

THE CRY
FOR A **LOST**
GENERATION

IF ONLY THE YOUTH REALISE
WHAT'S AT STAKE!

Modupe Kumapayi

The Cry for a Lost Generation

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My Reader: _____ (Please insert your name here). It's my prayer that your life will be filled with so much light as you read this book! Thank you for taking a chance on me and what God has chosen to say through me!

Dedication

I dedicate this book to the youths of my generation.

God Says: *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation...”*

– **Exodus 19:5-6a, KJV.**

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I

Revelations

It all started one Sunday. Or maybe I think it did and it actually started way before then, I'm not sure; I'll let you decide when you finish reading this chapter. But one Sunday, as I sat reading my Bible, the book of Exodus, chapter fourteen to be precise, I let out a long sigh of despair! And I'll tell you why. When I was done reading, I began to think about that generation and how God had raised Moses for them.

I also began to think about how that generation experienced God, not just His power, which no one can deny was on full display, but also His Law; meaning they became acquainted with God's word (even though they struggled quite a bit with following it). Soon, it dawned on me that other generations had one or more persons that God would raise up and use; and through them and with them He would do exploits! It's scattered all over the Scripture.

As a matter of fact, once you open your Bible to the contents page, you find that some of the books of the

Bible in both Old and New Testaments are named after individuals God raised and used for their generations (and even future generations). There are even books of the Bible not named after any individuals but authored by certain people God raised and used. Of course there would be many more individuals in the Scripture whose names don't feature in the contents page and who didn't write one or any of the books of the Bible. Yet God raised and used them!

I can't be thinking everyone should be a writer; but I wonder about my generation. Believe it or not I wasn't at my "sighing the sigh of despair" phase yet until I thought I had discovered something in the portion of Scripture I had read that day and I started reading commentaries, trying to see if I wasn't imagining what I had discovered; and there were at least two or three witnesses who had similar thoughts and who could help me establish the truth of the line I was towing. That's when I stumbled on an article from 2008! Here I am in 2025, believe me when I tell you, this person mirrored my exact thought! And it was quite an extensive article. Meanwhile, I was just beginning to scratch the surface! I sat stunned! Stunned puts it lightly; it was then I let out a sigh of despair!

Now don't get me wrong, I was thoroughly furnished with adequate information when I read that article, and was glad about all I had gathered. It saved me the time I would have used for more research, and eliminated my doubts. But I felt uncomfortable still

that although I had been a believer for quite some time now, and had read that passage over and over, I had never dug deep enough to find that kind of water until now! But someone had! Someone had! Seventeen years ago!

“Everything has been done!” I cried out to God, feeling like I might burst if I didn’t empty the contents of my heart right there and then. I continued, “Why does it feel like You’ve raised all the people You’re ever going to raise and use! Do You have plans of allowing us know You even more intimately than other generations? Are You going to display your power like in the past? Has Paul, John and the rest, like this man whose article I read seen all the *rhemas* available to be seen? This is so unfair! My generation has nothing but stories – past exploits of others to read and live through!” That was how I rounded off my little questions/accusations to God.

Even though I was done speaking, I didn’t leave God’s presence in frustration. I sat still a while staring out my window, looking at the birds flying freely in the sky; and soon I heard myself speaking to God again. This time, I wasn’t questioning nor accusing Him; I was pleading! I heard myself saying, “Please raise and use people in my generation. Please, do exploits in my generation. Please, don’t let us be left with stories of the exploits of other generations! Please, give us revelations too! Is there any plan for my generation? Surely there has to be! Is there any

blessing left for my generation? Surely there must be! Oh, please, let it be so! Please, let it be! Bless even us also, O my Father.”

I wailed shamelessly! Soon I simmered down, hope rising in my heart after the pleading I had just done. I consoled myself that surely God has plans for my generation. And soon, desire accompanied the hope I had begun to feel; and once again I heard myself pleading with God. I said to Him, “Whatever it is You’re doing in this generation, I want to be part of it! I don’t want to be on the side-lines. I don’t want to clap only for others and read about their exploits. I can’t be content with front row seats. I want part of the action!” What ensued was a period of silence, because by then, I was exhausted emotionally, I felt like I had felt many emotions in a short period of time.

When I was finally quiet and done, God responded to me and He did so in two ways. First, He reminded me of someone in the Scripture that had cried to his father the way I was crying to Him. Second, He reminded me of some revelations He had shown me in the near past. Let me share at least three of those revelations.

Revelation 1

This was more or less like an out of body experience. I was suddenly transported to a place where there were only youths. Imagine a certain geographical location where there are only youths, with just two

huge and fierce-looking men dressed in black, and in charge of that area. The two men went about collecting things that belonged to these youths. One of the items I saw clearly was their phones. And the youths were more than willing to release their belongings to them. In fact, they seemed not to care at all, but occupied themselves with other activities, as it were, having a “good time”.

I took in the scene in utter disbelief! But I was soon on the run because these men had noticed me and were headed in my direction. I wasn't interested in losing anything, especially my phone – a device I cherish, not only in communicating with others but for writing down ideas and developing my projects. So I ran, looking for where to hide. I soon lost the men, but came to a young lady whom I spoke with, for whatever reasons I can't remember. I asked where her phone was; and she said no one in that area had a phone. They had all submitted it, as they were not allowed to use one. And with that she left and I continued running.

Eventually I found somewhere to hide. No sooner I did so, the two men came, searching where I was, but couldn't find me. They seemed to be communicating with a superior and reporting the situation. They eventually turned away, still searching for me in a different location. How glad I was when that revelation was over! But I wasn't confused about its interpretation; for I had a witness in my spirit. I

could tell for a surety that there are evil spirits/ influences dispossessing youths (most likely nonbelievers) of what was rightfully theirs.

Revelation 2

This revelation too was like an out of body experience. This time I was in a certain church environment. In there was a designated building for the youth to fellowship, and do their thing. I heard their voices from outside, got curious, and went towards the building. A bike belonging to the youth coordinator was parked outside, plastered all over it was his picture.

When I got to the door, I noticed inside the building was pitch-black! How people could fellowship in the dark like that was beyond my comprehension! Yet I felt compelled to go in. It's amazing how, even though it was pitch-black, I could see the things going on in there very clearly. The group gathered there weren't fellowshiping in the scriptural way as to be expected, like "breaking bread", praising God and praying; it seemed they gathered just for gathering sake. No sooner I entered, they all dispersed! When I looked around, I saw their bags left on their seats unclaimed! Who leaves without taking their bags! I wondered. The bags contained different items very specifically labelled.

I soon turned to leave also, but not without my bag. Yes, I had one too, and all its contents proved it was mine! I had to leave because someone called for me, someone not from there, saying it was time to leave; and then I left. Again, when it was over, I knew what it meant! The youths, even those who claimed to be named after the Lord, were distracted and not well informed of what belonged to them. And I tell you, there's nothing worse than losing something you didn't even know you had in the first place. How do you even begin to look for it, and when you find it perhaps, how do you know it's exactly what you lost?

Revelation 3

In this third revelation, I saw myself out taking a stroll. Suddenly, it turned dark and chaotic! Some evil looking beings had been unleashed and young people specifically were their target! The youth started running helter-skelter, including me! I don't know why; I simply ran for dear life. Funny enough, I noticed someone struggling; so I held unto her and ran with her. Soon, she wriggled free of my hand and was gone while I continued running.

I saw the most despicable things as I ran; one of which was a creature hid under the covers of darkness, naked, but was visibly male. Where he was, a male youth went to him and tried to be intimate with him. I quickly looked away. It reminded me of

the few times I had seen similar scenes, of a female with another female, and another of a male and females engaged in the immoral act in the view of everyone! Oh, how I ran!

I ran until I got to a place where there was less chaos, and had no real reason to continue to run. I looked at myself. I was beautifully clothed. I saw that I wasn't the only one; there were others like myself who were dressed in the same manner, but there were others who weren't; and those made it their job to mock those of us who were dressed alike. While the mocking and jeering went on, my phone suddenly began to ring. I picked the call and heard a voice telling me to continue to reach (deep) for myself. I did, and other information was passed to me. Then the revelation ended.

When it was over, again, I knew what this meant too: the world is chaotic and under attack; even more, it is so unkind to those who have identified with Christ. We are the enemies of the world and are facing persecution of different kinds; but God keeps encouraging us to continue to dig deep, discovering our true identity and all that pertains to it while ignoring external pressures and distractions.

Earlier I had mentioned that before God reminded me of the revelation, He had reminded me of someone who from the Scriptures had cried to his father the way I was crying to Him on behalf of my

generation. That person's identity I will now reveal, that is if you haven't guessed it already. It was Esau. But I saw him as a type of the youth today. Yes, this is the Esau generation, a generation dispossessed, knowingly and unknowingly; a generation unaware of its true spiritual state and loss. Yet, it is a generation that can be redeemed and experience total restoration; even be raised and used for exploits if only we desire to walk in the light God will in His mercy beam on us!

2

Settling for less

“How come I picked this Scripture?” I grumbled to myself, “I won’t keep it. I’m going to take it to the Pastor and demand a new one!” I said to myself. And it was exactly what I did. When I was before the Pastor, I gave him strong reasons why what I picked was less than a blessing; it wasn’t the original blessing, and I informed him I was going to pick another one. I wasn’t settling for less. He said nothing, but I think he smiled a little. Maybe God was saying something to him or showing him something, I don’t know. But he didn’t stop me. Well, it took me some years after to realize God was definitely saying something to me.

I’m not sure if it was usual practice in that church; but back then there was a prayer and fasting programme that lasted several days; and on the days we gathered in the church to pray, we were allowed to pick at least one Scripture verse that had been prepared and kept aside. The events I described in the preceding paragraph were the events of the first day of the programme. I have never shared this story with anyone. The first Scripture I picked was Genesis

27:40, and the second one I picked to replace it that very day was surprisingly Genesis 27:28. What are the odds? There were many Scripture verses folded up, how could I have picked that one from the same chapter? God was definitely involved and trying to get a message across to me. But what was it?

Genesis 27:40 reads, *“And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother, and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.”*

Genesis 27:28 reads, *“Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.”*

I was comforted by the change of Scripture verse because now I felt like I had the original blessing; but even though months turned into years, as you can see, since I’m still referring to the incident, I never forgot. It was etched in my memory; and because of that, I’ve always had to think about it. And thankfully I did eventually figure out what God was saying to me.

You see, three times in my life God had sent me stern warnings; and the second is this one Scripture incident I just shared with you. At the time when I picked this Scripture, I was fresh out of the national youth service (NYSC), and volunteering at a non-governmental and non-profit; and I was a new or rather baby Christian. Yes, baby Christian, for even

though I had been born and raised by a Christian mother and had always been in the church and involved in Christian activities, I hadn't accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord over my life. I wasn't truly Christ-like neither did I have a daily intimate relationship with God until then. With those Scriptures I shared, I believe God was drawing my attention to the person of Esau, and his life choices and how I would be headed towards a life that was less than God's best if I wasn't careful about the choices I would make. However, if I made the right choices as led, then I could avoid Esau's fate.

Scary, huh? Well, maybe not for you, but it was for me; and I tell you, you should take it serious too. I'd share with you some of the things I learnt about the choices of Esau. I hope it would be a tremendous blessing to you as it is to me. Even though many like to read Esau's story from the trade-off, I like to start from the very beginning when Rebekah his mother went to the Lord to enquire of Him about the children in her womb. This is what the Lord said to her in Genesis 25:23.

"Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."

Now I know at this time no one but the Lord knew who the elder and younger would be. Let's keep reading.

“And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and his name was called Jacob”
Genesis 25:24-26a.

Permit me, but I’ll now share with us the Scripture verses for the trade-off. Verses 29-34, and then we can dissect it together.

“And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Now that we’ve read all these Scripture verses, let’s look at Esau’s first choice.

Carefree Living

You see, the reason I started Esau's story from the time he and his twin were in the womb and their mother had gone to enquire of the Lord, was to establish the God factor in their family. Their father Isaac knew God (See verses 20-21), their mother Rebekah had enquired of the Lord, both boys must have grown up hearing their father talk about God and seeing him worship Him, offering sacrifices to Him, living a life of obedience to Him. The same way both boys must have heard the story of their birth; how Jacob whose name meant one who takes by the heel or supplants/deceives, had grabbed his brother's heel. So, Esau, without excuse, was aware of the presence of God who represented all things good, and the presence of something else that wasn't good, that was competitive, something looming over him; and his brother holding on to his heel and even being named supplanter/deceiver was symbolic, for he would eventually dispossess him of his birthright and blessing. But Esau chose to live a carefree life.

Carefree living isn't completely a bad thing, if the goal is to have a life free of worries; even Christians are advised by Jesus Himself to live a worry-free life, and instead entrust themselves to God. But carefree living can be a bad thing if it means you refuse to be aware of what's happening around you in order to make informed decisions. It is this carefree living

many youths of my time have adopted; and is the reason why they do not want to acknowledge God, because to do so means to admit that evil also exists, and that there's such a thing as righteous living that's required, and sinful living that is forbidden by God. So, instead of bothering with all that, despite the increase of information all around us, they choose to live like there's no God. Their rational is, if there's no God, there's no evil, right? Well, just because you choose to act like God doesn't exist, and evil doesn't exist, doesn't make it true. Esau learnt the hard way! I hope you won't have to.

Esau chose to live life without a care. Not one time was it recorded that he acknowledged God. Or, well, he did have a care; he cared about hunting so much, and invested time in it until he became very skilled at it. He also cared about his stomach. So it's safe to say those who adopt the carefree living do care about certain things, just not the things that are most important. They have hobbies, careers they love, and even things they just can't do without. They just can't care about the things that have serious weight/value; for instance, God, spiritual riches etc.

Esau's carefree living contributed greatly to the event that he is widely known for, the trade-off, or like I like to put it, the dispossession of Esau. Because of Esau's lifestyle, he didn't acknowledge God; and for this, the privileges and blessings that were supposed to be his, traditionally, and by God's backing, he

denigrated, and didn't really place any value. And you know when you don't place value on a thing you handle it carelessly; worse still, as in Esau's case, you trade it off for something you think is more valuable, even though in the real sense it's not. Unfortunately for Esau, he soon discovered that not only does evil exist, he was dispossessed of the good thing he didn't place value on.

Now let's talk about the trade-off; or rather, like I like to call it, the (spiritual) dispossession of Esau. It was pretty easy, if you ask me, for Esau was an easy prey. Like we've established, he was carefree and didn't consider important or place any value on anything spiritual and of eternal value, unlike his opponent. Scriptures reveal that that day was an opportune time for his opponent – Esau was desperate; he claimed he was at the point of death. Esau had gone out to hunt and returned empty-handed. When he returned, he went in and spent a while with the supplanter/deceiver. As it is with those who live a carefree life, the company they are supposed to refrain from is the company they seek out; and it is in this company errors, life-changing, destiny-impacting, generation-altering errors are made. It is in such company that people become less, that people settle for less than God's best for them.

Carefree Esau, empty-handed physically but loaded spiritually, is drawn by the sweet aroma of the pottage being cooked by the supplanter/deceiver, and

decides to beg for some, since he did care about his stomach. Immediately he expresses his desire, he is presented with a proposal. His stomach will get filled but his spiritual privileges and blessings which, in the near future, will manifest physically would be gone! And yes, carefree Esau reasons that it was fair bargain; after all, the present is all that matters, why worry (or be concerned) about the future or a future generation to come? Esau thereby seals the trade-off with an oath – declaring to those of the seen and unseen world that he had settled for less. And the rest, they say, is history. Only the Scriptures record that *“he despised his birthright!”*

A better way to understand the word ‘despise’ as used in this context is that Esau believed that his birthright was worthless, even though everyone else but him knew it wasn’t. Being the last one to understand a joke can be annoying. But imagine being the last one to discover that what you gave away willingly is something that’s worth a whole lot more than you can imagine, not just for yourself, but for your generation and those to come after you.

Jacob the supplanter/the deceiver wasn’t the devil, even though I know for sure he wasn’t under the influence of God when he did what he did to his twin brother. However, today, the devil is still out on the prowl, working through people and situations just like he worked through a serpent in the Garden in the very beginning of humanity, in an event widely

known as the fall of man (See Genesis 3). In this instance, the devil worked through Jacob in the events we just read about; and his very easy preys are still those who live the carefree life, refusing to acknowledge God, refusing to embrace Him and His ways, and refusing to place value on the things which are spiritual and eternal; choosing instead to live life on their terms.

God exists. It's as simple as that. God existed before creation. He is Creator. You and I were formed by Him, created in His image, after His likeness, and became living souls because He breathed into our nostrils the breath of life. To live a life without God is settling for less. He created you and I for many purposes, all linked with Him. For instance, as is revealed in Genesis 1, 2 and 3, God created us to replenish the earth, for dominion, with several abilities and spiritual blessings; but perhaps more importantly, for us to have fellowship with Him, to have a relationship with Him – a beautiful design. It's a beautiful desire to seek relationship with God. This is the relationship that almost permanently got truncated when Eve and Adam sinned. The consequences of their disobedience are still prevalent on earth today, and we would have continued to suffer had Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord not stepped in to rescue the soul of the penitent and repentant.

Thank God, His plan to restore us to Himself worked through Christ (John 3:16). Anyone seeking to

access the benefits of this plan, must believe that God exists, and acknowledge that there is such a thing as sin, and that since we've been away from God and lived life on our terms, we have sinned; as such, we are sinners in need of a saviour, right?

Now that that's sorted, we must be willing to confess and repent of our sins, confess Jesus as Saviour because He did die for us to have a clean slate and be reconciled with God (Romans 10:10). Next up is turning away completely from the lifestyle we used to live (Romans 12:2) and being open to learning and following through by practicing the new life Jesus introduces us to, all of which we can find in the Scriptures from His teachings and that of His apostles, including Paul, also known as Saul of Tarsus.

It is important that the journey of recovery and restoration begins here from acknowledging God, forsaking the world to become God's child; because, it's only in Him we discover things about ourselves; not just the general purpose why we were created and the abilities we have been endowed with, but more specifically, like God revealed to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5) and Jesus revealed to some of the disciples (Matthew 4:19), the role/part we get to play in the grand scheme of things here on earth before we enter eternity with God. It is a script written specifically for our lives, something we can't afford to leave undone, as it will affect, not just our lives, but our generation and those to come after us. Yet in order to discover

our purpose in life, we must be willing to invest in our relationship with God. The prospects are good; but there's something that precedes that eternal destiny, and sustains it: our daily walk with God.

Let's take into consideration something Jesus said in Matthew 23. I might be going ahead of myself by saying this here and now, and not later on in the book like I planned; but I did decide to write as led, so, why not now? Some things are just better learnt earlier, rather than later. Let me quote verses 16 through 21.

“Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.”

I admit it is a lot to take in; and in the original context Jesus is talking about swearing/taking oaths. Yet, if you take a closer look you'd see that there's

something more to glean. And I didn't discover it by chance. It came as an answer to the question I was asking the Lord at a time. What was I asking the Lord? I wanted to know if it was okay for me to join the service unit of the church I attended at that time, and accept all the added responsibilities that the church leadership was interested in delegating to me, that would be additions to the other things I was doing outside the church for the kingdom. I know you're probably thinking the answer should be yes, right? I used to say yes outright too, until I learnt the hard way.

I have always been a worker in church right from when I was a little girl, even at a time I wasn't born again, and after I gave my life to Christ. I served. And while there's nothing wrong with serving and being active in your local church, there's a problem when you don't do it right. You see, I overdid it. What I mean is, I did too much too soon. It took all my attention and energy, and the praise and admiration of men was all I was left with in the end. Privately, I suffered. I mean my relationship with God suffered. And it continued like that until I finally saw the light and had to retrace my steps. Now, about this time that I speak of, I was in a new city and a new church, and as is the usual practice with most churches, not long after you become regular, you're approached to join a service unit. I didn't want to disappoint the church leadership so I really wanted to say yes; but I knew it was wiser to speak to the Lord first, seeing that I was the type to get carried away and neglect my personal

relationship with God. And that's what I did. I told them to give me time and let me speak to God about it. It was that hot Sunday afternoon in my room at home that that Scripture dropped in my spirit.

In that Scripture, Jesus reveals that the religious leaders considered the Temple to be of less importance, same thing with the altar where gifts were placed. Jesus' argument is that the Temple was just as important, even more so because it made the gold holy. It also carried the presence of God. Same way, the altar couldn't be of less importance, because it had the capacity to make the gift holy too. Apparently the religious leaders had misplaced priorities; same way I had misplaced priorities. And many new converts also misplace priorities.

That day, as I read that portion of Scripture over and over, all the talks of Temple and Altar got me thinking of another temple and another altar. I'm talking about me. My body is a temple (of the Holy Spirit). I am God's building (1 Corinthians 6:19; 3:9). And the other altar is my personal worship, prayer and study altar, my covenant time that I spend with God daily that I dare not neglect. I suppose what you're about to read next is not popular opinion, but I'd take the risk and share it anyway. I knew that day that God was drawing my attention to something many people don't prioritize, their personal relationship with God, their daily walk with God, intimacy with God.

Believe it or not, before God uses you – i.e., see you serving, He'll like to have a personal relationship with you, a sustainable relationship. Jesus' actions with the disciples who later turned apostles prove this. Before He sent them out the first time, they had first spent a considerable amount of time with Him, learning of Him and unlearning the ways of the world. By the time He eventually gave them the great commission and ascended into heaven, they already had a strong bond with Him. They knew how to study and consider His words; they were in communion with Him through prayer even when He wasn't physically present. God is a God of order; first things first. In fact, something He said to Martha proves this also. Let's read all about it in Luke 10:38-42.

“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Jesus said one thing is needful, and what is it? You're right if you said sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing His word. You're even more correct if you said, obeying and doing His word daily, and prioritizing this first and foremost as a new convert. Jesus' words were directed to Martha alone, not only because she was the one with unmet expectations of her sister, but because she was the only one in the entire house who seemed to be confused about what should take first place and first priority. Mary knew it. The disciples who were there with Jesus knew it too. Let's hope after what Jesus said to her, she sat still for a while and afterwards prepared a simpler dinner for Jesus and the disciples, one that afforded her time to continue to enjoy Jesus' presence instead of taking her away from Him.

Now, there's one more thing I'll add just as we round off this chapter. Again, it's something Jesus said in John 15:5.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Whatever your desire is, whether it's to produce the fruit of the Spirit and to do endless exploits for the kingdom, both are important and should be the priority of every true Christian. It all begins with abiding in Jesus and continuing to do so. It's like the fuel that keeps one going. Without it, the car, (I mean

your Christian life) is bound to stop before it gets a chance to arrive. Too many people get lost midway like that. You and I don't have to add to the number.

3

If the foundations be destroyed

In the second chapter we had explored Esau's carefree living which led to him being dispossessed spiritually of his privileges and blessings; and if you would reflect on the first revelation I shared in Chapter 1, you'll see how it links up and addresses a group of people, non-believers, including those who claim to be Christians but know they are mere actors and impostors. I hope those chapters ministered to you. It's time to quit the act and start to live right. Speaking of actors, Esau became one too! I'll explain what I mean.

An actor is a performer, but I prefer to explain 'actor' as a pretender. Why? It's because what actors do is pretend to be what they are not. They pretend to be someone they are not, and claim to have what they don't. And they do it so well they are often able to convince their audiences that what they portray is the truth. You see, if the actor is really good at their job, you'll buy everything

they say and do; they'll fool you completely. The only person who will know the truth is the actor themselves. Not all of the time, though; sometimes they play the role so well they forget it's just an act.

Esau was an actor because, after the events of Genesis 25:29-34 which only he and his twin brother knew about, plus God of course and all the members of the unseen world, he went on living and acting like he was the real deal; and as if he had everyone else fooled, including his father Isaac. Let's read from Genesis 27:1-4;

“And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.”

Isaac, unaware of what had transpired between Esau and his twin, Jacob, believed his first born son Esau was who he thought he was; he sure acted like it. So, when Isaac believed he was going to die sometimes soon, he called Esau and gave him instructions that when obeyed would make him a recipient of a

prophetic blessing. And Esau, despite knowing his true spiritual state and that he wasn't eligible anymore, not even by birth order, went on to follow his father's instruction instead of opening up to him; he must have hoped he could fake it till he made away with the blessing. The story didn't end as he wanted, but in tears. The writer of Hebrews (12:16-17) actually describes him as "profane," who later realized his loss, but it was too late. Yes, he wept bitterly to try reclaim his birthright privileges, but the deed was done, and the bus had moved. That brings us to Esau's second choice.

Building on a Non-Existing Foundation

I may not know everything there is about building a house from scratch, even though watching building shows is one of my favourite pastimes, and obsessing over new building projects in the estate where I live is also another favourite pastime; however, one thing I do know is that every house must have a foundation, as an integral part of the construction of the house.

I have used 'integral' to mean necessary, and 'fundamental' to mean essential. You get my drift? Now, if this were common knowledge, this information couldn't have been news to Esau. As we

now know, he carried on attempting to build a house without a foundation. The blessing was for a specific individual, that person wasn't him anymore. Many Bible scholars even believe it wasn't for him to even begin with; that's another story for another day. Well, back to my original thought line, Esau was acting a part, pretending to be what he wasn't and attempting to lay claim to what couldn't even be his anymore. This is the plight of many youths in my generation, especially those who claim to be Christians. You see them busy for the Kingdom, but busy doing what? Many are busy about nothing God approves, but pretending to be busy all the same.

Consider this scenario 1: “Wow! That youth leader sure is something!” I said to myself. “He is busy with so many kingdom projects! Who can blame him; he is using the influence God has given him very well! Kudos to him! God must be proud of him! May I be useful like him.” I was talking about a popular and soon to be even more popular youth leader in a church community. After considering and admiring him, I began to hope God would raise more people like him all over the world. Beloved, God was paying attention to all I was saying and thinking, and when He was ready to respond to me, He revealed to me this young man was nothing but an actor. He had a side to him he reveals to everybody; but there was another side only he, his partner and God knew. In private, this young man wasn't truly converted to the Lord's side and was neck deep in different forms of

immorality: homosexuality, pornography,
masturbation and all forms of lewdness!

When the revelation was over, I was stunned. Of course I do not share this information so we can point fingers and begin to search out who is real or fake, but to help us pay more attention to ourselves and our true spiritual state; because, you can fool others but you can't truly fool yourself, or God, or even the devil. Now this young man was not only in darkness but as a youth leader, he was leading others blindly. Sure he looked like he was building, but on what foundation?

Scenario 2: "Please, I like it when Sister so-so-and-so leads prayer! She does it so well. It's always so electrifying! I always feel goose bumps all over! It's as if the fire of the Lord will always drop! She's loaded!" I said these words to another member of a prayer group I once belonged. She too agreed that the sister I mentioned was on fire for the Lord. If you've guessed what I want to write next, well, you won't be wrong if you said, the sister referred was acting too. Yes, she was. When the Lord was ready to reveal it to me, I saw her in a revelation, listening to the message of a certain minister and rehearsing it. In fact, she copied the minister down to the tongues the person would speak!

After the revelation, I started paying extra attention, and realized there were other youths with the same

specific tongues. Wow! They really were copying someone else. Yes, Sister so-so-and-so was building a reputation for herself as a fire brand prayer minister, but by copying someone else. What kind of foundation is that? Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with admiring someone else and even being inspired by them; but trying to become those you admire is what's wrong. What happened to you being you? God made us unique beings for a reason, you know?

Here's another minister for Scenario 3: "Once I receive the mic, you three from the choir, and Brother so-and-so, please be at alert. When I sing, you back me up, and when I pray, I want the whole place to erupt! Start to pray loud in tongues! And keyboardist and drummer, don't forget your cue too! It must be electrifying."

I presume this was all the minister told his collaborators. I'm talking about a certain youth that led a prayer session in a church. From where I stood, everything looked like a perfect stage performance, like I was at a theatre, a well-rehearsed performance. Yet it failed to deliver a sound spiritual result. Perhaps it didn't fail at all if the desired result was to create an illusion of something that's real. And still it failed if the desired result was to bring down the presence of God and give us an "upper room" experience. For that sort of result, the foundation wouldn't be a well-rehearsed performance; that type is way more costly

to attain, spiritually speaking! And those who are truly paying the price for the Upper Room experience know it.

Back to Esau. He obeys his father's instruction; then what next? Let's read verses 30-35.

“And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.”

When Esau returned, he learnt the hard truth. The house, his house (his name, dynasty, legacy etc) that he was attempting to build couldn't exist despite his effort because there was no foundation. That same

rude awakening awaits the youths of my generation, if we don't take the mask off, turn the lights on and walk in that light!

One thing we must take seriously is what Isaac said to his son Esau towards the end of the portion of Scripture I quoted. He said, "*Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.*" Let's consider the word "subtilty," a synonym for it would be slyness or cleverness. These are all fanciful words in our day, mind you. If I were to interpret Isaac's words in my own words, I'd say, your brother (Jacob, the supplanter, the deceiver, your adversary whom you've always underrated) is a fantastic actor! Very skilful! You're no match for him! He pretended so well, he had me fooled and carted off your blessings!" Have you understood yet what I'm trying to say? I'm saying that pretence cannot, and must not be part of the lifestyle choices of a true child of God. We see that, even though in old age Isaac's eyes were dim and could not see, and he was fooled to give the blessing to the "wrong" person, God who is the Ancient of Days sees perfectly! In fact His sight/vision is so fantastic that He can see through us! So He can't be fooled! And no matter how well or terribly we act, we won't get a blessing from Him, and our generation won't be blessed too. In fact, I put it to you that all we will be left with in the end will be tears, tears of regret, until we repent and become honest.

The title of this chapter is If the Foundations Be Destroyed. It's culled from a very popular Scripture many Christians are familiar with: Psalm 11:3, a Psalm of David, and a personal favourite. The whole verse says,

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

This verse is a question seemingly left unanswered but isn't. For the answers can be found even in the same Psalm, beginning with the first verse, which I love to quote. It says, *"In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?"*

As always, David was going through something. That something was probably sponsored by Saul, his predecessor and first king of Israel. And it seemed that his first response was to entrust himself to the Lord. This was a fantastic foundation he had built, a Rock, a solid Foundation. But there was a temptation for him to substitute that foundation for something else that seemed more reliable when in actual fact would be shaky and less reliable. It was his response to this tempter's voice, whether it came as a friend's suggestion, popular opinion, or stray thought that crossed his mind that's recorded in verse 1. There's more but I'll stop there for the sake of the point I'm trying to make, and so as not to digress too much.

Now imagine if David had chosen another foundation other than the Lord; what do you think his fate would be? Please think deeply about it.

You see, the verse that follows verse 3, which we've already quoted is verse 4. And there David continues to talk about the Lord, In fact, he goes on and on until verse 7, the final verse of the chapter, proving that his focus and entire attention was on the Lord, not on himself, whatever might seem pleasing to him; not on others, whatever might seem pleasing to them, and definitely not on his adversaries, whatever might scare them or prove a point to them. He just focuses on God.

Beloved, we all know how David fared in the face of the challenges in his life. Would you even assume that he was ever defeated? Yes, he suffered one or two defeats but he was never truly defeated, David was a champion who raised champions; he did so much exploits on and off the battlefield. Yet, my favourite in all his exploits was that he had a relationship with the Lord God. His real existence, his firm foundation was the Lord, and nothing else.

I asked if the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Well, read those words again. It's the righteous that can actually do something to fix the foundation; I mean those in right standing with God. Are you in right standing with God? Or, perhaps, I should put it this way: do you want to be

in right standing with God? If your answer is yes, then let's revisit the three scenarios I shared earlier in this chapter and consider what these youths could have done differently.

The first Scenario: The Youth Leader with Secret Sins. To this youth leader with the secret sins, I'd like to start by sharing a portion of Scripture; it's something Jesus said, as is recorded in Matthew 7:21-23,

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Jesus clearly states that even though you outwardly confess Him as Lord in the hearing of people, and even though you seem to be busy for the Kingdom, when He considers your matter, it would be discovered whether or not He is truly Lord over your life and whether or not you spent your lifetime doing what God had willed for your life. If it turns out that you were a fraud, Jesus wouldn't count you as one of His own; you won't be called Christian any longer but your rightful title or label would be *worker of*

iniquity, and you will also get the punishment that such people deserve. Now there's no excuse for ignorance. Here are the right steps to take;

Get Off the Stage! It sounds extreme, but it's the first step to reclaiming your soul from the devil who is misleading you and causing you to mislead others. Don't consider your "service" more important than your soul. What would it profit you to gain the attention, admiration and applause of the world and lose your soul? Get off the stage and create time for the Lord. Continuing on the stage, and being busy, even if you claim it's for the Kingdom, is you declaring that you place no value on your soul and eternal fate.

Take the Mask Off! You've pretended for far too long. It's time for the mask to rest, and for you to be honest with yourself and God. He knows the truth about you; but I'm sure He will like to hear it all from your mouth. Why do you think He asked Adam and Cain the questions He confronted them with? He knew the truth, where Adam and his wife, Eve, were hiding in Eden, and the fact that Cain had killed Abel his brother. He was just giving them a chance to come clean. So tell Him everything; confess your sins, open up about your weaknesses/struggles and make up your mind to receive all the help He can and will give you so you can overcome them completely.

Make Him Lord. Yes, make Jesus Lord over your life and come under new management. Let Him become your Teacher, Discipler. Confess Him with your mouth to His hearing, and perhaps more importantly, let it begin to show in your day-to-day life decisions that He is the one calling the shots and not you (your flesh), or the devil or the people anymore.

Prioritize Your Relationship with Him. Don't rush off back to the stage after you've recently gotten off it, repented and made Christ Lord over your life. More than you doing exploits, God's will is that your soul be saved. So stay still a little while longer. Let Him instruct you in His ways, guide you in what is right and teach you His ways. He will prepare you and prepare a stage; and when the time is right, He will lead the prepared you to a prepared stage.

Continue to Practice Honesty. Remember, without honesty there can't be true intimacy; and without intimacy can there even be a relationship? Beginning with your relationship with God and letting it set the tone for your other relationships, you must practice honesty; and it can't be a one-time thing. It must be an every-time thing. Be honest. Don't try to be froward when dealing with God; it won't end well. So sow seeds of honesty in your relationship with God and others; and you will reap a good harvest in the long run.

Now all that I've written are ways of building a good/right foundation for those who want to do things differently. But if you're yet to decide, then I leave you with this verse of Scripture from Proverb 28:13.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

The Second Scenario: The Copycat Prayer Warrior. To the copycat prayer warrior, I also have a portion of Scripture to share. It's Proverb 4:18.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

This is one popular Scripture amongst Christians; we quote it a lot, with different interpretations too. However, two things are obvious from the verse: there's a path of the just – let's take the word 'just' to mean Christians, and that path is likened to a shining light that just keeps getting clearer and clearer; that is, shining from one level to another level; it's progressive. Yes, that's the word I'd like to bring to your attention: 'Progressive'. For something to be considered progressive, it must first have a starting point; then it begins to happen or develop gradually in stages, so much so that when it does eventually end, the difference between when it started and when

it ends is significantly noticeable, so it becomes clear there has been some progress.

Now a path is a course or direction, a course of action or conduct, as we have established, for the believer; it must, or rather, ought to be progressive. Now think carefully about what you are about to read next. If God has a sheet where He records and monitors the progress of each Christian, not like He needs to write anything down, since He can't forget, but let's assume He writes things down, when He checks your file and wants to see some progress, do you know that with your copying ways, no progress will be recorded? Yes, because where will be your starting point? So here's my candid advice:

Be yourself. What I mean is this: embrace the level you're in and don't try to promote yourself. All you'd be doing is fooling yourself and others, not God. You wouldn't even be fooling the devil either. It's okay if your true spiritual state is that you're a baby Christian. So far you keep on drinking the sincere milk of God's word and keep walking with the Lord daily, you'd soon start to eat meat and chew strong bones. It's okay if you can't even speak in tongues yet. True, it marks a mature believer; but speaking in tongues is not the only expression of the Spirit of God in you. You need to concentrate on producing the fruit of the Spirit; then, when you desire and pray for the Pentecost experience, the Holy Spirit's baptism, and you are baptised, you will then speak in

tongues; that, among other gifts God will release into your life according to His perfect will. And it's okay if you can't even pray "hot" prayers yet; there is absolutely nothing wrong with praying simple, sincere prayers. Jesus did it and even commended those who did so in the Scriptures. What I'm saying is, start from somewhere. Let your progress be evident. In the end God will promote you by Himself.

There's one more danger to copying others, something I mentioned briefly, and I'd like to reiterate. It is that you lose your uniqueness. It is my personal belief that we are all the way we are for a reason and we all have something unique to offer. Take for instance the writers in the Scripture, a personal favourite being the writers of the Gospels. I've used this example before in one of my books titled *God's Love Letter To You*, and I'd use it again here. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all four of them had different writing styles; and with all four accounts, it's like we get four different perspectives, and you'd even sometimes see that all four seem to address what one omits, or shed light on what one touches lightly/in summary, right? Imagine if all four were copycats? They would lose their unique edges! So yes, be inspired by others, be motivated by them if you will, but try to reach deep down for yourself. Pay the price that needs to be paid. The price of consistently investing in your relationship with God daily, which translates into your spiritual growth; and you'd see yourself becoming who God said you'd

become, and doing all He planned that you'd do. It will for sure be beyond your expectations!

However if you insist on copying still, here's a portion of Scripture for you to chew on; it's John 15:1-2.

*"I am the **true** vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."*

Wouldn't you rather bear fruit, even more fruit, than to be spiritually and physically unfruitful, and eventually be "taken away"? Think about it and choose to build on the foundation of truth and consistency.

The third Scenario: The Young Christian Performer. To the young Christian performer, I also will share a portion of Scripture; it's something Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with

enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Who doesn't know who Apostle Paul was in the Christian faith? If you don't know, well, I'd read his resume to you briefly. He was a former Pharisee-turned follower of Christ and Apostle. He preached, taught and travelled far and wide with the gospel of Christ. He led many to Christ, was a church planter as well as a major contributor to what we call the writings of the New Testament. Some of his major teachings include expositions on Grace, Love, Christian ethics and conducts etc. Through Paul God also performed miracles. This is but a brief mention of Paul's exploits.

I said all that not to glorify Paul in anyway, since it was God who worked through him; but so I could say the words you'd read next. It is this same Paul who writes the words in the Scripture portion I shared. In case you missed it, he said to the Christians in Corinth that he was no poser! When he came to them, he did so without trying to impress them. He didn't even try to cover his weaknesses, all of which were pretty obvious to all who he interacted with. He reiterates that his speech and preaching style were not designed to be attractive or enticing. If they were anything powerful, then they were because God chose to demonstrate to them His Spirit which

rested on Paul, and His power which He had endowed Paul with. All of this because Paul and God were in agreement that the faith of the people needed to be built on the right foundation. Paul did his part and God did His. Do you get it?

So in case you're thinking it, yes, Paul wasn't a performer, a pretender, a poser. And because he was willing to be "weak" in the sight of God and the people, God displayed strength through him. This weakness is considered as humility before God, and like we know, there's a grace that God gives to those who are humble; He resists the proud. If Paul could humble himself, why won't you? A well-rehearsed performance with the performers all ready to act on cue will only give an illusion of the real thing. God will not reward such a show with His Spirit and power. Only the real deals get the real deal!

Now here's my advice, if the advice isn't already obvious: Don't continue building on that foundation like you've been doing. Such a foundation cannot endure let alone support a building. Tear it down and start again. How do you start again?

Walk humbly before God. I know you desire to be used in a mighty way, but start by walking humbly before God. Perhaps an incident from the life of David will explain what I mean by walking humbly before God. Let's read it. It's recorded in 1 Samuel 17:32-40.

“And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.”

One of the major exploits of David's life was his defeat of Goliath. It's a very popular scriptural event. But something we can't overlook is how David almost lost the battle before it even began. Yes, because even though David was chosen for this victory, and even though he entrusted himself to God and was confident in how He had used him in private and what He could do even in public, Saul was going to give to him the wrong gear and weapon for warfare, and thereby unwittingly disqualify him for victory! Thank God David rejected Saul's offer! As it turned out, the man God wanted to use to defeat Goliath was not a soldier, or a local champion with many supporters; he wasn't even a king who is experienced in the art of warfare, but a simple, unknown shepherd boy with just a stone and a sling.

Simple boy, "inexperienced", that is, with visible flaws and simple instruments was who God would demonstrate His Spirit and power through! Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying embrace mediocrity because David did eventually drop slings and stones for swords. But one thing he learnt early was the type of man God would always use to do exploits and win victories: one who trusts in God and not in any physical or carnal instrument of warfare. And that is how you walk humbly before God.

Trust in God. Take your focus off everything else. And be rest assured that regardless of what you are and what you aren't yet, what you have and what you

don't have yet, or where you are and where you'd end up, God can use you because the truth is, God has never needed much to do much. And even if we give Him much, what He does with it usually exceeds what we release to Him.

However, if you insist on placing your trust in anything other than God, then I have two portions of Scripture for you to consider. The first is Proverb 3:5-8. *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."*

And the second is Jeremiah 17:5-8. *"Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."*

It wouldn't make sense for me to round off this chapter without making sure we see how it links with the second revelation I shared earlier in Chapter

ONE. If you noticed, this second group represents “Christians” in that revelation. I put the word Christian in quote because though they bear the label with pride, their actions scream that they aren’t.

Anyway, the people in this group gather; but they’re in the dark. It’s either they don’t even know they are in the dark or they don’t care about the darkness; because, no one bothers to find the switch, let alone turn it on. They are too preoccupied with something else and immediately they were done with what they came for, which was something else other than God, they leave. The error in such action is visible in the revelation: you miss out on God and God’s best when He isn’t top priority. No wonder they all leave without their bags! How would they even see it? It is those who operate in the light that would have seen such things and would have left with them. And who else is light and the source of light but God?

Yes, though you claim to be a Christian, you aren’t a child of light neither are you walking in the light if you keep on living a double life, if you can’t embrace your true self and you’re self-promoting and if you have decided not to walk humbly before God, trusting in Him completely, and not placing your trust in something else. Putting on the light and walking in it in order to possess your true possession, and being a blessing to the world will involve making God the true foundation again, doing away with old practices and picking up new habits, habits of

honesty and intimacy with God, embracing your uniqueness, your spiritual level and paying the price required for your own spiritual growth and transformation; then of course fixing your gaze on God, trusting that wherever you are, and with whatever you are, He can use you.

I know some of us who have read up to this point must be thinking, “Well, thank God, this doesn’t concern me. I don’t fall into any of the categories mentioned.” If this is you, then I have one thought I’d like you to consider; and this is it: The “bag” you’re with, is it yours, or are you claiming what belongs to someone else? I say this because many of us are busy doing what we think we should be doing for the Kingdom, what we see others excelling at in the Kingdom, i.e., the grace expression of others, and what the world says we should be doing more of for the Kingdom. If you fall into at least one of the groups I mentioned, then guess what? You too are attempting to build on a non-existing (wrong) foundation. That’s an error you will have to fix; else, you’d be left with regrets in the end.

How do you fix it? Turn to God and pray prayers of inquisition. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” That’s how Saul of Tarsus started when Jesus confronted him with his sinful conduct in Acts chapter 9. And it’s a good way to start! Then wait; for the answers will come.

4

Behold He comes to you, be ready!

We left off on Esau's story in verse 35 of the 27th chapter of Genesis. Let's go back and see what happens next in verses 36 through 40.

“And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy

dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.”

We see here how the realization finally dawned on Esau, that he had underestimated his adversary, that he had lived a carefree I-can-do-it-in-my-own-strength kind of life, and that he had been supplanted twice. However, in the presence of his father, and while admitting that he had been robbed twice, he had also let it slip that he had lost his birthright. Finally some honesty, eh? Then Esau starts to beg for a blessing. It's my prayer that we never hit this level of rock-bottom despair before our eyes are enlightened, in Jesus' name (Amen).

Unfortunately for Esau, Isaac his father wasn't God; so he couldn't undo what had been done to restore the lost birthright nor the lost blessing to Esau. The result? Esau wept! His tears moved his father to compassion. He did give him something that's a blessing, but wasn't the original blessing.

Let's consider the other blessing well. It contained the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven (just like the original one), and those are not bad things at all, if you ask me. A rich soil will help crops grow well, same with the dew of heaven. Only problem is,

these are agricultural blessings; and Esau wasn't a farmer or even a shepherd; he was a "skilful" hunter.

What then does this reveal to us, that Esau had made a wrong career choice earlier? Some Bible scholars take this agricultural blessing, especially the original one, to prove that the blessing was for Jacob all along. And there's also another school of thought that it simply meant that Esau needed redirection from his chosen career path in order to enjoy the blessing. What do you think?

Personally, I believe it reveals to us a potential Esau was yet to unlock. If the original blessing and the substitute blessing were (in part) agricultural blessings, then it was hinting at a path he needed to consider exploring. There seemed to be a side to him that was yet to be revealed.

Let's go back to the very beginning again, shall we, when the twins' career path were revealed to us. It's in Genesis 25:27.

"And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents."

A man of the field means someone who liked the outdoors. There are many things one can do outdoors, and hunting was just one of them. Farming and animal husbandry were also options.

Isn't it funny how the very occupation Esau was least interested in ended up being the one that seemed to have God's backing, seeing that it carried a blessing for him? It was a blessing that could benefit his generation and those to come after him. How come he never considered it? How did Esau end up choosing a career path, charting a course that was so different from his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac? Hmm! Think about it.

I'm sure someone is wondering where I'm going with all of this seeming irrelevant information I'm sharing. Well, I'd get right to it. What if what you're interested in doing and what you've spent all your time and energy becoming, isn't what God had in mind for you all along; and what if I tell you that there's another side to you that you'd have to explore in order to receive a blessing, and end up being a blessing to your generation and those to come after you? What if I told you that you've picked up this book to read so you can also read this that God's inviting you on a new journey, and He'd like you to get ready?

Sometimes the way out is a new way altogether, something unfamiliar to us. I wonder if, when Esau considered giving up hunting and picking up farming, he cringed! I mean it was a complete overhaul of an old way and a ground level up, building a new foundation and a new way. Did he make the choice to switch lifestyles, or did he continue to cringe when considering what his

hunting buddies might think of him, and how it was too much a sacrifice giving up what he had loved and pursued for several years, and then just continued to settle for less? What do you think his decision was? Some people seem to believe he switched career and lifestyles just based on what's recorded in Genesis 36:1-8. Meanwhile, there are people like me who would rather focus on their own lives and what's before them. Are you with me? If you are, then let's dig deeper.

Let's start by exploring the differences between a hunter and a farmer. Dictionary definitions will tell you that hunters hunt, and farmers farm. Yet there is more to it than that. One difference is their focus. To hunt is to pursue and kill; and to farm is to grow and rear. Another difference is their posture. While the hunter is concerned with position and speed, that of the farmer is majorly nurturing and patience. And how can I forget their tools: that of the hunter is either prepared for trapping or for shooting, and all that the farmer uses, especially the basics, has nothing to do with trapping or shooting, but for tilling the soil in preparation for planting, and guarding/guiding the livestock. Then there's also the end result. For the hunter it's immediate gratification, and nothing else. Meanwhile for the farmer, it's a delayed and long-term benefit.

I took us through that route so I can say on this new journey into glory that we are embarked on, our focus needs to change, same with our posture, the

tools we use, and our desired end result. Let's explore these four major areas!

Our Focus

Just like there are hunters and farmers in the world, there are professing Christians, especially youths, who either have the hunter's focus or the farmer's focus. Which do you have? Don't answer yet; you'll be answering too soon. Wait till you're done reading before giving an answer.

Like I earlier mentioned the hunters focus is to pursue and kill; and this is also how you identify a Christian with a hunter's focus. They too pursue you in order to kill you. While you might not die physically, i.e., if you receive the mercy of God early, you will however be hurt because being on their radar means hurt, pain, torture, torment and great discomfort. Also, it will be nothing short of a miracle if you are still spiritually alive by the time they are done with you. So, yes, if you fall into the hands of a Christian with a hunter's focus, then you will be referred to as a prey.

Christians with the hunter's focus are predators disguised as evangelists or supposedly passionate soul-winners and pastors. They don't mind dedicating long hours to the Lord's work, especially as it involves winning souls and "discipling" these souls; after all, the souls they are working hard to

gather will join their following (workforce), build their city for them and help them make a name for themselves. Yes, you guessed right; the Christian with the hunter's focus is very ambitious, many times secretly so, sometimes unashamedly so. They have a point to prove to themselves and to others; and you unsuspectingly could be the one to join them in making this happen.

You might wonder how this will hurt the people that follow them! Well, here's how, and I'd be sharing from first-hand experience. Since they have a point to prove, you can believe me when I say they are very insecure. And driven by these two major reasons, they are always coming up with new ideas, new plans, new programmes, something, just about anything that will put them out there, something that will in the end boost their confidence and make them assured!

Their elaborate ideas will always require your input for execution. And because early enough you're imbibed with an 'us versus them' gospel, "them" being both other believers of other denominations and non-believers out there in the world, you find yourself agreeing to everything and anything; you'd even believe you're doing it for the Lord. This is where it gets interesting. After you've agreed to go to "battle" with them, you're organized into different groups and given certain responsibilities which in the end you'd realize is actually a workload. You'd work

hard, using your time, energy, skill and resources; but you'd be told, sometimes in subtle ways, other times in not so subtle ways, that you aren't working hard enough. And if you ever get any recognition for the hard work you've done, you're rewarded with more hard work. Soon, you'll start to feel like it's slave labour, and that it's crushing you physically, spiritually, financially and even emotionally. But if you're expecting mercy, there'd be none. If you try to walk away, leaving them, you'd realize it's not going to be as easy as you thought, for there's always high level manipulation going on there.

And if by any chance God has given you a personal vision that He would like to work with you on, just forget it while you're still stuck there; it becomes impossible to see to it. If you ever leave, it will be nothing short of God's mercy and a miracle; and that's when you'd discover how controlled your life has been, and how contained you have been!

Earlier on I asked what your focus-style was like. Was it that of a hunter or that of a farmer. And while I haven't touched the focus of a farmer, you can already assume that it's a polar opposite to that of a hunter. Yes, for farmers grow and rear. To rear animals is to care for their young until they are fully grown, even the older ones are cared for and bred so that they can produce, and are trained.

You see, with farmers there's no predatory action, neither is there any self-serving ambition. Instead of taking from others, farmers majorly give to them. Do you see the difference? Now that that's been covered, what's your focus? Why do you invest so much time in Kingdom service? Is your motive to build something for yourself and make a name for yourself? Do you see the people as a prey, a means to an end? If your answer is yes to at least one of these questions, then your focus needs to change completely.

Our Posture

There is such a thing as the hunter's posture. Most Christians who have the hunter's focus also have the hunter's posture. Like I earlier mentioned, the hunter's posture is that of position and speed. They always have to be at a vantage position, and like things to be done quickly; or better put, they like to make things happen fast! You won't be wrong if you call them opportunists. God's will, God's plan, God's way and God's time are not their concern; so they are not on their agenda.

Let's tackle the posture of position first. For the Christian hunter, it's always a vantage point or nothing. For instance, a mountain top is a great vantage point. Not only do you see things very clearly from there, it does wonders for your self-esteem, perhaps too much wonders if you're not careful. But someone might argue that that's not a

very good example, I mean one who hunts from a mountain top. Well, you're right. While you might not hunt from the mountain top, you do get to see possible opportunities below clearly from all the way up there. It's pretty amazing view for someone who is putting together a strategy, and is aspiring for more; don't you think so?

Don't believe me? Why do you think in two out of the three temptations Jesus faced (See Matthew 4), He was taken to the pinnacle (highest point) of the temple, and also up into an exceeding high mountain? Think about that! Anyway, the Christian hunter is hungry for position, a good position, because his/her desire is to have more and more recognition, more accolades, more followers, more.... And to get more, it's important to be at a position where it can be possible; at least that's how they reason.

So far we've been talking about God using us in this end-time harvest, and giving us a blessing and making us a channel of blessing for our generation, enabling us to leave a good legacy for those coming after us. These are good things to desire; even a Christian hunter desires this, but not for the right reasons. You do know by now that it's possible to do the right things and desire the right things but not for the right reasons, right? It is very possible.

Am I trying to say most of the people in top positions are hunters? Yes, that's exactly what I'm trying to say.

Most people in top positions, even in Christianity, are hunters; and most people who are obsessed with the top positions are hunters. Those who are at the top with a farmer's focus and posture, which is to serve and nurture, are in the minority!

Let's talk about speed. The Christian hunter believes they have to act quickly. They are always on the lookout for an opportunity: something and someone they can take advantage of in order to get ahead. They believe they have to make things happen for themselves; they have schedules, things that must happen in a certain way, at a certain time, by certain kinds of people penned down. They act quickly, and are not the type to give in to emotions. The concept of patience in waiting on God, and even consideration for how their actions might impact others, is completely foreign to them.

I've been in congregations, and on teams of Christian hunters, whose posture was that of speed; so I can tell you, the only person that benefits from this posture of theirs is them. And when I use the word 'benefit', I use it loosely because you can't even call what they get in the end good success, at least not by God's standards.

I remember one time while in the company of a Christian hunting group; they wanted to increase the church membership. They were the strategists and the executioners, including the rest of us of course. They too determined how quickly the results must

show, or else.... And so we poured our resources into this hunting expedition every other weekend. By the allotted time, sure we had some people join, but in the long run, despite all our investments, the church ended up getting closed.

What happened? Do you really think this is how God runs His things? That we would set goals, cook up strategies, and execute them, while leaving Him out; and He would bless it? Is God a joke to us, a genie – God forbid the word – that we drag along to make things happen in our time for us? Well, He isn't a joke, neither is He a genie, nor will He answer to our wilful beck and call and timing. He will definitely not release His precious blessing that we seek either. His blessings are not for such wayward individuals or expeditions. If we are to walk and work with God, we will need wisdom to seek God first, and have the patience-posture of a farmer until He answers us at His own timing.

Our Tools

So far we've touched briefly on the Christian hunter's focus and posture; now let's look into the tools. I earlier stated that the hunter's tools are for trapping and/or for shooting. Let me give us a visual aid.

One time my family and I moved into a new house in the same neighbourhood. I was so happy with that small flat built against a wall at the backside of the

compound. It had just two rooms. I couldn't contain my joy. I would have my own room, and life would be perfect. Don't laugh at me; that was how my mind considered things back then. Anyways, my happiness soon faded as soon as I encountered my first rodent, a small rat to be precise. Oh, how I dislike rodents and the nuisance they cause! Of course I know God has a purpose for everything He made, and while I am often in awe of His creation, animals inclusive, I honestly can imagine a world where there are no rats, and a perfect world I believe it would be!

Encountering the first rat in that apartment stole away my happiness. But the last straw that broke the camel's back was when one massive rat found its way into our home. Just writing about it makes me shudder. I couldn't sleep for nights. Yet this large rat was what inspired my family to determine to take on the roles of predators. We were going to catch it, including the little ones. We didn't have that much money to hire a company to fumigate the house; so we got these paper mouse traps that are so popular in Nigeria. I placed them strategically and said a little prayer. Believe me when I tell you that one time, I trapped at least six or more on that paper. And as for the big one, it too was caught on a paper mouse trap. It fought for his freedom but it was futile; once we saw it, we covered it with a black pail and the rest is history.

Still on predatory tools, I remember one time when we had moved to another house in an entirely

different neighbourhood, and were visited by thieves. Even though they succeeded in carrying out their mission without waking us, we woke up to discover they had left a weapon behind, a large stick with nails in it. I'm guessing they had planned to use it to hurt us if we dare wake up and make a fuss while they were still in our home. Who knows what other weapons they came in with!

Now that I've shared these incidents with us, let's look at them more closely. In the first instance, I mentioned that in order to catch the rats, we purchased paper mouse traps, which were laced on the inside with sticky glue that makes it hard or nearly impossible for the rat to escape once it has stepped on it. I also mentioned that we placed the traps strategically, and even said a word of prayer over them while constantly keeping watch. What am I driving at? What I'm trying to say is, a Christian hunter would be seen lying in wait, using any means available to "catch" people in order to carry out their own goal, which in the long run is to exploit the prey for their own good, and do so by any means. I mean any means.

I can't even mention just one such means, for they are many; and many a time they appear and feel so harmless that unsuspectingly you are moved to act on the promise of sustenance and abundance, believe their doctrine, be carried away by the glitz and glamour, accept that gift, take up that offer of employment, go into that partnership, go on that all-

expense paid trip, marry that person etc. The rat assumes the room it has entered and is exploring is just a room, not knowing that someone's watching, and something has been placed in a corner. It thinks it's just paper. But it's laced. When the rat unsuspectingly steps on it or even runs across it, it discovers it cannot escape. May God give us understanding!

Now that's for tools that are for trapping; they are often well disguised to look and feel harmless, decorated with offers that seem irresistible and foolish to pass up on. But the ones for shooting are more conspicuous, and you can sense danger. A wise person once said, "Many times, you only see what you want to see; you only hear what you want to hear, and so you only do what you want to do." I'm not sure who this wise person was, but I've always known what he/she said to be true.

You see, there are some Christian hunters, even among the youths, who are very bold. They make outrageous claims, sell false doctrines; and you'll know their teachings are false because they don't even make sense; and you don't have to be a Bible scholar to know, they live fake lives. Yet some people seem to be pulled in by this larger-than-life kind of lifestyle portrayed by the charismatic hunters. Gullibly, they, with their eyes open, pick up the label of prey/easy kill.

What are their weapons for shooting/hurting? Ha! Are you still asking? How can you ask when it's obvious? It's their charm, claims, their teachings and promises they make; it's the lifestyle they encourage you to live etc. I personally have heard and seen all sorts; other people who fell prey with their eyes opened have told their experiences too, until they were eventually rescued by God, but not without enough wounds that only God knows how long it will take for them to become whole again.

But I'm not talking about these tools, posture and focus of hunters as if to give us information on people apart from us, but so we can look inwards and either stop being this way or not to even become like that in the first place. True children of God who are also workers enlisted in the end-time harvest are not to be predators/hunters; we should even have nothing to do with their focus, posture and tools. People aren't out there for us to do with them as we like; and we have no business lying in wait trying to trap people in order to exploit them, neither are we sent to hurt people, thereby leaving them with wounds only God and time will heal completely. We are expected to take up farming tools, ready to till the soil of the heart of the people so we can plant the seeds of the gospel when we come across them. What tools are these? Picture yourself equipped with the fruit of the Spirit, all nine of them (See Galatians 5:22-23) and just so we don't become snares unto them, by coming under the wrong influence. You

guard against such by equipping yourself with the whole armour of God (See Ephesians 6:11-18).

What tools have you been using? Would God approve of them? You can only begin to pick up the right tools and use them perpetually, not only because you're interested in what God's planning for this generation, and you want to be a part of it, but because you have begun to have the fear of God. That is, you now respect God. And like the Scripture reveals, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So get wisdom today!

Our Desired End Results

Under this heading, I really would have loved to make some references to Jesus, the things He said and did; but I know how quickly we can say "but that's Jesus, He is God". So I'd rather use the example of someone that was one hundred percent human alone, even though he was under the influence of God's Spirit – Paul.

Like we earlier established, Paul was used by God in many ways to not only populate the Kingdom of God but to equip it, and with two portions of Scripture, he proves, at least to me that he wasn't a man obsessed with, or obsessing over immediate gratification. And because of this, he couldn't have been a hunter, for he didn't have their focus, their posture, neither did he have their tools.

You see, though the desired end result is discussed as the fourth part of our discussion so far, it's actually the first part because it's all encompassing. It's the motive, the driving force, the fuel for the hunter. It's what inspires their focus, encourages their posture and informs the selection of their tools. The hunter wants immediate satisfaction while the farmer understands there's a large and more enduring benefit in what's delayed.

Let's check the first portion of Scripture; it's 1st Corinthians 3:5-6.

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

I know, at first glance, it does seem like one of those verses you cast but a glance on and keep it moving until you get to some “*rhema*” from other portions of Scripture. But if you take a closer look, you'd discover that Paul was a man of deep understanding of working with, and for, and alongside God. The background gist is that there was fraction in the body of Christ, in the church at Corinth, to be precise; and some people were claiming to be on his side while others preferred to be on Apollos' side. Paul caught wind of the matter and laid it to rest. Here's what I

however want us to take away from his words. There's no "now-now" in the work of God.

In Paul's answer to the issue on ground in the church, he borrowed terms and a scene from the farmer, when he mentioned planting, watering and seeing a harvest/an increase. Now, I'm not sure I have planted any actual physical seed in my life; and, even though I know Paul is talking about a spiritual seed, I put it to you however that, whether it's the physical or spiritual, I'm yet to see a seed that produces an harvest, or brings forth increase the same day it is planted. Paul tells us that planting is one thing, watering is another; and even when you've done all you can do, there's still the place of waiting for God to do His part, which is where the outcome either becomes favourable or not.

Someone might say, don't people give their lives to Christ in one moment and become saved? Yes, you're right; people believe in Jesus and become saved. But it's not many who get saved the first time they hear the gospel; and many who get saved don't give their lives over to Jesus to be Lord over them fully immediately. There is the issue of becoming Christ-like and being a fit vessel to be used by God for others. Now, that never happens in one day. What I'm getting at is that Paul understood that working with God, and serving Him takes time, same with seeing (a) positive outcome(s).

Here's the second portion of Scripture; it's Philippians 3:12-14.

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Here Paul again reveals his priorities to us, none of which fit that of a hunter. With the first portion of Scripture I shared, Paul talked about how he understood that even the work of God happened (often) in stages, and has a time frame which only God can determine. He informs us of a goal he had that was in alignment with God (Jesus Christ), a goal which had nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with satisfying his fleshly desire, making a sideshow of his gifts/talents in order to build a city for himself or make a name for himself, or amassing wealth and other things etc, a goal that seemed to be time-consuming; by this I mean, it could take his entire lifetime to pursue and attain.

See, there is not one single mention of others in this goal of his; and this is not to say that God didn't use Paul for others or that he didn't desire it, but that

while he was focused on this goal, that seemed to be something between him and God. Others seemed to be getting blessed and will continue to do so; it was a definite part of the package. Do you get the point I am trying to pass across? Whether it's the work, like we previously covered, or the goal, and the reward, whether physical or spiritual, Paul was one who dealt in long term things.

The farmer deals in delayed, yet long term benefits; but the hunter is concerned with immediate gratification. I looked up immediate gratification and I liked one definition I saw. It says, it's the desire to feel instant positive results. By now you already know that it's too much trouble for a Christian hunter to invest their time and resources in growing and rearing; instead, they pursue/hunt and kill, as this takes a shorter amount of time with the right posture and tools! However, the results will not be enduring, neither does it hold any long term benefits for them nor those coming after them, for it will all soon disappear like smoke. Speaking of smoke, I'll like to share something with us from Exodus 19 as I round off this chapter. Let's read verses 9-11.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be

ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.”

Exodus is one of my favourite books in the Old Testament. I just discovered this, and the reason is besides whatever is obvious. Here I see a people who are new to God, and a God who is more than willing to be made known to them, though the interaction wasn't always pretty. I mean the back and forth between God and the people, with the intermediary Moses in the mix. But if you pay attention, you'd see yourself as among the people, and recognize and appreciate God's generous nature to them, and to you by extension. Anyways, I brought up the portion of Scripture we just read because it holds a message for us.

The Scripture we read expresses God's desire to help Moses become more credible to the people. And this desire meant the people were going to get an experience/encounter like never before! God had not left them, but He was going to come visiting. And when He was around, they were going to hear Him. He was also going to make sure to give them a physical manifestation of His presence, I mean something they could also see so they could know He was there. This was a big deal for them, at least I hope so because as I read it, it was a big deal for me; it was something so monumental because it would be, not only their experience but something to be shared with generations after them.

Before He could come, God says He had one instruction for Moses to relay to them: the people are to be sanctified two days; they are expected to wash their clothes in preparation for God's visit. Those that were married were expected to abstain from sexual pleasures until after the visit. I know what you're thinking, what does washing of clothes have to do with divine visitation? Well, I considered it too and decided that cleanliness is important to God since He mentioned it. That's just the surface of the point I am trying to pass across. This is what I want us to take notice of, God was coming and this chosen people needed to be sanctified in preparation for the visit. For them, the sanctification included washing of clothes, abstaining from sexual relations for those who are married; this is assuming the singles know better than to indulge in premarital sex etc. But the instructions hold a different set of instructions for us.

If you will allow yourself to admit it, you'll agree with me that our generation is lost, and needs to be introduced to God anew. The foundations around are faulty, buildings shaky, and need to be torn down and rebuilt; and if things are going to have any positive impact or leave a good and lasting legacy, there's a need for changes to be made by those of us who claim to be Christians. Anyway, first things first, if God's planning to visit us, then we have a responsibility to get ready!

Sanctification is the setting aside of someone or something for a special or sacred purpose. I just needed to state it clearly, even when you probably already know what it means. But did you also know that it's a mentality? It is, and it ought to be our way of thinking. I believe the chosen ones in our generation, by this I mean Christians, won't hear and see God as an occasional thing or be constrained to worship from afar like the Israelites who wandered the wilderness were. Our case should be different. But first, we ought to go about knowing and acting like we've been chosen and set aside for a sacred use. And this renewed way of thinking should then inform our actions; we won't just make sure our apparels are clean, but our focus too, as well as our posture, our tools, and our motives! And we won't just abstain from sexual relations but from any interactions with others that can present us as unclean and unfit before God!

I'll leave us with something my mum said to me when I was living home for the university. She said, "God has standards and He won't lower it for anyone." What she wanted me to understand early, at least in my opinion was that, even though God loved me dearly, wanted to help me become my best self and wanted me to have the best of what He has to offer, there were things He required of me and I would be better off striving to meet that requirement. Her words still ring true today. Beloved, God has standards. Let's meet the requirements and obtain the blessings! Let's get ready!

5

Come up hither!

This final chapter is in parts, each a challenge to the Christian today. One draws a vital lesson from what Isaac told his son, Esau; and the other is about a Psalm of David, a very favourite psalm to many Christians.

Part I: MEN AT WAR FOR FREEDOM

Still on the way out of the yoke of Jacob that Isaac presented to his son, Esau; he concludes on it in verse 40 of Genesis 27.

“And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.”

Let’s compare it with the concluding part of the original blessing recorded in verses 28b and 29.

“...and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over

thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

The difference in the blessings is clear. There was now a promise of warfare in Esau's future and that of his descendants, the Edomites. The servitude to his brother, Jacob who was later renamed Israel and his descendants, will however not be perpetual; for a time will come when the Edomites will revolt, challenge and put an end to the norm. But how did Esau respond to the news? At least, according to verse 41, instead of considering what his father was saying to him, Esau harboured feelings of hatred for Jacob his twin and planned to murder him after his father was dead, buried and fully mourned. What a waste of information and emotions.

I'm sure you're wondering if Isaac's words came to pass? Well, yes. Scriptures reveal to us that by the time Esau and Jacob meet again, Esau wasn't doing badly at all, and Bible scholars say the Edomites were a warring people for many generations; and as for breaking off the yoke of servitude, the Edomites did revolt against Israel, Judah to be specific, and changed the course of their lives. You can read the following scriptural portions to learn more: Genesis 33:1-17; 2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10. But what does this mean for us? Let's consider carefully the words of Isaac again.

1. Isaac said, *“And by thy sword shalt thou live....”* For Esau (and the Edomites), like I earlier mentioned, this was a promise of warfare. He (and them) might as well get ready to be a warring nation if they didn’t want to die out; because, as the anarchical societies of the time was, to live meant to fight! But what does it mean to make war? First off, its rivals and surrounding neighbours make war; and all that because one party seeks to enforce a particular unpleasant situation or condition on the other, and that one is making conscious and sustained effort to deal with it and end it. When push comes to shove, Esau/the Edomites better make sure they win or else.... Anyway, all this talk about fighting to live reminds me of something Jesus said in Matthew 11:12.

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

The words “violence,” “the violent” and “force” are the operative words in this verse. And Jesus was implying that there was some fighting and an aggressive nature required in order to acquire or, better put, experience the Kingdom of heaven! Well Beloved, just like Isaac said to his son, Esau, Jesus’ words ring true for our generation too. And this is what it means for us: we must be willing to fight in order to live! We must be willing to fight and have an aggressive nature in order for our generation to not

pass by without it experiencing heaven on earth; we must use every godly force available if we are to continue to experience the Kingdom of heaven and eventually spend eternity as a part of it. For our opponent is on a mission to make sure we die out! We must make conscious and sustained effort to resist him, his cohorts and win or else...

And who is our opponent? Our adversary is Satan. Ephesians 6:12 reveals more about our opponents, they are; principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places who have covered this world with temptations and seek to overcome us so we would be eternally separate from God and miss out on being the best we can be. We should be doing exploits and generally enjoying the best that God has prepared and offers us. If you truly want to be on the Lord's side, if you truly are on the Lord's side, then you must be willing to fight!

2. Isaac also said, ***"...and shalt serve thy brother..."*** So warfare was in their future and so was servitude. The dictionary definition of subjugation explains 'servitude' perfectly for me. It reads, "It's the action of bringing someone or something under domination or control." In a lay man's language, it would be that instead of being an independent being, your life goes according to the dictates of someone else, and this someone else isn't God but one looking out to further their own interest at your expense. Bible scholars say Edom was

at one point conquered by David (2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Chronicles 18:11) though they revolted in the days of Solomon (1 Kings 11:14-16). They were again conquered during Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Kings 3:8-26) before they later gained another independence. So the story goes on and on.

To be a servant is to have a master. Jacob became Esau's master in many ways, and Israel became Edom's master as well. We know though that while we were yet sinners, we too had a master who dominated and controlled us. And even now that we are in Christ, it's sad to see that some of us are still being dominated and controlled by him, a vicious cycle of defeat and victory, then defeat again and victory again, then defeat again, when what Christ has done for us, I mean His perfect sacrifice on the cross, is capable of ushering us into permanent victory.

Oh! Or don't you know that this "brother" that is also called supplanter and deceiver was like the devil to us? Satan is the one trying to be master over us, seeking to lure and damn our souls. Sin and conformity to the world are his tools for keeping his victims in servitude to him. If we continue to sin, falling and rising and refusing to fight (from the place of victory) for our independence once and for all, we are co-operating with Satan, fulfilling his satanic quota, furthering his agenda at our expense and that of our generation, and leaving nothing for

those to come after us other than what we met on ground. Let me now share two portion of Scripture, the first is Exodus 21:1-6, and the second is Luke 4: 16-21.

“Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.”

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the

brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

I'm sure some of us already can see how the two Scriptures link up. But for those who haven't, let me try to make it plain. The first portion of Scripture reveals the right of the slave which, as you might have guessed, is the power of choice. God had made it a law that a Hebrew (male) slave on the seventh year could exercise this right. He could choose to go free or choose to remain in servitude. Now in the second Scripture, Jesus is reading the words of the Prophet Isaiah to the people, both male and female, which find fulfilment in Him. In the words He spoke, we learn of an offer for freedom for those who are captives (i.e., under domination and control of someone/something). God had made this possible. From the time of Jesus even till His return will be the “acceptable” year, it is no longer limited to every seventh year. All the “captives” need to do is exercise the power to choose and begin to choose Jesus every time in order to get and retain their freedom! Do you get it? Oh, the gospel is indeed good news! wouldn't you agree? I hope you agree with me that what's left is

servitude, an option that is completely unacceptable for those who have come to know and accept Jesus.

3. Isaac also adds, “***...and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck....***” How long did it take Esau to break free from Jacob’s yoke? How long did it take for the Edomites to become an independent nation? I don’t have the answers; but what I do know is that a time came when there was a turnaround for the better. And that time when things must change for us is now! Now is the time when we must take back dominion!

And leveraging on the victory Jesus has won for us, we must revolt against the enemy of our souls, break and throw off his yoke from off our necks! Become the best versions of our selves, being salt and light and doing the exploits God has ordained for us to do. Perhaps we will be motivated when we are reminded of our true identities. Let’s read something Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-16.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the

house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Here are two words Jesus used to describe His disciples, “salt” and “light”. Let’s take it one at a time.

“*Ye are the SALT of the earth....*” What Jesus is implying is that we, not the multitude and general unconverted public, but we who are His, have by this sole reason of our union with Him possessed a certain quality about us that is likened to savour, the unique quality of salt. When salt is added in the right measure to food, it offers it savour – a taste that makes it more pleasant and enjoyable than it was before. In the same manner, while we dwell/remain living in this world, we too have a chance, since we already possess this quality about us, to make the earth, whatever geographical location we are in, way more pleasant and enjoyable to live in.

I said all of that just so I can say, Jesus is simply referring to the influence we possess. As Christians, you and I are designed and declared to be people of influence! We have the capacity to have a positive effect on the character of the people around us; we possess the power to shape policies for the better, both spiritually (through prayer) and physically (through the positions we occupy in society and by our examples).

Now it is important to note that for Jesus to say we are the salt of the earth, it means the earth needs us! Our generation needs us! Without us there's no pleasantness – at least by God's standards – in the world. And so we mustn't lose our savour. And the way to do this is by remaining in union with Christ and not taking sides and conforming to the world. For how can we influence the world if we are completely conformed to it and its ways? Apostle Paul describes the true state of the world we live in now and its people in 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”

Can you see what's out there? Now do you believe me when I say this generation needs you to take back dominion and begin to dominate as God intended? The alternative is to be trodden! That's not even an alternative, if you ask me. God forbid!

“Ye are the LIGHT of the world,” Jesus also says, so long we are His and in union with Him; we have the ability and responsibility to stimulate light and make things visible to others in the world around us. To stimulate can be understood to mean to encourage interest in something, in this case all things godly; meanwhile to make visible is to make something easily noticed.

All of these definitions and explanations reveal something to us: there is a very low, to zero, interest in all things godly in our generation, even in the generations before us; that's one. There is also the issue of it being hard for people to easily notice/identify God and all things godly in the world. This is largely due to all the counterfeit gods there are, the false messiahs, false teachers and erroneous teachings there are in the world. It's an issue that's been there before our generation, which is plaguing our generation, and will continue to plague those to come next, if we did nothing about it. We really have to let our light shine, so that those in darkness can begin to see!

By the way, those in darkness are those out there in the world; they don't belong to Jesus, neither is He Lord over their lives in its entirety. They will only see when we begin to shine! How? Let's first read something Jesus said in John 8:12-14.

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.”

Jesus Himself declares that He is the light of the world, even after declaring that we are the light of the world in another gospel! While this in no way equates us with God, it reveals our source. The only reason we moved out of darkness and (spiritual) blindness and now walk in light and have the light of life is because we chose to follow Jesus. And now I put it to us that for us to know how to shine, that is, give light to others in the world by stimulating their interest in God and all things godly, and by helping them notice/identify more easily the real God and all things that pertain to Him, is if we continue to follow Jesus. All the answers of how best to put our light to use, and the guarantee for the best possible results will be provided by Him.

I imagine someone is thinking: we should just pray. Well, yes. Prayer is part of it. I do believe with all of my heart that a large percentage of evangelism and mission work is prayer. But then, there's the other percentage too which involves something other than prayer. It is getting acquainted with the Person of Jesus; that is, increasing in your knowledge of Him and His teachings and acting according to His example, His teaching and His leading. Let's consider what Jesus said as He rounded off His talk about light in Matthew 5:16.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

My emphasis is on the very first word, **LET**. It means don't prevent or forbid! It's like the Lord is urging us to do the right thing with what He has deposited in us, and with what He plans to still deposit in us! Beloved, let us choose to cooperate with God and His Spirit who wants to work in us, with us and through us to reach the nations and those to come after us! Choose to let your light shine! Choose for God to affect the lives of others through you! Choose for God to be glorified by others through you! But first, choose to take back your dominion! Throw off that evil yoke from off your neck! It doesn't suit you! Now prepare to sit on your throne and reign alongside Christ!

But God's not done speaking to us, keep reading!

Part II: THE ASCENSION

Psalm 24:1-10 reads:

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah."

The psalm you just read is by David, and is a very popular one in Christendom today, mostly used in Nigerian churches for prayer, spiritual warfare to be precise. However, Bible Scholars say it was one David wrote for a very special occasion. The occasion? He was moving the ark of God from the house of

Obededom to Mount Zion, a hill in Jerusalem, an event recorded in 2 Samuel 6:11-19 and 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:43. The relocation was accompanied with singing and this Psalm was written for the occasion and sung by a choir at the occasion, with a leader leading it and the people chiming in on cue. Now, to what you're probably thinking, why have I added this Psalm to the book?

You see, when the idea of this book dropped in my spirit, it wasn't that day that I got the breakdown. I only got the general concept. The day I got the chapter one, that day I started hard at it, but it wasn't the same day I got the chapter two. However, chapters three and four came the same day. All happened while I was in the presence of God, either praying or studying. I'm recounting this experience not to validate myself or the book, but so I can tell you how this final portion of this book came to be.

As I sat still in God's presence after receiving the chapter three and four, the fifth chapter came rushing through too, and I wondered myself how it would add up to the book. Well, I'll let you be the judge when you're done; please decide if the chapter fits as part of the book or it somewhat stands alone. Yet, even while I was thinking about it, I couldn't deny that the words of this Psalm were more than just a lyric to be sung, let alone on one occasion; neither were they just prayers to be prayed for spiritual warfare. To me, they held a bigger message,

a message for David's generation and for all the others to come, including ours. It is the lessons I gleaned from it I intend to share here.

From the Occasion

David and God had a very special relationship; but then we also see how Obbedom and God also had a very fruitful relationship. You'll see it too if you read 2 Samuel 6. And the only reason we came to learn, or discovered that Obbedom and God had a special relationship is because something went terribly wrong on David's first try in relocating the ark of God. So the ark gets to stay in Obbedom's house. But the ark wasn't going to remain forever in Obbedom's house; only for a short while, three months to be precise. Its destination was going to be mount Zion in Jerusalem where the people came to worship God. What am I driving at? It's pretty simple, while each of us is able to have a special relationship with God, if we are prepared to do it on His terms and not ours, still our vision should be broad and should include others joining us in worshiping and serving God (the right way).

There's a lyric to a very popular worship song in Nigeria that goes thus: "Lift Jesus higher, lift Jesus higher, lift Him up for the world to see, for He says if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." Our vision should align with God's, who will have *"all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4).

Yes, David got it wrong on the first try relocating the ark; but the vision didn't die. He righted his wrongs and tried again; and this time he succeeded. So, yes, it's possible that you could have done things wrong initially and could have even been somewhat selfish with your motives; but now that you're aware of all these things, it's time to right your wrong and try again with a much larger and accurate vision. If you do it right, i.e. on God's terms, God will be more than willing to help you succeed.

From the Intro

By this, I'm referring to verses 1 and 2.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."

While David and those in his company were all prepared to do things right, and he especially had the right vision, it was important that he also had the right view of God. And did he? By my understanding, he did. Let's see what David thought about God and helped others too to know or/and remember.

They all knew about the invincibility of God who resided in heaven. But they all also needed to know and be reminded from time to time that the earth

was His too, including everything and everyone in it. In fact, the world in its entirety belongs to Him. Isn't God Creator/Founder? He is! This means **He is the highest Being/Power there is.**

And why was all this information important back then for David and his generation, and for us now? It was, and still is, fuel for true worship and service. It was important and still is important that we who worship God and serve Him have the right perspective of Him; this way, we can willingly and rightly give Him what is due Him and encourage others to do the same too. We won't liken Him to any other god, neither would we attempt to elevate ourselves nor even dare to share in His glory.

David got it right, I mean having the right perspective of God, and led the people to get it right. It is my desire and prayer that we will get it right and encourage others to do same.

Someone might say, are there Christians who don't know or who need to be reminded about God being Creator/Founder or the highest Being/Power there is? Well, the answer is yes. Those that need to know are those who profess to be Christians but aren't truly Christians, and those who need the reminder are those who start out as true Christians but have been seduced by a lying spirit. Some now believe they are God or equal to God. Then, there are others who are professing Christians who believe these human beings when they claim to be God. And if you don't

know about these atrocities happening in the body of Christ, then you aren't well informed, or perhaps you aren't interested in what's going on around you. But, you should be; because, anything that concerns the body of Christ should concern every child of God.

David sets the scene for true worship and service by helping the people focus on what's right and true. Let's see what's next.

The Ascension

Here, I'll be sharing from verses 3 through 6.

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.”

Earlier on as I rounded off the first part of this chapter, I mentioned about God having standards; and as I read through the verses aforementioned, I discovered David held the same opinion. Only difference is, while mine was more of a general concept, David, I believe, was thinking about the ascension. What does ascension mean? Dictionary

definition reveals it as the act of rising to an important position or a higher level. And if I apply this to David's words, the rising to an important position and the higher level would be from being separate from God, or worshiping from afar, to approaching the hill where His presence is, and actually standing in His presence, to worship, to serve and to be blessed. David knew about God's holiness, and wondered who would be worthy to ascend! I'm glad that as the choir and the people would sing these words, they would be forced to think about whether they were worthy or not, and how they could eventually become worthy!

I guess someone's already thinking, Well, there's no need for an ark now; there's also no hill now, neither is there any physical "holy" place for us to stand in; so what's all this talk about worthiness? If this is your line of thought, you aren't entirely right. True, there's no need for a physical ark (which contained manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablet of the covenant) now; but you do know that there are certain vessels where God makes certain extremely valuable deposits, right?

By vessels I'm referring to human beings. And, yes, there's no physical hill to climb up to and no specific holy place either seeing that you'll argue that God is everywhere. Indeed, yes, God is everywhere and we who are Christians have His indwelling Spirit. But there are certain people like there used to be locations

who are in constant communion with Him; they are carriers of His presence, just like the average Christian; they have the Spirit of God. However, the access they have to the things of God and the manifestations of that Spirit in them will be beyond what's considered normal or average. I hope this has your attention. Now, let me also chip it in that these worthy vessels don't have to be one or two; they could be an entire generation of Christians!

Worthiness is not a topic likely to be preached on Sunday mornings or during special services in many assemblies today, because there's a much more preferred topic called Grace, which in itself is not wrong, but unfortunately has now been watered down to be a license to sin. The generally accepted theology is that we will ascend by the unmerited shed blood of Jesus. Well, while the sacrifice of Jesus has made us right with God, given us peace with God and afforded us the peace of God, it doesn't take away from us our individual spiritual responsibilities. By this I mean our own role to play in our transformation.

There is absolutely not one Christian that would be exempt from their role; this is why even those who have been Christian for a long period of time are still actively working with the Holy Spirit to become better versions of themselves, and will be encouraged to continue to do so with the view of an emergence of their best selves. Paul calls it working out your own salvation (Philippians 2:12). Yes, you have

chosen Christ once, and it worked wonders in the spirit realm for you; but you are tasked with continuing to choose Christ every single day, proving that your salvation is authentic, and proving that you're fit for the Kingdom of God to come, especially being entrusted with things valuable for Christian service.

Who is worthy, who is fit? When God searches for a vessel to make valuable deposits in, someone who He can commune endlessly with on a much higher level, someone who He can hand over keys of His treasures, so they can have access to things hid from others, someone through whom He'd like to manifest His wisdom and power; when God searches for that person, would He choose you? Could He choose you? Let's see what David believes God looks out for in the people He chooses.

Clean Hands: Now we mustn't reduce this to ceremonial cleansing of the hands with water, by which we rid ourselves of dirt, marks or stain; this "clean hands" is more than that. Here the true message is that God is looking (amongst believers) for someone, or rather a people, whose priority is clean living!

One way to understand the word "hands" is that it symbolizes something we are engaged with. So if I ask, "Are your hands clean?" what I'm really asking is, "What are you engaged in?" Therefore, a person

with clean hands is not morally contaminated. The lines of right and wrong, according to God's standards, are not blurred. For the person with clean hands, it's not just that they are very much invested in upholding and manifesting God's high principles, they are actually real in their personal lives.

Pure Heart: And so we would not be misled by what he meant by a pure heart, David explains further; he says, a person or a people with pure hearts will not lift up his (or their) soul unto vanity, nor swear deceitfully. Let's unpack this. The first is the issue of lifting up one's soul to vanity. To be the one lifting anything means to make a conscious decision to do something, like to make something go from one level to a higher one. Now, as for the word soul, it can be understood in two ways; the first is that the soul is a part of you that consists of your mind, character, thoughts, feelings etc. It is also understood to mean your basic nature and beliefs. Now, to lift up one's soul to vanity is to make a conscious decision within you on what your priorities and action will be. And in this case, we are advised that it better not be vanity.

A person who has lifted up their soul to vanity is vain. This person obsesses over things that have little meaning or value before God, and will be seen making vain boasts! What God's on the lookout for is humility, which in this context is broader than just having a modest opinion about yourself and your achievements, or including the idea and needs of others in your world, but also about priorities. Are your priorities same as

God's? If it isn't, you better get to realigning; for God is known for searching the heart.

The second is the issue of swearing deceitfully. There are many ways people interpret this. For me, I believe it concerns false claims. Doesn't the Scripture reveal that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks? If your heart is full of vanity, it is only expected that your words will reveal it. Our words, many times, do reveal the contents of our hearts. I have caught myself blurting out things that I discovered were not a mistake, but were the contents of my heart, and I was just in denial. Swearing deceitfully is making claims that are deceiving and misleading, whether about yourself – who you are, what you can do or the things you've supposedly achieved – or about others, especially about God!

Now, this I want so desperately to say something about. If you're in the habit of making yourself seem credible by involving God in your claims, you ought to stop it already! I'm talking specifically to those who claim to operate in the prophetic! Those "thus saith the Lord" that you are in the habit of declaring, when you know they're false, ruin lives, you know. But don't think they don't hold consequences for you as well. And what do you think, that if the words that come out of your mouth are lies, that God will entrust anything of value to you?

David says those with clean hands and a pure heart will receive the blessing from the Lord. Though this blessing is not specified, it does represent the climax of the experience – encountering God. Meet the requirements and receive a blessing. Sustain the relationship, and doubts will be cleared, convictions will be strengthened, “blessings” will be released, exploits will happen! I’m sure Moses can testify to this! But who will testify to this in my generation? Will it be me? Will it be you? Or would we be many? Are we going to ascend and become the generation that seeks and finds God? I’m talking about seeking His face, not His hand.

In verse 6, David pictures a generation with the aforementioned positive qualities; and I see our generation, a new generation who daily seeks God, who seeks His face and not His hand. What does it mean to seek God, to seek God’s face and not His hand? It means coming to God with our priorities in order. God is already a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, so rewards can’t be our primary motive for seeking Him; it has to be something else entirely. To seek is to attempt to find, to search for something or in this context, Someone. To seek God’s face has nothing to do with catching a glimpse of His face; instead, it means wanting to know a particular aspect to Him. On the face are eyes, so you show interest in His view, viewpoint, perspective, opinion, way of thinking, standpoint etc. On the face is the nose, so you show interest in what He

considers sweet smelling, i.e. pleasing and acceptable “incense”, implying His worship and service. On the face is the mouth, so you can show interest in what He is saying to you per time, and so on. I’m sure you get the message I’m trying to pass across.

Still on verse 6, David referring to God, calls Him the God of Jacob, and rightly so. The God of Jacob is also the God of Israel; but first, He is the God of Jacob. What I’m saying is that our God is a God that is able to work a miracle of transformation – taking us from who we are, from where we are, to who and where we ought to be. David saw Him as One who his generation should seek out and hopefully find. I share his beliefs on behalf of my generation too! I highly recommend God Almighty.

From the Gates - Access!

Our focus here is verse 7 to 10.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

I can't count how many times I have heard this portion of Scripture quoted and recited during church services, whether it's a worship session or a prayer session. The words are crammed; and they roll off the lips of singers or preachers; and the people know it all too well, and respond too. But I wonder how many of us have our hearts opened to receive God and the best He has for us; for too many times, only our lips talk about Him; our hearts are far from being ready to receive Him. Take a minute to think about that.

So Bible scholars say the ark was at the gates of the city, but it won't disappear and appear inside the city; the gates/doors needed to be opened so that God could enter. And this was no ordinary God! David made sure to proclaim in the hearing of the people of God; that when the gates and doors are opened, they would be giving access to the King of glory! The Lord (who is) strong and mighty, even mighty in battle; the Lord who is the Lord of hosts! All these talks remind me of something Jesus said in Revelations 3:20; you should be familiar with it, as it's also a popular verse used in evangelism to urge the penitent sinner to open their hearts and let Jesus come in. Meanwhile in its original context, it's Jesus' message to a church in Laodicea. This also means He was addressing His words to Christians. I'll share the verse now.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will

come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Prior to the words recorded in this verse, Jesus had given the Christians in the church in Laodicea the result of His appraisal; there really was nothing to commend. Not only were they lukewarm, they were completely unaware of their true spiritual state. Let's read the preceding verses to the one above. I'll share from verses 15 through 19.

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Yes, it was after all of these that Jesus adds the words of verse 20. So you see, it was not a physical gate or door that Jesus was standing by and knocking for admittance. The gate or door that He is standing by is the heart and life of the people. He was hoping

they would not only listen to what He had said, but allow His word access in their hearts and lives, i.e., to take root in their hearts and bear fruit in their lives, fruits that would be lasting, producing not only internal but also external changes in life, motive, speech and deeds, and will be powerful enough to influence others.

See why I linked it with David's words? Was he only saying the city gates and doors be opened to admit God, or was he also saying that the people pay attention to all he had said prior to that, and give God's Word admittance into their lives? This was the way to go if they were hoping to live a glorious, victorious, and exploit-filled life.

These talks about gates and doors also remind me of an incident recorded in the Scriptures. Permit me to share this last example with us. I promise it links up. It's a long read and I refuse to shorten it, because you need to read the full story for yourself. Here's Acts 12:1-17.

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him

forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named

Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.”

Do you already see why I say it links up? You don't? Well, think about this: though Peter had enjoyed access through gates that were opened supernaturally, and even those that open on their own accord; he eventually encountered one that didn't open supernaturally or of its own accord; and it's amazing that it happened in the home of a Christian where Christians were gathered together praying. Now, after all that has been said in this book, like in the case of Peter, there will be two kinds of reactions. I'm wondering if you'll fall into any of these two categories or if you'd have an entirely different negative reaction altogether.

Rhoda's Reaction

Rhoda, who happens to be my namesake, was present in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark where many huddled and praying for Peter's release. I'll assume that she was a Christian; let me also assume she had joined the prayers too. One more assumption I will boldly make is that she was a servant; because, she was the one who first hears the knock and had the responsibility of attending to it.

Now, this is where it gets interesting. Rhoda hears the knock, goes close to the door, recognizes Peter's voice, but doesn't open the gate – out of gladness. Bible says she runs off to tell the others. Now, this kind of zeal is usually found in those with a call. Imagine you've read or heard God's voice; you recognize what He is saying; in fact, you're glad. But wait! Don't run off with just the information, or zealous to be a messenger. Open the gate! You'd be more credible with the evidence. Don't you think so? What I'm saying is, give God's word access in your life first! So that when you step out to do God's work and minister to others, there'd be more credibility to your work; there'd be evidence speaking for you!

The Others

Rhoda didn't need to see before she believed. She only needed to hear. Once she discerned Peter's voice, that was all it took to convince her it was really him speaking. But as for the others, well, they didn't hear the knock; if they did, they didn't go near the door. And even when they were near the door, until they saw with their eyes, they didn't believe.

I've read all manner of commentaries, some excusing, some accusing the Christians who didn't believe until they actually saw Peter. I honestly believe that as people of faith, their response should help us realize that we really, really, really need to awaken our faith and live up to our name; because, sometimes, we have to see before we can believe when it should be the other way round. Yes, there will always be a Rhoda who will hear what you didn't hear, and attempt to lead you to the one you wouldn't have gone towards in the first place. But when do you think it will be your turn to be a Rhoda, at least not just the informed version, but the upgraded version; i.e. the one with the information and the evidence, who also leads others?

When Peter does get admitted into the house, He had good news not just for the Christians gathered there but also instructed them to share it with those who weren't there. You see, someone greater than Peter is knocking with good news and instructions!

His name is Jesus and you've already read about the good news and His instructions in this book. What are you going to do with all the information?

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR



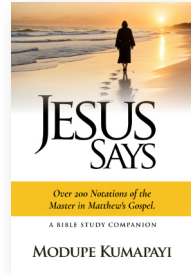
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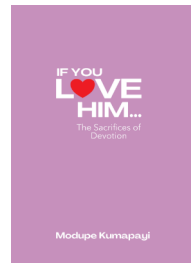
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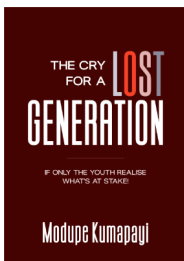
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A challenge to parents and guardians to release their wards to do what God wants and has ordained for each child.



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A book that answers the question, What is God's love? And it presents the challenge, if you love God, then what?



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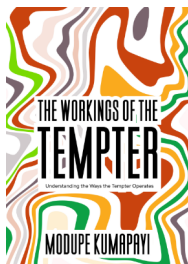
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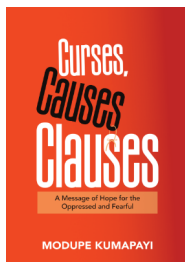
Prophet or Magician?

Prophet or Magician? Is a unique book, a mirror of sort, and reflects who God's true prophets are, and who impostors, charlatans, liars, false preachers are.



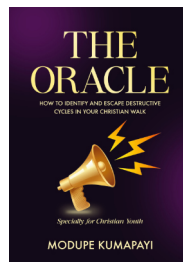
The Workings of the Tempter

The Workings of the Tempter is an unusual book; it retells Bible episodes of temptations and chronicles incidences of many who had fallen for the tempter's cunning ways of trapping those he lures into sin.



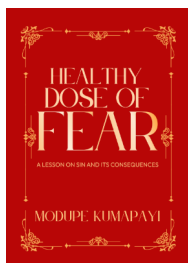
Curses, Causes and Clauses

Curses, Causes and Clauses is written to answer questions about curses, show you the way out of curses, and also teach you how to remain free from curses.



The Oracle

The Oracle reveals hidden truths about the Christian life. Opens the way to understanding why some Christians fell in the early church and how you can stand today and gain heaven at last.



Healthy Dose of Fear

Healthy Dose of Fear equips you to be a victorious, sin-overcoming, holy, upright, and heaven-assured child of God.

The Book

“If only our youth realise what’s at stake!” This book is for the youth, but fathers and mothers who read it may wish they had read this book before. Which does not mean anyone has totally and fatally lost out; there’s immediate help for anyone seeking God now. No one seeking to do God’s will, however their past experiences, is ever denied.

With God, there is always a TODAY, a chance NOW to do right, for the young, and for the old. So, *The Cry for a Lost Generation* may well turn out to be the joy of a reclaimed future with God, for the youth, as well as for the older generation.

The Author

MODUPE KUMAPAYI believes strongly that God has impressed upon her heart to share through her writings the knowledge she has gained in her walk with God and the insight she has been given in her study of God’s Word. Her deepest desire is to arm people with the truth; and her greatest fulfilment comes from watching people thrive spiritually.