembly level. You must also be busy at the kingdom level with the assignments given to you by the Lord. He told you to write a book, feed the poor, help the widows, train orphans, support missionaries but your job is standing in the way. Do something about it.

Don’t allow comfort and problems move you because they can, it is only in the Lord that you will find stability. Financial prosperity is a danger to your faith than hardship. Money can be a cruel master. It can tell you what to do, when to do it and how to do it. It can affect your emotions and skew your

thinking. Somebody rudely speaks to you, when you didn't have the money, you felt you were broken, that the Lord had dealt with your pride; you are now a humble person. Moments later, you have money, the same scenario repeats and you feel irritated, that is when you know you were never broken or passed the test.

Don't fail the tests of God like I did because if you do, you will have to rewrite, and it will last as long as God wants. For me, it took eight years to get it because I was stubborn, my parents tried to teach me at the beginning, that even if I am right, I should let it go but I refused. To me, the person who was wrong should be the one to apologize and I always demanded it. The test of God is not to humiliate us, but to show us where we are in the scheme of things.

You must learn to fast and pray. Don't negotiate prayers; don't let anybody tell you your prayer is too much or tell you it is only prayers you know. It is better than knowing how to steal, kill, destroy, kidnap people or prostitute. Pray in season and out of season; you don't know what will come. The best teaching on prayer is for you to pray. You know the prayer of intercession, exaltation and supplication, you know every theory but to pray.

Problems will teach you to pray long. A man of God used to tell a story of a medical student that had an accident and by the time he woke up, he couldn't remember anything. He was already in his clinicals, so it became a battle; the doctors had given up. He was a member of the church and they prayed for him for 46 days, 24 hours a day. (Not prayers via social media

but collectively) The boy came back to his senses and passed gallantly. Two weeks after, he sent a message that he is leaving the church and has found another pastor. That was a crucial time for the pastor because it can painful. Then, God told him, “You are looking at the person going, you are not looking at what you gained; you can now stretch yourself for 46 days, 24 hours a day.” And since the 90s, they have never lost anybody because long prayers has been built into the church.

That is how you learn to pray. Set an alarm. You set an alarm to watch movies so, why can't you set alarm to read your Bible or pray? Have the intention of revamping your prayer life. Pray for everything in your life including the future, that the devil will not join himself and his minions to what God is doing in your life. For the young ones, build your life based on the word of God.



6

AVOID ITCHING EARS

PART OF WHAT THE WORD of God offer is for reproof and correction, and this often comes across to the hearers as strong and condemning. Yet, the goal of the writer is not to condemn or give a consciousness of sin to the reader. Rather, it's a warning and clarion call to get issues of our faith right and get better at obeying them. One thing that can make this difficult is itching ears.

WHAT ARE ITCHING EARS?

2nd Timothy 4:1–4

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord

*Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;
2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.
3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.*

The church of God is not like a comedy show where you will entertain people. Yes, now and then, you may find reasons to laugh but the church is not for entertainment. The Bible calls it, “*The ground and pillar of truth.*” I call it, “*The University of the Lord.*” The world trains you for academia that doesn’t add eternity to you but helps you to live on this side of time efficiently.

When you come to church, that is where you should be equipped with the word of God and what will help transform you. It is the truth that will take you from where you are to where you ought to be in the Lord. We are not sent to make men feel good; the good news is already given. If you want to derive any good, you can find it in the good news and the good news is simple: Jesus came to die for sinners.

There is nothing you want that you won’t find in Christ; that is the truth. We have entertainers, we have people that will

tell you what you want to hear, and those that don't know any better but will tell the best they know and those that do it for their stomach. Some have merchandised the gospel so much that they see God's people in monetary value and not in their destiny.

Avoid itching ears. I am sounding this warning knowing the terror and dealings of the Lord. Christianity is spiritual; it is not a life lived to tickle people's fancy.

Whether you are dead or alive when Jesus comes, everyone will be judged. The Bible says, "***Be instant in season and out of season.***" So, it is not going to be convenient for you. Christianity is not carried out as convenient but as commanded. You cannot follow God only when it is convenient for you. It is not going to work unless as commanded. My dad being in the military gives me insight into all these things. That is why it looks like I am relentless and can drag myself.

During a war, a soldier must be present and functional. It doesn't matter how they feel. You can't see them getting dressed or making up on a battlefield. So, whether you feel like it or not, you must pray. Sometimes you don't feel like praying, the truth is nobody does. Though you are dragging yourself and complaining, you still make sure you get to work on time. If you can do that for a job with a transient value, for a work that if you die, you are not remembered and instantly replaced. A work without eternal results; how come when it comes to our Christian practices, we give excuses why we cannot carry out what God wants us to carry out?

Battles of life bring some down and can't touch some because foundations differ.

And some of these truths (thank God for the early preachers) may seem legalistic. But some of those supposed legalistic teachings are the reason why some of us are still standing. Compared to these modern teachings that seem to accommodate loose living.

The third verse speaks about a time when men won't be able to endure sound doctrines. It seems the followers are as guilty as the leaders in this regard. It is the reason why you want preachers to teach for 20 minutes and leave. Yet, you can be patient to watch five seasons of a tv show in one night and still go to work the next day.

When it comes to teaching the gospel, you want it rushed. Church growth has its problems because the body language of the mix multitude will always want to influence the way we do things.

“For a time is coming when they will not listen to sound doctrine.”

Teachings that come from the instructions of Jesus are doctrine. And the Bible has doctrines: A set of rules, and guidelines by which you should live your life. Not by following letters, but by allowing the Holy Spirit to interpret the letters of the Bible in your spirit.

Don't engage in unreasonable questions like who is the father of God? Who gave birth to God? There are things that are

too wonderful; for your mind to grasp. We all use pieces of technology that we don't fully understand its functionality, but we accept its function, and we are better for it. Our mind can never completely understand God. That you know Him, does not mean you understand Him. His instruction to you is to obey not to understand first, you will be full of disobedience when you always seek to understand divine instructions. You don't have to always understand or figure out things of God before you obey. Just trust and obey; understanding comes later.

Do you have itching ears? When we say itching ears, it is simple! It is the same word as *"tickle"*. If that which tickles your fancy is what you always want to hear, then you have itching ears. You don't like messages that do not speak about success. And if you are talking about success, how successful are you? I have gotten suggestions to teach more on how to succeed in this world. So, I said, "If in this world we have hope, are we not of men most miserable? Besides, everything I teach by the Holy Spirit is for you to do well not only in this world but that which is to come as well." Prosperity, success, marriage, peace are all part of the doctrines of the Bible, but so is also holiness, contentment and the likes.

You can't pick what you want from the word of God. Paul said, "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." The word of God is whole, you can take a path to run with and get into trouble. It is the same thing when you don't want to take medications that will make you better because they are bitter. Growing up, there is this medication my mum gave to us every Sunday—Daraprim. I was not a fan, but it

doesn't matter how I feel. It is either the pill or the rod, and my mum doesn't joke around. I was forced to take it because my mum knew it was good for my health. You need to take the same approach to the doctrines of the Bible, take the sweet and bitter pill of the word of God.

As a child, listen to your parents. Don't be wise in your own eyes. I know times are different, what we counted as training, you count as suffering. I understand, but you can still learn something from them. They did not get to their position overnight, and you can still learn from the people around you. My mum woke me up early, making me work till I could work no more. With my mum, it was not a case of "I am done working". You couldn't tell my mum there was no more chores because she would follow you and discover something you missed. Times I have thought of her to be a witch, to my surprise, she always replied to my thought saying, ***"In your heart, you think I'm a witch, I'm wicked, I have not even started."*** Now, I can see all she did contributed significantly to who I am under God. The first woman I have ever loved; she drove the training in me. So, when I don't forget or miss out on things, it is not because I got it from heaven as a gift, my mum raised the bar for me and made me live up to the standard set. Train and apply yourself, stop deflecting all your lack of training to prayers.

Don't have itching ears. How do you know if you have itching ears? Review the messages you listen to, the books you like, the conference theme that excites you, it will open your eyes. If all you're listening to is one-sided, regardless of the topic,

you have itching ears. You cannot take one and leave the other. You must know everything that makes for life and godliness.

Verse 4 says “and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables”. When you have itching ears, you will ultimately reject the truth. Whatever tickles/excites you does not build but leaves you empty. You can’t afford to always go to places where your spirit is not challenged and your mind stimulated. Most black congregations are full of emotionalism and little word content. Even what they call preaching is nothing but sound bites. A service of two hours, which has one and a half hours of comedy and drama, can’t be consistently good for growth.

When you think you are not growing, you are growing. Growth is not something you see, but what other people will feel. I know people that I met with habits that are not there anymore. That is what growth does.

Don’t let anybody measure you by anything other than the truth. Seek it. Don’t let anything chase you away from the truth, if you deviate, come back again. Because, you must love the truth to be able to practice the truth. You won’t find the truth in your life if you don’t love and commit to the truth. So, love the truth of God’s word. The truth is worth finding. When you find it, it’s worth storing and it’s worth living by.



7

WHAT IS TRUTH?

John 8:28–32 (NLT)

28 So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I am he.[a] I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. 29 And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.” 30 Then many who heard him say these things believed in him. 31 Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. 32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Truth is that which was covered to keep you bound in slavery, but now revealed to you to aid a decision to live better. You can be set free today by the truth.

John 14:6

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

Two descriptions of the truth Jesus gave from the above scripture. The first definition of truth I gave is a verb, truth in action. But here, it became a person. Truth is not just what you know and practice. It is also a person that you must relate with. He was in essence telling them that, “you will never understand my principles and practices if you don’t receive me as an embodiment of truth.” That’s why if your friend’s opinion overrides God’s word, you don’t know God or the truth. Because Jesus’ opinion is the final on every matter. The personality of Jesus must be behind every truth revealed to man.

Truth is always dependable. You can depend on the word of God at any point, even when you don’t see results, or it is not making sense. If it is truth, its availability must be constant. That is why the Bible says, ***“When the Holy Spirit comes, He is going teach, explain to you and take of Him to reveal to you always.”*** Truth has a tangible substance to it which is why it can make you free. John said, ***“That which you have heard, seen, and handle.”*** The three dimensionality of the word is the proof of the tangibility of the word. That tangibility it brings can be

used to defeat issues in your life. Devour the word of God, it must dwell in you richly. Push the boundary, push the word of God into that situation until you see a solution.

Whatever you are building your life upon, if it is not the truth, it is not going to stand. A lot of us enjoy building on lies because it is easier, sweeter, and gives your flesh satisfaction. Take a relationship, for instance, you know your relationship with the person is a waste of time. But you can't bring yourself out of it. When they ask why, you answer that you like the way he/she speaks to you; he is very kind

Truth is not validated by the majority vote. That the whole church is doing it, does not make it true. The majority does not make the truth valid; don't always say it is what everybody is doing. It has put a lot of our younger generation in trouble because they want to keep up with the Jones'.

Conversely, truth is not validated by the minority. Because I have heard people say the big churches are not saying the truth. Some churches are not any better if not worse.

The minority is not a validity of truth. Though there is a provision in the Bible that says, ***"Broad is the way that leads to hell. And narrow is the way that leads to life, and few find it"***. It must be that the minorities are doing it by the word of God. Elijah tried to play the minority card with God, it just didn't fly with the Master. We like the siege mentality, the army of one bravado. We say things like, "I am the only one saying the truth, the only one with integrity". You are not the only one.

No geographical location on earth, no matter how advanced, developed and prosperous can be used as a yardstick for truth.

It is the word of God that controls what we do, not the other way round. You don't use your life to justify the word of God, but you use the word of God to justify your life. You must put your life side by side with the word of God and let it show you things to adjust.

Copying what others are doing though they got it from God will not replace the truth either. It becomes truth only when God sanctions the same thing for you. People's obedience should motivate you to good works, not duplicate them. So, it isn't the truth because it is coming out from Lagos or New York. It is the truth because it is coming from the word of God.

You must honour those ahead of you. But a spiritual father's opinion is not the ultimate instruction on truth. My father in the Lord does not like jeans simply because he sees a lot of bad guys wearing it. That is personal, it does not mean all those who wear jeans are bad.

Personal instructions and decisions are not Bible truths and doctrines. I don't do parties, but I can't say if you do, you will go to hell; that will be an error. There are good and bad party celebrations in the bible. Putting people's personal likes or dislikes because of their position will lead you out of the Holy Spirit into personality. You see people call themselves a miniature of their pastor. Yes, you are going to grow in the image of the shepherd God has placed over you, you need

to understand that. That was why Paul said, ***“Follow me, as I follow Christ.”*** But the goal is not to become like Paul or your pastor but like Christ.

A senior man of God likes a blue shirt with a strap like that of an officer. All the followers started wearing the same thing. Some assumed he had just a single shirt since he wore it every day and then they followed too. People washed blue until it turned into indigo. Then, one of the close ministers went to the house of the man of God for a personal errand. When he opened the wardrobe to get what he was sent, he saw shirts of the same style and colour in his wardrobe. He came out to say that he deceived them, it took years to know he was the foolish one. Because the man of God never said he had only one shirt. That is not what God wants you to copy. Paul said, ***“You know my ways and my manner of life.”*** That is what you should look for in a minister, not his dressing.

How do you pray? That is the right question to ask, not asking about his tailor. The questions you ask when you have access to great men speaks to your level of development.

The Bible is what you should look out for; compare whatever you do to the scripture. Know what the Bible is saying about what you plan to do because you will find it. The reason why you don't get God's revelation from the word or by personal instruction, is that you don't love the truth. Jesus said, ***“I don't cast my pearls before swine.”*** Why do you think He will come and deposit pearly things in your life, knowing you don't value them? You are not ready for it, you should be okay with the

little ones you get. When you come to Christ, you need to understand the truth. That was why I made mention of the principle of “First” and “When.”

The principle of when? Matthew 6: 1–16

Verse 2: It is not “If” but “When” because you must do it.

Verse 5: It is not a case of praying when you like. Problems can force you to develop a prayer life, but developing a prayer life helps you when you have a problem. Because you can’t generate or release power and grace than what you have deposited. Jesus told His disciples saying, “*Can you not tarry with me for only an hour?*”

I am convinced that the deposit of spiritual power for any man’s spirit, should be at least an hour per day not a week. You can break it down into minutes, if you can’t go at a stretch. Consider this, if you want to pray an hour per week, why not try eating once per week. If your body can’t live without food, your spirit can’t live without the word and prayer. And it should be a constant practice. Whenever you eat breakfast, ask yourself, has my spirit eaten breakfast today? Don’t starve your spirit.

It will show when you face a little challenge. Does it shake you? Problems come to a lot of us, whether pastor, bishop, or an apostle, problem comes to each of us. But the depth you build in your spirit is what will sustain you. Begin from now, once you eat, ask yourself if your spirit have eaten. If not, feed

it with the word. You don't have to read the whole bible in one day, commit to two, three, or five chapters a day. You can create time for it: the time you spend in the restroom, or on social media. You need to put down your phone and make use of the paper Bible to avoid distraction.

Ask yourself when last you were not distracted while praying with your phone. You are praying and thinking of a transfer payment, you have broken the concentration of that prayer. The devil is very crazy devil. It is while praying you remember things like that. If you can set alarm for your favourite TV show, you can do same for prayer and Bible reading.

That is what the devil does. Have you noticed when you want to pray that is when important things happen? It is how it works. Important things will always come. Make sure you build prayer into whatever you do.

Don't just teach or learn about prayer without praying. You learn to pray by praying. It is hard to pray because it's a spiritual exercise; your body doesn't want it, and your mind will fight you for it. The devil will do anything to ensure you don't get pray or study the bible; he doesn't joke with these two things. The devil will rather have you go to where nothing is happening to you, than where you will come to the knowledge of the truth.



8

THE PRINCIPLES OF FIRST

Seek Ye First The Kingdom

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

First in this context is a matter of what is important and what you must align your life to. When you come to Christ, He expects that you align your life first to kingdom principles. Find out apostolic teachings and principles, from the writings of Paul and other apostles in the epistles and Acts of the Apostles. Jesus also emphasized them in the gospels as well.

The majority of the Old Testament became fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. He fulfilled the law and left us with the Holy Spirit through grace, that we may receive instruction. Everything written in the Old Testament, like terms of worship, the feast and sacrifices were all fulfilled the moment Jesus died. Yet, there are some of the laws that were carried over and even upgraded. For example, one of the Ten Commandments. *“Thou shall not commit adultery or fornicate,”* were physical acts that Jesus upgraded from acts to thought patterns. In interpreting scriptures, you must understand that the physical feast was fulfilled in Christ as well as most of the laws; some were upgraded, and most became rolled up in the law of love in the New Testament.

Now for things Jesus didn't talk about, then the writing of the apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit stands. For the controversial ones we see Paul say,

1 Corinthians 7:12

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

He made it clear that it is not what the Holy Spirit is commanding, but what he thinks you should do.

I hear people say the Old Testament is gone. I always ask them why pray for the blessings of Abraham and confess the

blessings of Deuteronomy 28 over your life. The Bible is a whole book that can be seen through the lens of Old Testament details and the principles of the New Testament.

For example, when Jesus said in

John 4: 21–24

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He took worship from just a physical location to the life we live to please Him. He was referring to the fact that the first original temple was given by God to man (Moses). God told Moses in

Exodus 25: 40

40 And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount...

When Jesus died, His body, being the temple became what was pulled down, taken away the physical order, then the spiritual order was erected when He rose from the dead and granted all access to the holy of holies, making our spirit become the temple of Jesus.

Whatever physical place we build, as beautiful as it is, is not where Jesus dwells but in your spirit. That is why, you can't use your body anyhow if not, you will destroy the house of God. It is like going to church to dirty the place, the pastor will not agree. How much more your spirit where Jesus dwells? He is only present at church at the time of worship. If the church leaves their building, it can become a bar. There are many old church buildings around the world that have become whore houses. It is not so much about the building itself, but the presence of Jesus that sanctifies the building. For this reason, Jesus called the Pharisees, hypocrites; cleaning the outside at the expense of the inside, the inside is where Jesus lives. You can't afford to look good on the outside and rotten on the inside. You can't shout hallelujah, praise and dance when you have unforgiveness, bitterness and wickedness on your inside; It is dirty and you need to wash it.

And nothing washes you cleaner than the blood of Jesus and His Word. Those are the two spirit-soaps given to us in the Bible. The blood washes, and there is the washing of water by the word as well. Prayers don't wash but empowers you and connects you to the power source. But if you want a clean washing, then apply the word. He sanctifies us by His truth. Seek the kingdom's priorities, first. Find out how God wants

His things done and do it.

2. First Cast Out The Beam In Your Eyes

Matthew 7: 3–5

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

What is important is not correcting your brother but dealing with your issues. You know what is good for everybody except yourself; you are a hypocrite. At times, the fault we see is a reflection of the fault in our lives. A mote in your eyes will always seem as if it is in someone else's eyes. At times, you need to let the word of God help you see clearly. When God wipes your face clean, you will see clearly and realize the fault was never from your spouse, friend, neighbour, colleague but from you. You must deal with hypocrisy first. It is very important and among the “first” things Jesus wants you to look out for.

3. First Be Reconciled To Thy Brother.

Matthew 5:23–24

*23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar,
and there rememberest that thy brother hath
ought against thee;*

*24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go
thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and
then come and offer thy gift.*

This is when you bring a gift to the house of the Lord. It could be physical or the gift of worship. If you are unforgiving, you are only giving in the flesh. It won't attract God's blessing. It is not the man of God that blesses, but God. We are just channels at best and God must still choose to channel through us. It is not the man of God you give to that brings the blessing. It is God that takes your obedience into cognizance and then, releases the blessing.

If you give a tithe of 2 million and you are not living right, even if you bathe in oil or dip yourself in the blood of Jesus, you will not attract divine approval. Your lifestyle is very important to God, you can't work in unforgiveness.

Jesus says, "*Before you give me anything*"; check your forgiveness bank.

Firstly, you must forgive. It is hard. Forgiveness is not for the person but for you, either way, it is what God has commanded. You must forgive, in advance in some instances, you don't have to like it.

Jesus never said you should like it, but you must do it. It amazes me how Christians battle with unforgiveness. You want God to forgive you for everything, yet you cannot forgive. Whatever you do unto the Lord with unforgiveness is unacceptable.

4. First Bind The Strong Man. (Gaining Authority)

Matthew 12:29

29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

Becoming proficient in the battles of life and learning to deal with the Devil is one of the first things you must learn.

Jesus said, ***“If you want to enter a strong man's house, you have to learn to bind the strong man.”*** Dealing with controlling spirit is one thing that is of importance for you and me to be able to continually walk in the victory of Christ. The ministry of deliverance is controversial because of some extremes that come with it. A Christian cannot be possessed of the devil. Yes! The devil cannot stay in your spirit. Because when you got born again, your spirit became the abode of the Holy Spirit. An unbeliever is a different story, an unbeliever's spirit is not alive unto God, even though he is existing.

For a believer, demonic activities are more in the area of our soul. Especially in repeated negative habits that open the door to spirits. That is why the Bible says, ***“Don't break the hedge or***

the serpent will bite.” Even as a Christian, you can be under demonic attack without knowing or you are deceiving yourself. If the demon is not in your spirit, the activities of your soul, disobedience and lifestyles are being induced by demons. Not because God wants it that way, but because you have sinned so much that your resistance is broken, and you have given Satan a foothold. That is why He said you must take care of your spirit. Make sure you don’t open the doors for demons to operate in your life. Because you can be having demonic donations in your life without knowing or you even know and explain it away.

Have you asked yourself how some people forgive easily, they don’t seem to get angry? I don’t know about you, but I have seen Christians in the spate of anger, injure themselves. I’m talking about brethren who left church service, after speaking in tongues, to fight at the car park. The pastor had to move back while praying after one of them used his hands to break the glass. I’m a good student and I observe a lot. You can’t leave God’s presence with such wrath. When he turned back, the look in his eyes made me believe he needed help. They found out later that he came from a fetish background and whenever there is a festival, his mum sends him some leftover items and he eats it. Those are openings for demons to operate, so it is not so much about not being God’s child anymore.

Judas was with the source of anointing. You could imagine someone Jesus mentored and trained. Yet, the Bible said when Jesus gave him the bread, Satan took over his soul (greed took over).

You need to start asking and taking stock of your life; some of your character, attitude, weaknesses and sins. You need to find out if they are being demon assisted. You can't help yourself. You firstly must bind the strong man. You can go for a prayer of deliverance but the beauty of is that Jesus said, "***You can also do it.***" "***These signs shall follow them that believe***" For you to deliver yourself, start by the word. The word delivers. That is why you don't persist in sin in the name of grace. Because it is not so much about God killing you, but the fact that it opens you up for the strong man to have a say in your affair.

Jesus said, "***The prince of the world came, and he found nothing in me.***" He was cleaning house. It is your responsibility to keep your garments white. You must look at things you need to deal with.

The Lord gave me seven statements when I first became a born again: The first is that no matter what I do, I must learn and understand how to live by faith.

The second is that I must know how the Holy Spirit leads. Whether there is money or not it doesn't move me; it's a life I have lived for over 27 years.

The third is that no matter how people deceive me, I should never deceive myself. You see someone progress, and for a week, you lose your peace and joy. It is not ordinary; demons are the ones ministering to you. The Bible says, "***Rejoice with the people that are rejoicing.***" We understand if you feel bad occasionally that God has forgotten you but not perpetually.

We don't emphasize for people to share testimony not because it is wrong. Jesus told the people to share their testimony with the priest. So, if you tell me your testimony, you have fulfilled the Bible. You must wish people well no matter what. We announced someone is getting married, you stopped greeting the person. Beloved, that is not feeling bad that God has not answered you, but demons are ministering to you.

You must learn to gain authority over the devil. You don't give up. The Bible says, "*whom you resist, steadfast in the faith.*" If he pushes you, push back. God gives boundaries, the devil creates barriers. The boundary of God is to keep you within the confines of grace, but the barrier of the devil is to limit your manifestation. David said, "*By my God, I have run through troops and leap over walls*" May barriers on your way be taken away.

If there are barriers that seem impossible, push back the devil. If you feel the barriers are demonic, bind the devil, don't leave it to chance. The western world is experiencing an onslaught of the devil because all demonic activity is being psychologically treated. A child shoots down a whole mall, you say emotional distress, he lost his dad when he was little and his mum is an addict. Is there anyone in the Bible without a dysfunctional family? Even in Africa where abuse is never reported, but if we go by their definition of dysfunctional, we will be shooting everywhere. It is the devil. I know demonic activity when I see one.

I heard a testimony of a man of God that got into a place and

a guy was shooting. The bullet got to the pastor and he said, ***“I arrest that spirit in Jesus’ name”***. The boy skipped him, laughing, then he continued shooting. Learn the ways of the Lord, you don’t know when you will need it. It could be the intercession of your spouse that holds the hand of Satan during the attack, but somebody will not always be there to do it for you.

Christianity is do-it-yourself. You must gain authority, learn to bind the devil. There was a period when the behaviour of my daughter was a concern to my wife. When she told me, I said let’s watch but it became alarming. I said no more, and took it to the Lord in prayer, breaking any wrong influence over her life. It may not be a demonic attack yet, but for a child that has always been good, we know her habit, suddenly, she starts acting up, your response shouldn’t be superficial. Don’t take chances, especially with your children, break any wrong influence over them by binding the strong man.

If the devil knows you don’t pray, your case is gone. He goes to the next generation. The things of God are generational too. The devil learned it from God. The Bible says, ***“A seed shall serve the Lord, it shall be accounted for generations.”*** One action can save your generation many years of sorrow. For some of us, our lives would have been horrible if not for our parents. Some of you, your mum interceded for you, they may not even know God as much as you do now, but one thing they know is how to pray. But the one thing you know is how to eat in fancy restaurants all over the world, but to pray for 5 minutes, you are already complaining it is too long. I remember at the beginning of the church; we usually have an hour of prayer.

We had a first timer, he came by 7:00 am. So when the prayer meeting started after 30 minutes, he went to the restroom hoping at the time he is done, we must have concluded. When he got back, he looked around and was wondering if it was only a prayer service. After service, I had a conversation with him, and he claimed he has been a Christian for almost 12 years and he couldn't pray through for an hour of prayer.

Your spiritual temperature is measured by your activeness in spiritual activities. If you don't love to read the Bible, we know something is wrong. When you are sick and the doctor is diagnosing you, the first thing they check is your appetite. Once that is gone, they know there is a problem. I remember when we first gave birth, we were worried about our child, but the doctor said since he was eating, he will be fine. But if he was not eating, then we should be worried. It is the same thing; if you are not praying and reading the Bible you should be worried, you are spiritually sick. And it is not your job. You are sick because you can be on that job, your mind stayed on the Lord, and you are praying. You can use your break time to pray while eating. Jesus said, "*Pray without ceasing.*" It means you can take every opportunity to pray. You are traveling, you can pray, while on the bus instead of discussing the problem of your nation, pray! Yes, occasionally you can discuss but not all the time. Learn to handle the devil, Jesus said you need it. That was the first thing He did, He was tempted by the tempter, and He handled the devil. That is one of the first thing we all must learn as well.

5. The First and Greatest Commandment

Matthew 22:36–38

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

You must learn to love the Lord. Loving the Lord is not in words but action. When you love someone, we see the love in the activities you do with that person. So, if you love the Lord it will show in your activities with Lord. Activities of prayers, the Bible says, *“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said...”*. The spirit speaks in the place of intimacy with Him. I am yet to see any marriage or even deep friendship without intimacy.

It will show in your fasting, prayers, and studying of the Word, and it will show in how eager you are to obey the Lord; those are the proofs of your love for the Lord.

It is not an emotional love. You can love your spouse that you have seen, that is physical, and God is spiritual. You can't quantify God's love by trying to make it look like the way you are in love with your spouse. You can see your spouse but not the Lord, so it is in the spiritual activities you do that shows your love him. When He speaks to you, obey. That is how

you show your love to God, not just by saying it. God is not a woman that needs your reassurance of love. He says, ***“If you love me keep my commandments.”*** As beautiful as it seems, loving the Lord is better than loving your pastor or spouse, because it will ultimately teach you how to love them.

6. Have The Right Motive

Matthew 23:26

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Renew your mind so that your motive can be pure. God does not judge actions alone; He judges motive as well. As it is written in the Bible, ***“God is the God of all thoughts and with Him actions are weighed.”*** And it starts with, ***“Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable.”*** Renew your mind, read the Bible. It is one thing I will never get tired of saying till I see my Master face to face. There is no shortcut to knowing God, read the Bible, read it!

Sincerely, I never knew I was going to be a pastor, it never factored into my thoughts, it was just my love for God. The physical Bible is forever my favorite, though I love the electronic Bible because it makes searching easier than physical Bible. But back then, before I had money to buy concordance, there was a time I almost read the whole of Psalms to find a bible verse. I like to also read the words of Jesus alone back

then using the red letter edition of the bible that highlights the words of Jesus in red.

Read everything in the Bible, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly so that you can always have an answer when you are confronted with situations that need a word and wisdom. You can fail at mathematics, but don't fail in knowing important things of the Bible.

You can fail math but don't fail in the Bible, read it. You can't read the Bible, yet if you carry a secular gossip magazine your anointing to read comes alive. When you want to mix the Bible with the world, it will not work because the pureness is what makes it work, read it, know it! You should be trying to measure up than not knowing it at all, get it right and get better at it. You can even focus on Bible characters as a thrust of your study.

I was to take offering on campus during fellowship and I quoted from the book of Psalms as opposed to the popular scriptures used during offering. One of my friends, after the service, said I made up the scriptures, so I showed him in the bible. He was surprised that he had never seen it before. I replied to him that it is because you don't read it.

I always suspect any pastor if all your Bible references are the popular scriptures; I always know you are not reading your Bible, or you have stopped reading.

Spiritual truths are slippery, that is why you must always keep

reading. The Bible says, “*Give earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time they slip away from us.*”

Spiritual truths are very slippery. It is the same reason why you go toilet, the food you eat doesn’t stay inside. It digests, and you pass it out. You will forget the word of God unless you keep reading it. Play it in your car and on your phone.

Listen to songs that will let you know the Bible. All the songs Maranatha Singers and Integrity Music left for us contributed to the Word of God in our lives. But some of the gospel singers these days can’t sing with scriptures other than motivational songs.

We need to do better. Read the Bible, you say it’s hard. Yes! Someone told me he doesn’t understand the Bible. I said, “We all don’t understand it, the Holy Spirit knows it, and He will keep teaching us.” I don’t know much about it that is why I keep reading it. Renew your mind and read the word of God.

7. Align With the Body, Attend Service.

John 20:18–19

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews,

came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

You must find a church family. The Bible says, “*God sets the solitaries in families.*” Immediately you get born again, the first thing the Lord gives is a local assembly. You must settle down to be discipled and stop roaming round churches without anchoring down somewhere. Getting born again puts you in the spiritual family: you are part of the body of Christ globally, but a local church puts you in the local gathering of the saints. You must belong to one because God did not design that you live life alone. I know the church has helped and disappointed people; things like that happen not because God is the problem but because the people that practice these things are flawed.

Any Christian practice that has issues is not in the practice itself, but in the fact that the people practicing it are the ones with the flaw. You must be part of God’s family, be part of a place where you and your family can pray because the Lord sets solitaries in families and he expects that we should all fellowship with one another. The Bible says, “*Don’t neglect the gathering of one another.*” Some do and it is not advisable.

These are the first seven things Jesus mentioned in His word to the disciples and I advise you to make alignments in these areas. Read your Bible, seek the kingdom of God first, and learn to forgive. These are fundamentals that will help your Christian practice because people will hurt you, but you must make a choice not to stay offended.



THE CONCLUSION

THERE ARE LOTS OF ERRORS out there, filter what you hear and be careful where you go. These errors are preponderant because some don't know better, they were not thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Their furnishing was for some good works. Others are in error due to laziness; they are not just willing to labour in word and doctrine like the elders of old.

There is another category that are in error just to exploit the ignorance, problem and desperation of innocent souls. Yet the most dangerous of them all are the demonic agents of darkness, sons of belial sent with a satanic mission to plunge the body into error and confusion.

Anywhere you see unquestionable CONTROL, an abusive

subjugation of the will of man in a DOMINEERING enterprise and a flagrant cum subtle MERCHANDISING of the power of God, flee for your life. You are not safe in such environment.

Why do we need to raise the standard?

It's important to God.

It's the future preserver

It brings liberation to God's people

It glorifies Jesus

How do we raise the standard?

John 2:5

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

By doing everything He tells us to do in His word and by the Holy Spirit. We do this through our lifestyle and conduct within the body, by love and evangelism to the word.

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