

Towards Freedom, Success and Excellence in Life

Getting the
Faith that
Produces Knock-out
Victories in Life

Kintu Francis

Preface

Have you ever wondered why many of God's great promises are not realized or fulfilled in the lives of many of us Christians? God promised us, among other things, victory over the world (**1 Jn. 5:4**); victory over fear (**1 Jn. 4:18**); restoration of health (**Ps. 103:3**; **Is. 53:4-5**); revealing Himself to us (**Jn. 14:21**); filling us with His Holy Spirit (**Jn. 7:37-38**); power (**Lk. 10:19**); financial or material sufficiency (**Deut. 15:4**, **2 Cor. 8:9**); great works or outstanding results or fruits (**Jn. 14:12**); all-round prosperity (**3 Jn. 1:2**); a complete life (**Jn. 10:10**). This is a life of total victory in all areas of life – the spirit, the soul and the body. God is not a liar, but why are many of God's great promises, such as the above, not realized or fulfilled in the lives of many of us Christians?

Well, the Lord Himself gives us part of the answer, and this is what He says: *"Have faith in God. For truly I say to you, that whoever shall say unto this mountain, be you removed, and be you cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them"* (**Mk. 11:22-24**). Faith! Many people wait to see or experience things before they can believe God for them. As a result, they do never get much out of life. The promises of God remain unfulfilled in their lives, because faith or belief comes before experience, not vice versa. If you wait to first see Christ Jesus walking on earth before you can believe Him, chances are that you will never get saved. Faith is your ticket to everything. Our Lord Jesus says that all things are possible for them that believe (**Mk. 9:23**). *"All things"*, not one or two!

If you want to be a victorious, prosperous and successful Christian, whose life is evidenced by signs and wonders of God's supernatural hand, His love, care and faithfulness, you must be a man or woman of great faith. No great achievements can be made in life without this super-natural 7th sense of faith in God and the integrity of His word. Every failure in effort is first a failure in believing. The level of faith you have determines your level of success in life.

Yet having faith means much more than believing that God can or will do it. Find out in this book why. Find out how to acquire the faith gift; how to exercise it and how to use it to knock out mountains and secure victories in all areas of life. Find out how to grow in faith and to reach that level of trust in God that unlocks every kind of problem, need, challenge, or situation in life, and pushes a believer beyond the heights of his dreams. Find out how you can reach that level of security and confidence which makes you welcome the unknown with a sense of certainty. Find out how you can live a life of deep conviction that drives you to hold on to the Word of God come rain or sun, day or night, hail or storm - and conquer your world.

Table of Contents

1. Supernatural <i>vs.</i> Common Sense	4
2. The Basis of Our Faith	9
3. Passing the Test of Faith	19
4. The Question of God's Will for Your Prayer	28
5. When Faith is Dead	40
6. Winning Faith is Sowing Faith	43
7. Dealing with Enemies of Faith -Defeat, Failure & Discouragement	53
8. Dealing with Enemies of Faith - Guard Your Mind	56
9. Dealing with Enemies of Faith – The Fear Factor	61
10. How to defeat the Devil attacking your Faith	71
11. The Lord's Different Reactions	79
12. The Winning Power in God's Word	82
13. "Lord, Give Me More Faith"	94

Chapter 1

Supernatural vs. Common Sense

The promises made by our Lord Jesus Christ's before He returned to His and our Father in heaven are the most powerful promises that have ever been made on this earth. Take a look at some of them:

- ❖ "... So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (**Mark 11:22-24**).
- ❖ "For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (**Matthew 17:20**).
- ❖ "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (**John 15:7**).
- ❖ "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven given good things to those who ask Him" (**Matthew 7:9-11**).

In other words, the Lord is like saying that there is no mountain anywhere in a person's path to have life in its fullness; but rather, every man's unbelief is his mountain. Yet this is a great challenge to most of us believers. In spite of these and many other great promises from none other than the King of Heaven and Earth, not very many Christians may really be victorious in realizing these promises in their lives. Many of us Christians continue to find ourselves being overcome again and again by the flesh, the devil and the world. Sin, sickness, poverty, fear, and the like, remain the order of the day. Many of us in the body of Christ today remain weak and weighed down by all kinds of oppressions.

The Bible correctly states that, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not deliver?*" (**Num. 23:19**). Certainly not, but why are many of the promises of God not often fully obtained by many Christians in their lives?

The love of 'Common Sense'

Part of the answer is revealed somewhere: "*If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you*" (**Matt. 17: 20**). The fact is that often we do not take God at His word. We generally love to follow our "common sense," rather than God's "supernatural sense".

But as long as we are operating at the level of common sense, rather than at that of the supernatural sense, we experience common life, and to get common results, for the level of faith a person sows equals the results he or she gets in any thing. That's why Jesus *did not* say that signs and wonders would follow everybody, but only *them that believe*. The word of God says that: "*But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised*" (1 Cor. 2:14).

A natural man (anyone whose mind and heart have not been enlightened by the work of the Spirit of God, but is instead guided by common sense) cannot understand or obtain the supernatural wonders of the Spirit of God, since he does not believe them as true knowledge. That's why you hear some of our theologians even suggesting that these verses (about signs and wonders following believers) were valid for Christians at one time, but are no longer valid today. Others say that such verses are to be understood only in a spiritual sense, and not taken literally.

Then there are those who reject the text from which the verses were taken, claiming that it's not "the oldest and best copy"; that the verses are probably "a non-inspired addendum to the gospel" which shouldn't be taken seriously. How men love *common sense* more than scriptural, *supernatural* sense! We always want to fit things of God into our limited brains and reasoning. That is why, unfortunately, most of us live average lives, obtain common things and die having realized barely a sizeable proportion of our potential. For extraordinary things are only achieved by men and women of extraordinary faith.

We shouldn't be surprised about many people's lack of faith in the Word of God, even when they are professing Christians. There are those who will accept the Bible as the inspired revelation of God, but they will not accept the power of the words or promises contained therein. They look at them with a natural mind, and they find that it does not make sense.

The word of God predicted this a long time ago when it said that people will be "*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*" (Tim. 3:1-5). Jesus referred to this generation of people with weak or no faith at all as "*faithless and perverse*". "*Faithless and perverse generation. How long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? ...*" (Matt. 17:14-23). The wisdom of God may appear foolish to the natural man, but that 'foolishness' is still wiser than the 'wisdom' of men (1Cor. 1:25).

The winning Supernatural Sense

Men might love common sense but the key to true success in life is the supernatural sense – undying faith and trust in God, His Word and His work on the cross. God only works through faith.

Jesus said to the blind men who asked to be healed, "*Be it done to you according to your faith*" (**Matt. 9:29**). If you want to be a winning Christian, whose life is evidenced by signs and wonders of God's supernatural love, care and faithfulness, you must be a man or woman of great faith. The Bible in **Heb. 11:1** defines faith as "... *being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see*" (**Heb. 11:1**). Faith means taking God at His Word and acting on it, regardless of anything or how things appear. If you take hold of God's Word, stand and act on it without doubting it, you are a man or woman of supernatural sense who can move any mountain!

In other words, a man of faith says, '*because God says it, it will come to pass even, if in my human wisdom I do not see or know how exactly it can happen*'. '*Because the Word of God says so, it is true even if in my natural understanding, it does not make sense. Because the Lord Jesus said it, and He is not a human being that He could lie, it will come to pass at all costs*'. This is living faith - to believe even if you cannot see. Men and women of common sense only believe what they see or that which they can figure out. But men and women of supernatural sense believe because of the Person (God) who says what He says. Many of the promises of God are mere theory to many people, because they cannot understand them, for such promises can only be spiritually appraised.

But for men of supernatural sense, men of faith, the promises of God are a living reality because they know *Who* makes the promises. When your country's head of state promises you that he would appoint you to such a position in his government, even if you have never gone to school, you have to believe him - because you know he has a lot of power to do so. The same applies to God. Winning faith believes in God, even if circumstances are contrary. What matters are not the circumstances, but the person who makes the promise. If God could create you and the world in which you live, what else can He fail to do for you, if He has promised to do it?

The example of past Heroes

No great progress can be made in life by a Christian without this supernatural sense or living faith in God and in the integrity of His word. The word of God states, "*Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him*" (**Heb. 11:6**). And as that great chapter on faith (**Heb. 11**) says:

- "The universe was formed at God's command through faith so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible...
- By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. ...
- By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

- By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father ... By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.
- ... By faith Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward...
- By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible...
- By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.
- By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; ...
- By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days. ... " (**Heb. 11**).

This is what an ignorant world may call 'blind faith.' But it is what we victorious believers call "living faith," because it is based on an intelligent understanding that the 'person' who created you from nowhere you know and how, and who created the world in which you live, is also able to do whatever He says He would do. To such a believer, the integrity of God's word cannot be doubted.

Like these past heroes of faith, if you and I are - to get saved, to get healed, to get out poverty, debt and scarcity; to defeat sin, to bear fruits, to live a life of power, righteousness and all round victory; if we are to shine in this life, to thrive and not merely to survive, to fly and not merely to crawl, we must live a life of supernatural faith in God and the integrity of His Word. Like our great grand fathers above, we must be prepared to obey and do, even when we do not see or know; by faith we must move and not fear. By faith we must see the invisible. When a secular world is waiting to see before it can believe, we believers must be able to see things long before they come into existence. This is the winning faith.

Signs and Wonders follow only People of Super-natural Sense

Our Lord says, *"And I say to you ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you"* (**Luke 11:9**)."

Love the Lord and avoid the thoughts, words, and behaviour of a "natural man" who operates at the level of common sense. Such a man moves by what he knows, sees, thinks, and feels, not knowing that there is a lot far more to what we see, hear, feel or are bale to imagine or calculate with our limited mental faculties. Such a man his confidence is more in the visible than in the word of God. Let's not act more like those of the world but like those who carry Christ inside of them - the "man" who was given all power and authority in all heaven and on earth.

Live, therefore, by utmost faith. Jesus says it clearly that, "... *signs and wonders shall follow them that believe ...*" (**Mark 16:17-20**). Some Christians or churches have never witnessed any miracle healing, for example, simply because they do not believe in them. God cannot force you to see what you do not believe in.

The signs and wonders of God will continue to manifest themselves in the daily lives of *those that believe*, and to avoid those that do not believe in them or in God, because this is His principle. Yes, everything is possible for a man or woman of faith. The only limit to the products of faith is God's will. Have, therefore, constant faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus and His word. However gloomy or bad the situation might appear, however unlikely things may look, if the Word of God says that it will or can happen, believe it and act on it.

Do not listen to crowds of men or women who only have "common" sense. Common sense is too cheap to be relied upon, because it relies on what is visible, but super-natural sense is too great because it knows that what is visible came from what is invisible; so there is more to what we are seeing. Only listen to what God says, because, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not deliver?*" (**Num. 23:19**); "*Let God be true, and every man a liar*" (**Rom. 3:4**).

We Christians live by faith. If you wait to see or experience great things before you believe God for them, you will never get much out of life. If, for example, you wait to see Christ face-to-face walking on earth, before believing in Him, chances are that you will die a non-believer. Winners live by faith, not by sight. When we choose to believe the Word of God because of He Who says it, and walk on the basis of what we believe, it works out in our experience. But as long as we put our experience or the appearance of things before our belief, we will never fully realize the promises of the Word of God.

Our beliefs and expectations always set the pace for our experience, for "*As a man thinks so is he*", says the Word of God in **Prov. 23:7**. You can never, for example, experience a sinless life before you believe and take cover in the saving grace of Christ Jesus. Think at the level of a natural, common sense person and a common, achiever you will be. Think, however, at the level of the supernatural believer and a supernatural achiever you will become. The level of faith we sow in God in any area of need or life determines the degree of success we reap in the same area.

In the following chapter, I would like to go through the foundation secrets of this great gift of faith. I believe that at the end of it, no mountain will be able to stand in your way, in Jesus' name. Read on.

Chapter 2

The Basis of Our Faith

Faith in God is not just an act. We don't believe in God simply because we advised to or because there is no alternative. There is a very strong ground for us to have the faith we have in God and His word, whatever happens to our lives. In this chapter, I would like to share with you this very important topic, because it is this knowledge that determines how strong or weak our faith in Christ is.

Who are you?

We were originally created as children (sons and daughters) of God. But when our ancestor Adam sinned, something died in us: we were disconnected from God. We lost our status as children of God. That's why each and every human child who is born into this world, he is born with sin, the sin of Adam. He or she is born in sin, spiritually dead. We were destined for death because of Adam's sin, but God sent His Son Jesus Christ to serve our sentence and win His (God's) approval.

God therefore made Jesus Christ - the innocent one - guilty, so that we - the guilty sinners - might become innocent through Christ's sacrifice. Jesus became our substitute. He committed no sins, but then allowed the Father to punish Him for the sins of all people, so that the people might be forgiven and restored to their former relationship with God, that is, sons and daughters in the family of God. Because of the perfect life, suffering, and death of Jesus, God's justice was, therefore, satisfied.

When our very best was not good enough, when our highest attempts could not lead us anywhere (other than to hell), when we were weak, impotent, frail and unable to fulfill God's purposes, the Saviour Jesus came down to lift us up from our sinfulness, from our weakness, from our bondage, from our fallen state and from our mediocrity. Jesus lowered Himself to this sinful, corrupt, frail, weak man and woman who had come short of the glory of God, so that through His painful death and resurrection, He might raise him and her to a level of righteousness acceptable to God!

Every one who accepts that he is a sinner, spiritually dead, and destined for total death; who accepts that he can do nothing by himself, however good or well behaved he might be; but that he has got to be saved by someone else, who paid the sacrifice on his behalf - Christ Jesus; everyone who accepts Christ Jesus as his only Saviour who suffered and shed His blood, died and rose up again, in order to liberate or save him from sin and from death.

Every one who thereafter confesses and renounces his sins and sinful life, and sincerely invites this Jesus into his life to take control, to give him a new Spirit and to direct his life, that person becomes born again – he become a new child of God through Christ Jesus! That's why the Bible says: *"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God"* (Jn. 1:12-13).

If you have believed Christ Jesus and surrendered your life to Him, you are now a special *beloved* child (son or daughter) of God who is entitled to everything in God's kingdom! The basis of our faith is our relationship with God our Father through Christ Jesus. Ask any earthly loving father, and you will find that everything he has is a heritage of his children. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (Jn. 3:16). This is the God your Father. He calls you son, daughter! You are very dear to Him, if you are in Christ Jesus. Otherwise He would never have sent *His only begotten Son* to suffer and die for you.

The Lord Jesus clearly says: *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples"* (Jn. 15: 8). Christ wants you to be fruitful in all areas of your life, because you are now a member of the greatest family. You are a prince or princess of the Divine Family! This ought to be the basis of your faith in God, the basis for anything you want or ask from Him. It should be your source of confidence.

The Bible poses a very important question in **1 John 5:5**: *"Who is it that overcomes the world?"* before providing an answer to the same: *"Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."* The Bible goes on to say, *"for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith"* (**1 Jn. 5:4**). Your faith in Christ Jesus as your Lord and Saviour who restored you to a son-daughter loving relationship with God your Father is your ticket to all victory in life - victory over sickness and diseases, victory over sin and weakness, victory over poverty and debt, victory over bareness, fruitlessness and stagnation; victory over every kind of imprisonment or bondage, suffering or oppression that the devil, the world or even your fellow human beings might bring to you.

Who we really

Jesus' work of giving up His life on the cross and thereby changing sinners to saints, outcasts into children of God, is His greatest accomplishment on earth. As He said, without Him, a natural human person can do nothing. God chose to be like us because we could not be like Him. So in Jesus, God came to us, took our very weak nature so that we, through faith, could be given His fullness.

By giving up His body on the cross, He gave the power to all who believe in Him to become children of God, to defeat Satan and the world, and to have life in its fullness. The Word of God says that in His death and resurrection, God disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him (**Col. 2:15**). Not only were we made alive in Christ, Satan was also disarmed and defeated.

We are, therefore, victorious in everything through Christ Jesus – Halleluiah! God took *the most precious treasure of heaven* to buy you and me out of sin and death and to adopt us into His family. At the end of it all, He said, *“it is finished.”* It was finished. The price was paid and paid in full at Calvary. We therefore have a basis to claim anything according to His will, in His name.

If non-believers who neither trust in Christ Jesus nor have His redemptive grace can achieve a measure of success in this life, how much more must Christians who have the all-enabling grace of salvation? The devil, the flesh and the world and sin may stand in our way, but they are a conquered enemy to every soul that is in union with Christ Jesus. Yes, Satan roams around like an angry lion looking for someone to devour, and we are still in the flesh and the world. But in reality, all these have been tamed by Jesus’ work on the Cross. We should never fear anything.

The Seed of Sonship

Accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Redeemer and getting baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit gives us the identity of Sons of God. We are now His children because of Christ Jesus and His Holy Spirit seed deposited into us. Paul said: *“I am no longer living but Christ lives in me; and the life I am living is not mine but that of the son of God who dies for me.”*

Believers are not only saved but they have one of the greatest gifts, besides salvation. This is the Holy Spirit, the third *Persona* of God, by whom everything was created and is sustained. He is given to every body who has surrendered his heart to Christ Jesus. The word of God says, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (**Acts 2:38**).

Jesus made it clear that believers would not be left alone to struggle with the flesh, sin, Satan and the world, but rather that, from God the Father, He would send the "Helper" (Holy Spirit) to help them: *“If you love Me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you”* (**Jn. 14: 15-18**).

This is the Holy Spirit, by whom everything was created and is sustained. He lives in you. Are we believers not so privileged to have this kind of mighty power and authority over all things living inside of us? He lives with and helps, teaches, guides, counsels, empowers, leads, and protects Christians who believe and rely on Him, in everything until the end of time.

The Bible says that *"He [God] has given us of His own Spirit. That is how we know that we are in Him and He is in us"* (1 Jn. 4:13). This is the master seed of sonship. We carry the very Spirit of God, of Christ Jesus in us! Being a Christian is not merely belonging to a Church as an organisation. It is not merely an act of acquiring a Christian name. It is the release of the supernatural life (Spirit) of Christ Jesus into human vessels. We are Christians because we carry the very Spirit of God inside of us. A Christian, in terms of our deepest identity is, therefore, the carrier of the Spirit and Son of God. The word *"Christian"* means the anointed of God, one into whom the Spirit of Jesus has been poured or deposited. Remember, all the fullness of God dwells in Christ Jesus (Col. 1:19; 2:9) and He is in you!

Those who carry Christ are *gods* themselves

Did you know that if you have Christ in you, you actually have the status of a god? If you didn't know, get it this time, for the word of God says that you are one. *"I have said, you are gods; and all of you are children of the most High"* (Psalms 82:6). You are gods. I am not surprised God refers to us as such, for what else could you refer to a person who carries within him the very Spirit of God the Almighty? Everything produces after its own nature. The offspring of a goat is a goat. The offspring of a cow is a cow. What about the offspring of God? A god, for sure.

Every one who has Christ in Him and is conscious of this fact and has a high sense of value in it, he is supernatural. He is no longer a common human being. He is superhuman, extra-natural. If you carry Christ inside of you, see yourself no more as an ordinary human being. The truth is that you are a son of God; you are a god. God does not give birth to natural children. The son of a goat is a goat. The son of a man is a man. A son of God can't be anything else but a god, because in the law of creation, everything produces after its kind.

Our Lord Jesus confirmed this status of ours in the New Testament: *"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, you are gods?"* (John 10:34). When the Lord sent Moses to Pharaoh, He did not send him as a man. Since He had deposited His Spirit in him, like He has done in all of us believers, Exodus 7:1 says: *"And the Lord said to Moses, See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh...."*

Jesus Himself came and was God unto the world. This is what He said, "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you" (**John 20:21**). If you connect the Scriptures above, you will understand that we believers in Christ Jesus are no ordinary human beings we often confuse ourselves to be. There is something special about us. The day you received Jesus, you received another life. You have the life of the Spirit.

You now have the God-order of life within you, as someone beautifully put it. That's why the Bible says: "*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us*" (**2 Cor. 4:7**). St. John says: "*You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (**1 John 4:4**). But many Christians do not know this, and you cannot rise above the level of knowledge you have.

The Secret of all Victories

Many of us need to know how much power is working inside us, if we are to have winning faith. That was why Paul prayed this prayer in **Eph. 1:18-19**: "*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*" Wow!

He said when your eyes of understanding are enlightened, you will know what power is working inside of you. "*But as many as received Him, to them gave He power...*" (**John 1:12**). He didn't give them just a name or a title such as "Baptist", "believer", "Protestant", "Catholic", "Pentecostal", "John", etc. He gave them His very own Spirit. You have God on your inside, if you have received Christ Jesus. The word says: "*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us*" (**2 Cor. 4:7**). This is the fundamental secret of all victories in life – the realization of who you are; that you are carrying the Spirit of God inside of you.

So, a supernatural life has been infused and injected into us believers. Now as a carrier of Christ Jesus inside of you, refuse to accept anymore anything that the world throws to you. By faith in the one who is in you, you can overcome anything that life presents. Refuse, therefore, to accept that you are like any other ordinary human being who is vulnerable to all sorts of the works of the devil – sinfulness, sicknesses, diseases, poverty, debts, barrenness, failure, fear, weakness, stagnation, bondage, etc. Jesus is the vine and you are His branch. Whatever flows in Jesus should also flow directly into you, the branch, if you are in Him.

The point is that a person who is carrying the Spirit of Jesus Christ in him or her, and who also is conscious of the value of it, must in the same way carry the level of power and authority that is measurable to that which is inside of him. Otherwise, what is the difference between a motor car that is carrying a Head of State, and that which is carrying ordinary passengers - if both of them keep running out of fuel, have punctures, are equally subjected to the same inconveniences on the road (e.g. caught up in traffic jams, stopped and checked by revenue and traffic police, cut off in traffic by bullish cab drivers, waylaid by armed robbers, etc). There must be a big difference between believers and non-believers, carriers and non-carriers of Christ Jesus.

More than conquerors

And if Christ dwells in you richly, then your life is His life. Your needs are His needs. Your concerns are His concerns. You no longer have to face problems alone. They are Christ's. Jesus says: *"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"* (John 15:4-5). A branch cannot have a problem which is not shared with its mother tree. Actually if the branches of the tree die, the life of the tree itself is under threat. We believers have the same relationship with Christ and if He richly dwells in us, our needs are His needs; our problems are His concerns.

You are not a "worthless sinner," "born to suffer", as some Christians want to refer to themselves. You were liberated and now you belong to the victorious Christ Jesus. In Him, you are a winner in everything. You were purchased by the blood of Jesus, and the most precious blood could not purchase a worthless product or "worthless sinner". Instead you are "beloved" son or daughter of the Most High God who, in Christ Jesus, is *"more than a conqueror"* - over the flesh, the world, the devil, everything.

The Word of God in **1 Peter 2: 9** urges us to understand who we are and our value: *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."* You are a chosen person. You are a royal. You belong to a holy family, nation.

Your identity is not rooted in your former status as a slave of sin, but in Jesus Christ your Saviour, who loved you, came down to earth to save you, rescued you and gave you a new name (son/daughter of God), and a status with all the privileges that go with it. You are simply a new creature in Christ Jesus, who is growing from strength to strength and from glory to glory in Him.

Jesus says, “I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his Master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you” (John 15).

True believers in Christ Jesus are no ordinary people. If value is determined by price, we are incredibly valuable and priceless. God took the most precious treasure of heaven (His only Son Jesus Christ) to buy you and me out of sin and death, and adopted us into His family. If God went so far to buy you and me out of sin and death, we can claim anything according to His will and we get it.

If you have accepted Christ Jesus as your Redeemer and surrendered your life to Him, rest assured you are a special being: saved, highly valued and a privileged Son of God. You have been redeemed. You have been rescued from the shadow of death and brought out into priesthood and kingship. Do not lower your value. It is a disgrace to redemption for any Christian to lower his value before the devil. Yours is a highly privileged position in Christ. From the day you embraced Christ, you became a new person. You rose from the level of the common unbeliever to that of the special breed. God calls you a *royal*, a *chosen one*, a *priest*, etc. Do not contradict Him!

You can reflect the excellencies of Christ in you

Many believers consider themselves natural people because they see themselves as weak and vulnerable, just like any other person. But this is not true. Man in his mortal state may appear weak, impotent, frail and unable to fulfil God’s purpose because of weakness. Yet, he is still the crown of creation. Saved man is God-made, not self-made. We believers bear upon us the fingerprints of the *Infinite*, the Almighty, the God of Heaven and Earth. You may be a jar of clay, but you are not the plaything of the universe, because you carry the mighty Spirit of Christ inside of you. With Christ Jesus in us, we can reach the heights of victory, majesty, honour and glory God pre-ordained for us.

Because of His love, God lowered Himself to this frail, weak man who had come short of the glory of God. He raised Him to a status of a little less than God Himself. It was this glorious truth that so overwhelmed David to wonder: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him **a little lower than the heavenly beings** and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas” (Ps. 8:3-8).

Man's dignity and excellencies find their fulfillment in the *person* of Christ Jesus. Everything that is under the sovereign dominion of Christ Jesus is ours. Redeemed humanity has been elevated or raised, by means of the new birth, to highest rank of all created beings. We were raised to the most remarkable height possible, short of becoming members of the Trinity itself! Salvation or redemption is a restoration to what God intended when He made man in the first place. If you carry the Spirit of Jesus in you, you are a clear foreshadowing of all his excellencies. This is the basis of our faith and prayers.

Your faith must exceed that of a non-believer!

If you have accepted Christ and have made up your mind to obey His Holy Spirit in you everyday, you have a mighty source of power and wealth in the person of the Holy Spirit, which non-believers can only dream of. With all this incredible power, which force in the world can defeat us? Satan and the world can do nothing whatsoever about whom you really are in Christ; but if he can convince you that you are a worthless sinner, not any different from non-believers, then you are likely to remain that.

Our Lord refers to us in these words: "*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden*" (**Matt. 5:14**). But He also says, "*According to your faith be it unto you*" (**Matt. 9:29**). Many of us believers do not know or believe in the spiritual resources, privileges, authority and power available to us. That is why we often suffer unnecessarily or remain weak, just like the non-believers do. But now you know who are in Christ Jesus. If you have accepted the Lord, you have a mighty hand of power inside of and behind you. Know this fact and use your highly privileged status as a "Son of God" to dismiss or defeat the Devil, the world, the flesh or any problem, in any form they attack you – your salvation, your calling, your righteousness, your health, your family, your job, your peace, your finances, your life, your everything.

If sons and daughters of mortal Presidents have so much belief and faith in what they can do or get, if they want it, what about the sons and daughters of God? Our weapons may be different from the weapons of the world, but we must, nevertheless, have victory, power and authority over the world and all its forces through our faith in Christ Jesus.

A smart thief

The devil will, however, never let go what belongs to you until you claim it confidently and firmly in faith, in the name of Christ Jesus who has already paid it for you. Why should the devil leave you free to have a good and full life, anyway, when his mission is only to steal from, kill and destroy you? Every smart thief will always want to take advantage of a person who is 'sleeping' or one who is ignorant, in order to part away with his most valuable belongings. Our Lord makes it clear that the devil is a thief who "*comes only to steal and kill and destroy*" (**Jn. 10:10**).

What does he steal from you: your salvation, your health, your joy, your love, your property, your peace, everything. But the good news is that whereas the devil lives to steal, kill and destroy you and me, our Lord Jesus came so that you and I “... *may have life, and have it to the full*” (**Jn. 10:10**) – Alleluia!

The reason why many of us live defeated lives is because we are not conscious of the indwelling power/spirit of God in us. So the enemy takes advantage of our ignorance. If the Devil can make you think that abundant life is not for this life, but it is for heaven; if he can convince you that sicknesses, diseases, poverty and the like are inevitable in this life; if he can make you believe that suffering is your good “cross” and it is God’s will for you; if he can convince you that you are an ordinary person, just like a non-believer, he will have succeeded, not only in robbing you of your understanding, but your victory as well.

As the Bible says, ignorance is the number one factor for the suffering of God’s people (**Hosea 4:6**). Until you know the truth, you remain in bondage (**John 8:31-32**). Like an animal tied unto a tree, unless it discovers that the rope that is apparently tying it to the tree is fake or no more, it will continue rotating at the same spot. If you are a believer, know therefore that you were redeemed a long time ago, not only from sin and eternal death, but also from all consequences of sin. Be always conscious of the total and great package of your redemption, which our Lord Jesus came to give and painfully paid for us with His precious flesh and blood at Calvary. This must be the basis of your faith.

Heirs of God and Co-heirs with Christ

Whatever your background, when you received Christ as your Saviour and Lord, you became a member of the best and greatest family there is. You are no longer an outsider with an inferiority complex. No, all that belong to Christ belong to you. The word of God says, “*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of son-ship. And by Him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ ...*” (**Rom. 8:15-17**).

Christ Jesus restored us as God’s chosen ones on earth. In His victory over Satan, He restored everything that man had lost in the Garden of Eden. He has put all these into our hands. The victory is total — spirit, soul and body. It is a comprehensive victory for you and for me in all ways. He did it on our behalf. It is because of this that God says in **Isaiah 43:4-5**: “*Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you.*”

Satan has no right over you, therefore, because: “... *those He (God) predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified*” (**Rom. 8:30**). No force in hell is strong enough to condemn your destiny.

Jesus is making intercessions for us. He is standing in the gap for our liberty, not our captivity; for our prosperity not poverty; for our success in everything we do, not failure. The very first words that God spoke to man were: have dominion; be fruitful (read carefully the Book of **Genesis**). Man was made to have dominion over every other creation of God. He was also designed for blessings. This is the original inheritance of man that was lost to sin, and now the blood of Jesus has re-purchased it for us. Praise be to Him for ever!

This is why you should never allow the devil to play around with you, in any way. If we understand well the instrument of purchase, if we know that this original inheritance has been purchased back to us, we must become extra serious in our exercise of our rights. We must place a demand on what belongs to us. Satan is still alive and kicking, but he is no longer in control.

All power in heaven and on earth was handed over to Jesus, after His resurrection (**Matt. 28:18**), and from that time on. Jesus legally holds the reins of the heavens and the earth. And He chose to give the dominion of the earth to the children of men. Jesus was slain to receive for humanity what was lost by the first Adam. He did not need power, for He was always with God and He was God Himself. Instead He received it for us. Thus, power is available by the blood.

You must not accept to be a failure. You must not accept to be deprived of anything that Christ purchased for you any more. He was slain in order to receive the blessings for us - to restore to us all that was lost in Adam. Whatever does not carry the scent of God in our lives, therefore, we need to challenge it in faith, until it gives way.

A Christian must always be strengthened by an inner conviction that he is a son of God, a heir of God and co-heir with Christ; a member of the best and greatest family there is. You are no longer an outsider. You can go to the Father through Christ Jesus with all the faith and confidence of a son or daughter of the first and greatest family. As the Bible says, this is the confidence we have that when we call upon Him in the name of Jesus He hears us because we are His children.

Chapter 3

Passing the Test of Faith

A student who dodges exams stays in the same class!

The word of God says, *"Be still and know that I am God ..."* (Ps. 46:10). There is a time in our walk with God when He sets us in a place where nothing seems to be moving in our lives. It can be a place of need or challenge, but one where all your wisdom, your education, your qualifications, skills, past experience, your contacts and friends seem to be of little or no value.

Perhaps you are unemployed; perhaps you are laid with an illness; perhaps you are in prison or you are going through a financial crisis, with debts and needs all over you. Perhaps you have been praying for something for a long time – say a financial need, peace of mind, a career promotion, a child, a marriage partner, salvation or change of heart of a loved one, whatever. But instead of getting a breakthrough, nothing happens; you see no sign of God's hand. You have done everything you know how. You have prayed, fasted and offered all sorts of sacrifices to God, but nothing seems to work; things move in slow motion or seem only to get worse.

No sense of God's presence. It is as if God does not care or even exist. These are the times when many question the reality of God. Some stop praying, give up seeking God or lose faith in the word of God altogether. They settle for their circumstances. But this is where many of us fail the critical test of faith, for such delays, hard times or God's "absence" often come purposely, in order to prove the genuineness of our faith.

The Test

One of the most unfortunate things in Christian life is for your faith in God to be proved not to be genuine in a crisis! You must, however, pass the test of patience and perseverance before your faith is proved genuine. The word of God says this about the problems and challenges of life we daily face and God's 'delay' to intervene on our behalf: *"These have come so that your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed"* (1 Peter 1:7).

Until your faith is *proved genuine*, you will not give genuine praise and honour to Jesus, for until such testing, He won't be revealed in your life (1 Pt. 1:7). You never know how well your house is built until it is tested by rain. Torrential rains reveal the quality of your roof.

Wind and cold reveal how well your home is insulated. Heat and sun reveal the quality of your paint and siding. All these elements reveal whether a solid foundation has been laid to make your home a secure and lasting place to live. If you find yourself in suffering or need; you've prayed and made all sorts of offerings but God doesn't seem to care, don't quit or say God doesn't exist; or that the promises of God don't work for every body. It's not God's word not working for you. It is God working to reveal Himself in your life in a new and more powerful way.

There is a silver lining to every cloud, however dark it might appear. Problems or suffering can be God's means of refining the human heart, in order to bring out its finest qualities. Delayed answer to prayer is often meant to bring us to a level of faith, trust, as well as depth of character and experience with God that we would never otherwise get. When God finally intervenes, it becomes a 'faith experience' that allows us to know firsthand the reality, faithfulness and personal nature of God. Our relationship with and trust in Him rises to entirely new levels.

God is very close

So, the longer God delays, the more He seems to be far away from you, the closer He actually is. The harder things become, the more God is doing a work that cannot be explained to you or those around you. Remember, what we see came from what we don't see (**Heb. 11:3**). So, there is always more to what God is doing behind the scenes in our lives than what we often see with our naked eyes. Delays in the Kingdom of God don't mean denials. When Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree, nothing visibly happened to it. To His disciples, it looked as if the tree had defied Jesus. But a few days later, they found it dead (**Mk. 11:12-14; 20-24**)!

It had to die, because in the spirit realm, where the vital forces that control life lie, God is always at work for us (**Jn. 5:17**), even when we don't see it with our naked eyes. When things are going bad, when things are not moving, that doesn't mean God has stopped working. Not at all. He is, instead, working at a different level. It may not feel or appear that God is with us when we are in the midst of dark periods in our lives. But don't be led too much by your feelings.

Bodily and emotional feelings keep changing but God doesn't change. Be led by what God says. He says He will never leave you or forsake you; but He will be with you until the end of time (**Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20**). We must learn to embrace hard times with the calm composure of Princes and Princesses of Heaven! But you can't do this unless you have spiritual eyes of faith; eyes that are able to see beyond what the naked eyes can see.

God wants you Victorious

Are you in situation that is so bad or looks almost hopeless? It could be a spiritual, financial, health or any other personal problem or need. Do not lose faith in God, because *"in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose"* (**Rom. 8:28**). It's His will that *"... you prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers"* (**3 Jn. 1:2**). Anything that is against God's will for your life is a concern to God Himself. Love and put your faith in Christ Jesus - He is our ticket to success and victory in all battles of life.

God Cares

When we are suffering, in need or in problems, we tend to think that God doesn't care. But God knows and cares about us more than anything. He is watching every detail of your life to the extent that He even knows the number of hairs on your head (**Lk. 12:7**)! If God so cares about the lives and welfare of even the little birds of the air, (**Matt. 6:24-34; 10:29-31**), what about us His expensively liberated children? If value is determined by price, we believers are valuable beyond measure, because God took the most precious Treasure in Heaven - Christ Jesus - and bought us believers out of death. Imagine how valuable you are to cost God His very own and only Son!

The Bible says that His love for us is more than life itself (**Ps. 63: 3**)! *"He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?"* (**Rom. 8:32**). God is a loving Father and you are His accepted child, if you received Christ. You are loved by God beyond what you can imagine. He says: *"Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you"* (**Is. 43:4-5**). If you are in Christ, your battles are His battles. God will fight and defeat all your enemies - if you trust and rely on Him to do it for you.

God is ever faithful

In the heat of problems or suffering, we tend to doubt God's faithfulness. But God has never made a promise which He didn't fulfil. The word says, *"... Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave through His servant Moses"* (**1 Kings 8:56**). God is God. *"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not deliver?"* (**Num. 23:19**). The Lord who created everything *"remains faithful forever"* (**Ps. 146:6**)!

God is Able

Some of the problems we face in life tend to look as is they are too big. But this is so only when you have not looked at God.

The truth is that whatever our need or problem in life is, God working through Jesus has absolute power and control over them. God "*upholds all things by the word of His power*" (**Heb. 1:3**). All authority over everything in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus (**Matt. 28:19**). The word says:

Jesus "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.... He is the beginning... so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross" (Col. 1:15-20).

"Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, ... and that life was the light of men... From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another" (Jn. 1:3-4, 16).

This same Jesus has this to say in **Proverbs 8:15-36**:

"By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth. I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honour, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full. "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world."

I was there when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when He gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep His command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind. "Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favour from the LORD. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death."

This is **Jesus**, who was and is before everything; the craftsman at God's side - whoever finds Him finds life and receives favour from the LORD! Trust in Him without ever despairing or doubting. Our needs are nothing compared to the power of God operating in Jesus Christ. He "*is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us*" (**Eph. 3:20**).

God is able to change any situation, however hopeless it might have become. He can turn a dead person or situation into life; a loser into a winner; a weak into a strong one. He can turn a beggar or borrower into a lender or giver; a tenant into a landlord; a sinner into a saint; turmoil or gloom into joy; failure or weakness into strength. He can bring water in the desert. He can turn any situation upside down. The word says that: *“He puts forth His hand upon the rock; overturns the mountains by the roots. He cuts out rivers among rocks; and His eye sees every precious thing” (Job 28:9-10).*

The mighty power of God

Unfortunately, we tend to trust God for too little, and to reduce His power to that of a human being. The truth is that the power of God, working in and through Christ Jesus, is greater than any season, condition or system we can find ourselves in. Time lapse can breed familiarity but we are talking about:

- ❖ God who scattered the billions of stars at a mere word!
- ❖ God who engineered every favourable condition necessary to support life on this planet!
- ❖ God who populated the oceans and the lands with creatures, animals, birds, and insects of unbelievable variety and complexity!
- ❖ God who created the universe, the skies, the planets, the highest mountains and the seas and who holds them together by the power of His Spirit!
- ❖ God the Master Designer of the complex human spirit, brain, body, heart, and intelligent life!
- ❖ God who turned the Red Sea into a red carpet and drowned the entire Egyptian army before their eyes (**Joshua 2:10**)!
- ❖ Jesus the express image of the invisible God, in whom all fullness of God dwell and by whom all things were created (**Col. 1:15-20**)!
- ❖ Jesus who is before all things, and in whom all things hold together who has supremacy in everything (**Col. 1:15-20**)!
- ❖ Jesus who, through shedding blood on the cross, made peace for us (**Col. 1:15-20**)!
- ❖ Christ the King and Lord, to whom the earth and everything in it belongs (**Ps. 24:1; 1 Cor. 10:26**)!
- ❖ Jesus who made the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers whole and the dead alive!
- ❖ Jesus to whom all authority over everything in heaven and on earth has been given (**Matt. 28:19**)!
- ❖ God the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the One who is, and who was, and who will come, the Mighty One (**Rev. 1:8**)!
- ❖ The God of History, the God of the Bible, God Almighty, the God of *all possibilities* (**Matt. 19:26; Mk. 9:23; Mk. 10:27; Lk. 1:37; Lk. 18:27**)!

"Is anything too hard for the Lord" (**Gen. 18:14**)? God is so big, much bigger than anything you can imagine. There is no circumstance too hard; no wall so strong; no person or system so obstinate or stubborn that the power of God working through Christ Jesus can't break down or lead us around. God is "... able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (**2 Cor. 9:8**). Yes, we can have everything we need and at all times, not sometimes! Have unfailing faith in Christ, even when things look hard. He is not limited by your environment, education, economy, or contacts. He does things according to His power, not according to our circumstances.

Whatever the season, place, problem or circumstances, God remains powerful (**Deut. 8:18; Heb.13:8; Mal. 3:6**). He can provide the necessary conditions to meet your every need or accomplish His purposes in your life, regardless of the circumstances that surround you. "*Nothing is impossible with God*" (**Lk. 1:37**); "*Everything* [not one or two things] *is possible for him who believes*" (**Mk. 9:23**).

- o What is that tiny, minute virus, germ or bacteria that is causing the sickness or disease troubling your body - to God who created everything visible and invisible?
- o What is that tiny piece of land you want - to God who created continents?
- o What is that minute structure called a house you want - to God who created mountains?
- o What is that small thing called money (be it in its millions, billions, trillions of dollars) - to God who created and owns all the gold and the wealth of the entire world?
- o What is that small problem, need or concern of yours - to God the author of life, the creator of the world, and the one who has ultimate power, authority and control over everything in and under the sky?

The answer to all these questions is - *absolutely nothing*! We trust God for too little. Our problems or needs are so small, so temporary, but God is SO BIG, BIGGER than we can possibly imagine!

Trust in Him

Always trust God to meet your deepest personal needs, even when He appears to delay or even when they look too big; even when the situation looks too difficult, hopeless or impossible. Always love and trust Christ Jesus in good and bad times. Even when you are cast in a deep pit (of sickness, poverty, unemployment, debt, sin, abuse, loss, imprisonment, divorce, death, what ever) let God remain God. He will reach out to you, if you keep trusting in him. Let God be God in good as in bad times. Let God be good in hard as in good times. Trust and love Him equally every day. David was such a faithful man who said:

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" **(Ps. 3:24)**. What is your valley? What is the low point of your life? Even if you are walking in a deep valley of sickness, poverty, debts, sin, loneliness, bareness, prison, divorce, ridicule or shame, personal weakness or deficiency in any area, Christ the power of God is fully aware of it.

He loves you so much that He left the comfort of Heaven, came to earth, suffered, died and rose up for you and me. God wants to help you, if you will trust and draw close to Him. Whatever is casting your life in a shadow of pain, shame, or what, He can help you out of it, if you befriend Him. If He will not take it away from you, He will get you out of it. If He will not get you out of it, He will see you through it victoriously.

Our Lord, in a moment of human suffering, wished that His Father took away the cross from Him. But for our salvation's sake, the Father didn't take it away. Instead, He saw or helped Him through it even more victoriously - and raised him to the name above all names **(Phil. 2:9-10)**!

David who suffered many trials during his reign as King of Israel testifies to the goodness and faithfulness of God to those who continue to trust in Him: *"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned..."* **(Ps. 37:25, 26)**; *"Good people suffer many troubles, but the Lord delivers them from them all; He preserves them completely"* **(Ps. 34:19- 20)**.

The 'righteous', 'good people' David is talking about are those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour and *daily* surrender their lives to Him, walking in obedience to His Spirit, and not according to their flesh or the world. God's faithful people are not exempted from suffering, problems, trials and challenges of this life. But the big difference is that such suffering, problems, trials and challenges that life presents can't defeat them, unless it first becomes possible to defeat Christ Jesus in whom they trust and who lives in them!

Mature Christian

Who is a mature Christian? A mature Christian is that believer in Christ Jesus to whom problems, suffering, troubles, delays, trials or challenges do not change his or her belief about God. Do you and I pass this test of Christian maturity? Whenever God is slow to answer our prayers, or when pressure mounts, what we believe about God is revealed. Do we change our beliefs and move in a different direction, or do we continue to trust Him even more?

The fact is that the true test of Christian maturity is how well we handle problems, trials, troubles, suffering or delays in our lives.

It is in the arena of patient waiting and searching that true Christian character and faith are proved genuine. If we remain trusting and focused on Him, soon we will be hear from God. Be strong and courageous in the face of problems, suffering and God's apparent delay to intervene. Do not be terrified. Do not panic. Do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go (**Joshua 1:9**).

In whichever situation you find yourself, if you have received Christ Jesus and daily walk with Him in faith, He will definitely take you out or see you through it victoriously. There is no other outcome.

Tested in fire

Have you ever been in a situation that was so bad and hopeless until God stretched his hand and saved you from it? If you cannot recount several instances when God has delivered you personally in such a crisis, then chances are that your faith is yet to be born of the Holy Spirit into a living relationship with God. I am afraid, you may need such a severe test before your faith can prove genuine and grow into a living and strong relationship with the Lord.

Dark periods in our lives are often designed to bring our faith in and relationship with God to a new level, for our own benefit. For it is through such dark moments that our faith which, at first is based on head knowledge, is transformed into a real experience of God's faithfulness, His kindness and His reality.

This is because, when God intervenes in a situation that had become hopeless (like that of Lazarus), a strong conviction and bond of love and faith is born, which results in a changed life that holds to a deep, life-transforming faith and trust in God, His goodness, His faithfulness and the integrity of His Word. In order to be a man or woman of great faith, therefore, your faith must be tried, tested and proved genuine in a crisis.

If you find yourself in a time of great suffering, problems or need, take heart. The Lord is with you more than ever before. The Bible says that *"But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (**Rom 5:20-21**). The same applies to everything that tries to trouble the children of God. The more it troubles you who are in Christ Jesus, the more the mercy of God pours on you.

Make sure you do not miss the great opportunity to pass your test. Most Christians crumble or give up at this stage, but do not fail your test at this critical moment. It should be the moment you have been waiting for. Seize it as an opportunity and time to press into God.

With the help of the Helper – our dear Holy Spirit - let your roots of trust and confidence in God and His word grow deeper. You see, unless we are cast into times in which we are completely at God's mercy for breakthroughs in our lives, we will never experience God's faithfulness in those areas. We will never know how personal He is, or that He can be trusted to meet the deepest needs in our lives. There is no testimony without a test.

Learning from trees in a dry season

Have you noticed that whenever there is a dry season, the roots of trees are forced to drive deeper into the soil to find water? Similarly, hard and trying times in our lives, even when they are brought on us by the devil, may often be allowed by God, in order to create such a deep-rooted faith and trust in God that our lives will be changed forever. The longer God's response or intervention delays, the greater our faith in Him should grow. Like the trees in a dry season, the more He delays to come to our rescue, or the more our situation gets worse, the more we should believe in Him and the integrity of His Word or promise. Always persist in faith.

Unfortunately many of us give up in the heat of the moment. That's why our Lord Jesus asks: *"When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)*. Note that the Lord uses the word "when" and not "if", which means that His coming, or call it His response or intervention, is a must, if only we could persist in faith, trusting and waiting on Him. You and I should ask ourselves, by the time God decides to answer our prayer or intervene in our area of need, problem or concern, will He find what He is looking for in us -- a truly genuine heart, a steadfast faith and trust, waiting on Him and Him alone, without having given up, or despaired or discouraged or resorted to complaining or to worldly solutions?

The great King David knew better than any one the secret of winning, and we too can learn from him. David knew that the longer or darker it gets before the Lord answers your prayer or intervenes in your problem, the nearer or closer He actually is; and the more faith you should have in Him. David says, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me" (Psalm 23:4)*. The darkest hour comes just before dawn!

Friend, you and me must pass the test before our faith is proved genuine. The harder things get, the more we should take this as an opportunity to operate at a higher level of faith. This is the time to speak to the problem with all the confidence and trust we have in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 4

The Question of God's Will for Your Prayer

There are two extremes of believers when it comes to faith, prayer and God's will for us.

There those who tend to entirely ignore God's will in their prayers, and will stick to and pursue what they want, when and how they want it, without caring that God's will in their situation or circumstance might be different from theirs. Yet there are those who will attribute every suffering, lack or bad situation in their lives as a matter of God's will, even if God does not, in any way, will them for such problems or suffering. We need to stay away from both these tendencies.

Some people have claimed that the lack of an answer (from God) is itself the answer. Well, not quite so. True God has a will and His will may at times be different from our will. But God is not the author of confusion, or one that would delight in His children living in suspense or doubt about His will concerning their expressed needs or desires. God's Word is often the barometer of His will. If His Word says it, then He wills it. Every question in this life has its answer in the Word of God. If God's Word says that it is okay for you to have *a,b,c,d*, then you can rest assured that it is His will that you have them, regardless of how long it takes, no matter difficult things might appear to be.

If God's will seems to be against your will, ask Him to tell you exactly so, for He is not short of ways to communicate to His people. Make sure that God's will is your will, and that what you are praying for serves His purposes. If you are for Christ, and what you desire glorifies His name and purposes, then your need is likely His need; your problem is His problem; your vision is His vision; your concern is His concern. You no longer have to face it on your own. Give it to Him. If it is a problem or a challenge in your life, and He will not get you out of, or through it, then know that it probably serves His purposes, but you should continue to pray for His will to be revealed.

You can say, *"Lord, I have made my prayer, and I know that it is your will to grant it. But I will not dictate to your superior wisdom; I leave it to you, because you know better and have my best interest at heart; I should be glad to have this problem taken away, but let your will be done onto me as you wish because you know better... You have my total trust."*

If you are in Christ Jesus, He is in you. You therefore no longer have a separate life. Whatever affects you, it also affects Him; it is a concern to Him. Don't lose heart or try to face trouble or suffering alone. You are not alone!

Understanding God's will for your prayer

Using human senses, as we often do, however, we may at times not be able to fully appreciate God's will in some of our given situations. God's picture is often too big for us human beings with "small brains" to be able to understand. We need a spiritual sense to understand His will. That's why the Bible says that, "*God's ways are not our ways*" (**Isaiah 55:89**). This is because God knows and sees far much wider and better than us, what is good and best for us.

Our understanding and knowledge is limited, but God's is infinite. While we human beings often see just a short part of the *now*, God always knows the end from the beginning. Often what appears good to us can actually be bad for us; and what appears bad may actually be the best thing for us. Any normal child hates bitter medicine. But the parent who sees further knows better how good that medicine actually is for the health and long-term development of the child.

At other times we ask for what is good, but God decides to give us what is even better. This truth is beautifully expressed in the testimony of one Confederate Soldier (source unknown):

** I asked for power, so that I might rule over the world; instead I was given knowledge, so that I might be ahead of the world.
** I asked for money, so that I might obtain the good things of this life; instead I was given wisdom, so that I might enjoy life.
** I asked for gold so that I might become rich, instead I was given God so that all riches could become mine.
** I did not get what I specifically asked for; but, as I now realize, I got what I really needed and the very best for me.

God always gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. That's why you hear some people say, "God has done so much more than any of us had asked or imagined years ago." God's will may at times differ from ours, but this often is only because He knows better and has the best plans for us. If God will not *get you out of* a problem, a challenge or suffering, just as He did for Jesus, He will definitely *see you through* it. Look at the case of our Lord. For our salvation's sake, God never *took the cross away* from Jesus, but He *saw Him through* it victoriously.

Jesus loves you much more than you think, and He will provide you with what you need, much more than what you want, or what you think you need, if only you will have faith and trust in him to do it.

An example of death

For many of us human beings, death is a terrible tragedy. For God, however, death may be no tragedy. In God's world of the spirit, the termination of the human body is the beginning of another, even higher and better form of life. That's why we sometimes pray for our sick loved ones, but God, nevertheless, goes ahead to take their souls.

God must know that such a person will rest so much better in the place where He has prepared for them, than if they stayed here on earth. So, by taking their souls home, God is doing what any good father would do: He is providing a better place of rest for His son or daughter. I guess that once someone is there (in Heaven), the last place they would want to return to is here on earth! We must, therefore, always trust God's will. We must trust not only that God does what is best for us, but that He knows better what is best for us. He gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him!

As our Lord prayed, we should always put God's will in the centre of our prayers: *"Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done"* (Lk. 22:42). As someone said, if we are afraid to die to our own purposes and allow God's will and purposes to become supreme, we finish up pleasing ourselves, but not liking the self we have pleased. But God promises wisdom, instead of confusion. He will allow us to understand and to see His will as we ask in faith, believing (James 1: 5).

As long as you have the promise of God's Word in your prayer or dream, and God has not spoken to you to the contrary, be patient and persistent. Believe, and don't quit, no matter how long it takes. When God seems to close his eyes and ear, as He did with Job, you must not close your mouth, but rather cry even louder, just as the blind beggar did (Mark 10:46-52).

If you are in a situation whereby God's will seems to differ from your will, pray to Him to reveal His will. Otherwise God is willing to do the best things for His children. Come to think of it. An earthly father cannot love his children more than God who created him. Often God is willing to do for you more than that you know or are asking for. It was this revelation of the unimaginable goodness of God that so overwhelmed St. Paul to say: *"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen"* (Eph. 3:20-21).

Perfect and permissible will for us

Many Christians know God to be their Father. They know Him to be very rich, but they have no light regarding their right to the things that belong to their father. You might have read or heard about some preachers or brainwashed theologians who reduce the work of Jesus on the cross to only saving souls spiritually for heaven. They will tell you that the good Christian life, which pleases God, is that life of continuous and consistent suffering, troubles and sorrows. That suffering is sacred; that the heavier your suffering and burdens (or the 'cross,' as they prefer to call it), the greater will your reward be in Heaven!

But this is lopsided theology and lies from the devil. Do not buy it! Which Saviour of Mankind has the power and the love to save His children from hell, but not the power or the will or the desire to save them from their other shameful and oppressive conditions of life, such as sickness and diseases, poverty, etc? Which foster parent rescues a street child, takes it to his home but is not willing to clothe, feed, dress and nourish it in every way?

More than concerned with sparing you from hell

Salvation is not only about you and I having our sins forgiven, but also about becoming able to reflect the life and glory of God; and experiencing His goodness and mercy in all aspects of our lives. Jesus, speaking in **Luke 4:18-19** quoted from **Isaiah 61:1-2**: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has 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"* (**Luke 4:18-19**).

Jesus came to bring good news to those who are spiritually and physically poor; to heal those who are spiritually and physically sick; to deliver those in bondage of sin and any other form of oppression or captivity; to give sight to those who are spiritually and physically blind; to set at liberty those that lack it; and, to preach the good news to all. Jesus never came to deliver any bad news to any one. He came to deliver good news to a people that had no hope outside of God.

Redeemed from all curses

Do not be deceived by anyone. Sin, poverty, indebtedness, sickness, ill-health, homelessness, family problems and quarrels, mention any oppressive thing in your life, is not part of your inheritance as a Christian. *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, ... He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus ..."* (**Gal. 3:13-14**).

These curses include – all sorts of sicknesses and diseases, losses, lack of productivity, stagnation, bad luck, misfortunes, lack of prosperity in one's ways, family problems, every kind of affliction, every form of bondage and, every form of oppression that is troubling God's children (**Deut. 28:15-68**).

Jesus not only shed His blood, but also hung on a tree as well in order to secure our redemption from all the above curses of the law. God has purchased our health, our wealth, our peace, our freedom, our joy, and our every good thing at the expense of His Son's blood. Every parent wants his children to be comfortable, to prosper in spirit, soul, and body, and to have the very best in life.

What about God, our most kind and loving Father? The reason why Jesus came was to redeem us from the bondage of the curse and to grant us entrance into the blessings of Abraham. That is the core of His assignment. He came to make life more inspiring and fulfilling for you and for me. He came and took your place under the curse of the law and redeemed you. He brought you into covenant relationship with God the Father who loves us and wishes us the very best things He has – Halleluiah!

No body, more than God our heavenly Father, desires that we are comfortable and healthy. That's why He made available to us His only Son and through Him, His Holy Spirit. Every Christian believer must not settle for bed with curses that His Master has already redeemed them from. No Christian believer must be contented to live a life other than that which Christ purchased for him. Every Christian must strive to see greater glory in all areas of their lives, not only the spiritual.

Redeemed to shine

Jesus Christ didn't save us only to spare us from hell. Rather, He saved us so that, having our sins forgiven, we could see and enjoy His glory in all areas of life, as favoured children of God. We must be like Him: He never begged or borrowed from anybody. He never fell sick or struggled with poor or ill-health, like many Christians do. He never sinned or lived a life of weakness. He was never under the control of the devil or other oppressive worldly conditions. Mention any oppressive work of Satan and you will find that it was never part of Jesus' life. Why should it be any different for His redeemed children? As the Father sent Him He also sent us. The Spirit that was in Him is the same Holy Spirit of God that is in us, and more than that, Christ Himself is in us.

Now that He lives in us, and He is already glorified, we must be like Him in everything. The Bible says that the Spirit that lives in you and in me is the same Spirit that quickened the body of Jesus Christ in the grave and raised Him from the dead (**Rom. 8:11**). Thus, the Spirit of God in you and me causes our mortal body to become supernaturally alive.

Sickness, sinfulness, weakness, fruitlessness, failure, stagnation, poverty, debts, etc., are not supposed to be identified with us believers. There is more and better in Christ Jesus. Understand that there are more benefits in Christ other than just escaping into heaven.

The Bible outlines some of the benefits you can claim in the name of Christ Jesus: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingness and tender mercies; who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103:2-5).

You see! Salvation is a total package. Forgiveness of sins, healing of diseases, redemption from destruction or accidents, crowning us with loving kindness, pouring tender mercies on us, satisfying us with good things (not poverty!), mention it, is all ours in Christ Jesus. Jesus came for the whole man - spirit, soul and body. He wants every part of you to reflect His glory. His mission does not stop with sin. He says clearly that He came so that you and I might have life and have it more abundantly (**John 10: 10**). It is contrary to His mission and will for any form of sickness to be in our bodies; it's illegal for you to suffer poverty, debt and lack. It is illegal for you and to be spiritual weaklings - who rise and fall and rise and fall!

We don't have to keep it or get used to having parasites in our bodies. You must never get used to sinning, falling and rising and falling. You must never familiarize yourself with failure or stagnation. You must never take poverty as a normal thing, borrowing as a lifestyle, scarcity as an inescapable way of life. We must reject all of them right away, because they are not part of our heritage as children of God. Whatever is not part of your true nature in God, is not His will; it is the devil's.

Anything other than "very good" is not part of our original nature at creation (**Gen. 1:31**). Anything less than "very good" is not our heritage as children of God. We must not be identified with it. Your righteousness, your health, your family, career, finances, your relationships with others, must be very good. Anything short of "very good" was never programmed by God for us. We must reject it. Whatever the divinity of God carries - His righteousness, His freedom, His purity, His peace, His joy, His wisdom, His health, His strength, His wealth, His power, His glory, His dignity, His life - that is His will for you.

This is His will for you and for me. In your family, enjoy the peace of God that surpasses common understanding. In your place of work, have that level of fruitfulness and success that non-believers cannot understand. In your Christian walk, enjoy that level of righteousness that is envy to the devil. In your plans and business, you must be nothing but successful. In your body, enjoy nothing but divine health.

Prosper in whatever you do, because this is your heritage in Christ Jesus. It is God's will for you, which Christ Jesus dearly paid for.

God loves you and wants you to prosper in spirit, soul and body

For a long time, sections of religious tradition have, unfortunately, tended to over glorify suffering and troubles as godly virtues or as beneficial "crosses" for a Christian to carry on his way to heaven. But the truth is that whatever does not glorify God in you, your body, your life - whether it is sin, sickness or poverty, or what, this is what Jesus came to restore to you and me as He says in **John 10:10; 1 John 3:8; Ps. 103:1-3**.

God will and plan for you and me is that we become the very best that we can be. He seeks to prosper us and not to harm us. He makes this very clear: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart"* (**Jer. 29:11-13**). This is His will for you and me. Anything that departs from this is of the devil.

You must not suffer the same afflictions, oppressions, failures, family crisis and stagnation as the world does, and say that it is God's will. God can use our suffering for His purposes, and most often to mold us, but it certainly doesn't glorify Him. He is not a sadist! Suffering and problems only glorify Satan. God does not need your suffering for Him to be glorified.

It is God's will that you and I live very good lives in all ways (spirit, soul and body) while on earth; and that after we are departed from this world, we inherit eternal life, where we will even be more glorified (if we live and die in Christ Jesus). It is high time we stopped distorting and misrepresenting God's will. Many of us believers should be providing answers to non-believers but have instead settled for sin, failure, weakness, sickness, poverty and all manner of satanic afflictions, considering them as normal, or as God's will for us, or simply as our "cross". That is not God's will for any of His children.

It is not God's plan to raise an army of mere church-goers, who, however, are kept in perpetual bondage of weakness, sickness and diseases, poverty, borrowing and debt, habitual sinning, lack of joy, marital conflicts, and all manner of satanic oppressions. The truth of the matter is that redemption or salvation is a spiritual reality with earthly evidences. If Christ Jesus cannot manifest Himself in your life, your relationships, your work, your prayer life, you have not found Him yet. Continue asking, searching, and knocking, and He will reveal Himself in your life.

Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people (**Lk. 2: 52**). In other words, He had an all round growth (physical, intellectual, spiritual and social). Why should it be any different for His followers?

Yes, there will always be problems in this world, because our arch-enemy the devil also lives in this world. But much more so is Christ Jesus! We children of Christ's family have the unfailing grace of God to turn any problem into a possibility, any challenge into an opportunity, any stumbling block into a stepping-stone, and any setback into a springboard. As the word of God says, "... we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (**Rom. 8:28**).

God's great plan and purpose for your life

It is God's desire for us to live a very good life and to be an outstanding success in everything we are doing. Success is an attribute of God. There is nothing virtuous or sacred about suffering. True, there are many troubles in the world. But that is not the whole story. Most importantly, there is also Christ in the world. And between the two, we know who is stronger. God wants you to be great.

He wants to bless you so much that you will be a blessing to your generation. Those blessings mean righteousness, peace, joy, happiness, freedom, prosperity, and success. It means reigning in life over every bad situation and circumstance. That is God's will for you and for me.

Do not be deceived. God is not in anything that has to do with undermining the good life His Son so dearly paid for His people. Understand that you are a partner with God in success. Your well-being is His utmost concern; your success is His pleasure. God is the source of divine success. He gives good gifts. Any good parent doesn't desire any bad thing for his child. They do not even want him to be average. They want him to be successful in everything. He wants him to be the best there is all the time. Nothing but his best will satisfy them. How come then for some to think and believe that God could wish or plan for His children anything less?

Our Lord Jesus was so disturbed by this mentality of glorifying suffering or taking it as sacred or as His will, rather than as an oppressive work of the devil, that He asked: "*If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him*" (**Matt. 7:11**). Believe God for great things and you will get them, because it is His will that you prosper in spirit, soul and body.

God takes pride in our success, even more than we take pride in our children's success. He created you to be the expression of His glory and praise here on earth. You are not ordinary unbeliever. At salvation, Christ brought you out of sin and its consequences into sonship and its privileges. That is why Christians who have dedicated their lives to Christ are peculiar, and designed to be a shining light to the world in every good thing, so that they may reflect His praise and glory. You and I are the crown of God's glory!

True, there will always be problems in this life, and Christ said it. Sometimes God Himself allows it for us to go through problems and suffering, if He can use them to refine us or prepare us for His purposes. But such problems and suffering are for only purposes of promoting the prosperity of our spirit, soul and body. Your problems and suffering do not glorify God. That's why Christ is with us to help us win in every situation.

That's why God's word says that "*... greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (1 John 4:4-6) - Alleluia.

It is illegal

- By virtue of your identity in Christ Jesus, it is, therefore, illegal for you and me to find ourselves being overcome by sin now and again; to continue sinning, falling and rising and falling; to be ruled by evil habits. We must either have the nature of God in us or the nature of sin.
- By virtue of our identity in Christ Jesus, it is illegal for any form of sickness to reside in our bodies.
- By virtue of our identity in Christ Jesus, it is illegal for us to remain poor, begging and borrowing right and left; or being indebted to any one.
- By virtue of our identity in Christ Jesus, it is illegal for any oppressive work of the evil one to have a grip on our work, careers, businesses, marriages, our families, our property, our finances, or any area of our lives.
- By virtue of your identity in Christ Jesus, it is illegal for a Christian to suffer stagnation, misfortune, and lack of productivity or fruitlessness.
- Because of Christ's work on the Cross, it is illegal for you and me to be in any form of bondage, debt, slavery or imprisonment, loneliness, etc.

Sickness, sinning, defeat, fruitlessness, begging and borrowing money or anything should not be part of your life. Our Lord says: "*I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you*" (Lk. 10:19).

Let nothing trample or step on you. Never let any power of the enemy to overcome you in any area of your life. The person Christ Jesus who was given all power in heaven and on earth has, in turn, given you and me the power to win in all situations. Thanks be to God!

We Christians have royal (godly) blood flowing through our veins. The priests and kings, having been ordained, are separated and consecrated to stand in the priest's or royal office. So are we. You and I are liberated to be living witnesses of Jesus, proof-producing Christians. If we the Christians cannot prove to the unbelieving world that we have a special person of Christ in us, who will?

The world is waiting for answers from the people of God. But if we do not know how to obtain answers for ourselves, how shall we provide answers for them, someone once asked? A Christian should be ashamed of sickness. He should be embarrassed at poverty, borrowing, debt, defeat or failure in his life the same way he is embarrassed at sin. Why? By virtue of his new status in Christ Jesus, a Christian should not be under any satanic bondage (of poverty, sickness, sin, marital strife, etc).

Seek and search in faith for what truly belongs to you

God must be very upset to see His children being cheated, defeated and humiliated by the devil, the flesh and the world, and instead of using the weapons given to them to fight back, they say, it God's will! No it is not. God has already given us His Son as a sacrifice on the cross for our liberation from all forms of bondage or satanic oppression. He has done all that needed to be done to ensure we live a truly victorious life. The word says: *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness" (2 Pet. 1:3).* In Christ Jesus, God has given us *everything* we need to live a complete life! In Him, God has given us *everything* we need to be the very best we were created to be.

Never, therefore, ever accept to settle for a less victorious, fulfilling or joyful life, simply because it is what you see and experience all round you; simply because it is what the devil or the world is throwing to you. Seek and search for what truly belongs to you through Christ Jesus, for He has already fully paid your bills to have it. That's why the word says: "*Christ in you*" is your hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

Salvation brought Christ into us. Now He lives in you, is you are a Christian. Allow Him to take full charge of your life everyday. Do not merely visit Him in Church on Sunday or only occasionally pray to Him. He lives in you and desires to have a *full-time fellowship* with you, so that He can make you the very best you were created to be. Daily surrender to Him your heart, mind, body, soul, time, activities, talents, treasure, everything, everyday, and everywhere. Nothing in life will defeat a Christian who has fully surrendered his or her life to Christ Jesus, and trusts in and relies on Him.

But nothing is yours until you know and claim it in faith and in power. Victory and success in the kingdom depend not only on the truth you know, but also on how you stand to claim or uphold it in faith. You should have the right thinking towards a victorious life and pursue it in faith. You are born in the image of God through Christ Jesus to have life in its fullness, not the life of poverty, sickness, ill-health, debts, begging, fear, anxiety, imprisonment, weakness and chronic or habitual sinning.

Christ Jesus did not come to the world, suffer the way He did, bear all the shame and humiliation He bore, and undergo such great pain and spill all the blood as He spilled - just to produce weak children who are always under the oppression of the devil and the world - spiritually, physically, economically, health-wise, socially!

You and I were liberated to live a wonderful life that gives glory and honour to God, and which bears testimony that we are liberated by none other than Christ Jesus -- the Son of God, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords; and to whom everything in heaven and on earth was given. Christianity was never meant to be a religion of the "down-trodden", the "wretched of the earth", as some Christians like to refer to themselves.

God never intended it that His liberated children live weak, sinful, poor, miserable lives. Misery and suffering doesn't qualify anyone for Heaven. Only living faith in Christ Jesus does. Christianity was never meant to be a religious congregation of the poor, the defeated and the humiliated. Although our suffering would be worse if God did not sometimes prepare or take us through it, the fact is that God could never have intended to give a better life to non-believers than He would to His own children that are committed to Him.

To continue to live a life of poverty, sickness, poor health, debts, borrowing, begging, fear, weakness, shame and chronic or habitual sinning is none but a slight on your Creator and Liberator. Jesus paid a dear price to bring you and me out of darkness into His wonderful light. The Bible says that God our loving Father has *"delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His beloved Son"* (Col. 1:13).

If God has rescued us out of the authority of the prince of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of His Son and our Lord Jesus (where there is righteousness, peace and joy), then we must be free from all the works of the devil and his regime. We must crucify mediocrity in all its forms and strive to live life in its fullness. This is His will for us.

Prayer and reading His word reveals God's will

While you are waiting on God to meet you in your area of need, never give-up praying and believing before you receive your answer. Through prayer, reflection and bible reading, use the time of waiting for God as an opportunity for cultivating a closer relationship with Him and greater self-knowledge into His will for you.

The Lord says, *"If you continue in my Word, then you are my disciples. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (Jn. 8:32). God always speaks to us, but, unfortunately, very few hear His voice.

This is because, He often speaks through His Word, which many of us may not be very familiar with. Rarely will God speak from the roof-tops of our houses, to tell you and me what to do and what not to do. The best way, therefore, to know His will for your prayer is to stay close to Him in prayer, Bible reading and meditation; reading and listening to other Christ-inspired literature or messages, and interaction with devoted Christians.

Rest assured that we do have the promise that whatsoever we ask in His Name, that He will do it (**1 Jn. 5:14-15**). Suffering or problems in life can and will always come, but we must go through them in faith, and not remain stuck in them, thinking that it is God's will for us. Good Christian life, which pleases God, is not necessarily the life of continuous and consistent suffering, troubles and sorrows, as some theologians make it to be.

There is a perfect and a permissible will for you and for me to live and to live life in its fullness (**Jn. 10:10**). We should be glad that we are in God's perfect will. Do not accept to settle for a life of afflictions, troubles and sorrows, thinking that it is God's will for you. Pursue God's perfect will for you in faith. When faced with any challenge, problem, suffering, need, trial, hardship, put it to positive use in such a way that advances your maturity in Christ; but by all means trust and rely on the unfailing power of God through Christ Jesus to overcome them. The cross was a great sacrifice for our salvation, but the Lord Jesus did get stuck on it. With the help of God, He quickly went through it and received His crown of glory. So must we.

Trust in God's Word as truth. Trust that God will provide for your needs. Trust that God will protect you from the evil one. Believe that God is with you and lives in you, even though you may not see Him. Believe that, through faith, you have Christ's authority over Satan and all his plots. Believe that Christ's sacrifice on the cross paid for everything you need from God for life and godliness. Trust that the Christ in you is stronger than all forces of evil put together. Believe that you can overcome anything by Christ who strengthens you.

Chapter 5

When Faith is Dead

The Bible says that faith without action is dead faith. Many people do not achieve great things in life not because they do not have faith, but because they do not activate or *act* on their faith. You can, for example, have faith in the Word of God that you will prosper, because the Word says that prosperity is your inheritance as a Christian. However, this knowledge alone may not be enough for you to obtain the promise of God. We need to move as or before God can also move.

We sometimes don't get what we want, not because we lack faith, but because we don't act on the faith we have. Prosperity, health, success, are all our inheritance in Christ. But this knowledge alone may not be enough for us to obtain the promises of God. We need to activate our faith in those areas.

❖For Abraham, it meant *moving* from his ancestral home to new land (**Gen. 12:1-7**).

❖For the ten men whom Jesus was to heal of leprosy, it meant first *going* to show themselves to the priests. Note that when the ten men met Jesus and called out in a loud voice, "*Jesus, Master, have pity on us*", Jesus did not say "you are healed" there and then. No, He simply said "*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*" The Bible further says that "*And as they went, they were cleansed*" (**Lk. 17:13-14**). "Going to the priests" even before getting their healing was required as an act of faith before God's word of healing could work in their lives. You can be sure that if they had refused to go as Jesus had directed them, they would not have got their healing.

❖For the people attending the wedding feast at Caana, in order to receive their miracle of water-turned into wine and overcame the embarrassment of having nothing to serve their wedding guests, the Bible says that they had to first "*Fill the jars with water*" to the brim. And having done this, when they drew some out and took it to the master of the banquet, the water had been turned into wine (**John 2:1-11**).

❖For Moses, it meant *raising his stick and stretching forth his hand* over the sea before the Sea could divide itself into two and swallow up the Egyptians. As the Jews were escaping from Egypt, the Egyptians marched after them. They were so afraid, they cried out unto the Lord.

But God specifically told Moses against this crying when all he and the Jews he was leading needed to do was to take a step of faith and see the results.

He asked Moses: *"Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Lift up your stick, and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground..... The Bible further says that, "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left..." (Ex. 14:15-27).* This is living faith – faith backed by action.

Praying too much, doing too little

What practical steps have you taken to get what you believe God for? Like the Jews, God is telling us who have needs and problems, *to do* some thing. One of the major laws of physics is that an object will always assume a state of rest, until a relevant force is applied to it. This also applies to the spiritual. Yes, there might be circumstances when all we need to do is to faithfully wait on God's hand or timing. In most cases, however, we are supposed to *activate* our faith, for God to make things move or work for us. Sitting back and waiting for God to do everything is not God's way for His people to get hold of what Christ has already paid for them.

You see, faith without action does not produce results. We some times pray too much or go too far in crying to the Lord to give us this and that, to help us in such and such a way, when all we need to do is to take a bold step of faith and see the results we have been crying for. Like God told Moses, God is telling many of us who are faced with problems, challenges and difficulties like the Jews were facing, *"Why are you crying out to me? Move on. Lift up your stick, and stretch out your hand."* Like Abraham, God is telling us who are looking for a better life but can't see it, *"Get out of your comfort zone."* For those who are suffering scarcity, lack or poverty like the people at Caana wedding were, God is telling us *"Fill the jars with water."*

You can ask the Lord's Spirit of Counsel to show you which step of faith you need to make, in order to realize your miracle, or which jars you need to fill with which water, but the point is that we must "move" or "do something", in order for the *Lord to cause our sea* of trouble, problems or challenges *to go back*; in order to make our faith profitable. If you have faith in God to give you a house, start by buying a plot of land, even if you have no money to build the house.

If you trust God to get a job, move out of the house and look for one, even if you do not know where to find it. If you have faith in God to heal you, try to stand up. Do something; get started in faith and God will meet you on the way. When the Bible asks, *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14)*, it's easy to say, "No, Lord." But it's what we do next that proves whether or not we actually believe Him. John says, *"If you know these things, happy are you if you do them" (Jn. 13:17).*

If we don't act on what God tells us, can we really say we believe Him? Men of faith put their faith into action by *moving*, by getting started, instead of sitting by and wait. It may be hard to move, but as the Jews were to shortly find out, where your strength stops or fails you is often the point from where God takes over. Moses' responsibility was to stretch out his hand over the sea; and it was God's responsibility to cause the sea to go back.

Do not merely sit back and wait for the promise of God to materialize by itself. The Word of God says that: *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened"* (Matt. 7:7-8). Whenever we ask of God anything that is according to His will, it is immediately granted to us. That's why He says, *"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours"* (Mark 11:24). But this is not the end of it. To find what has been granted to you, you have to seek after it; and for the door of a house that has been given to you to open, you have to knock on it. The Lord freely gives us things we ask in his name, if they are according to His will.

But the devil will often not allow you to pick what God has given you, unless you 'forcefully' or 'violently' in faith move out to seize it. That's why many of us have faith but we can easily remain stuck in the desert (of poverty, sickness and diseases, bondage, suffering, etc...), not so much because we are lacking in faith, but because our faith is lacking in action. If we don't act on our beliefs, we risk remaining in the desert like the people of Israel who never received God's promises. We have to search, we have to seek, we have to knock doors. We need to stand up, to move out, to march on, for as He told Abraham, the Lord is also telling us: *"Why are you crying out to me? Move on. Lift up your stick, and stretch out your hand."* We can ask God:

- "Lord, I know you love me so much and you have granted my prayer, for your word says that by your stripes I was healed. Show me the way to actualize your word."
- "Lord I know you have heard my prayer and granted my request, as your word says. But now I pray that you show me the key to attaining this and that."
- "Lord, please give me wisdom to make a breakthrough in this area which you say is mine."
- Lord, please give me insight into this and that;
- "Lord, give me the courage, as you give the knowledge, to act in faith on what I believe."
- "Lord give me the courage to move on when I should."
- "Help me, by the power of your Holy Spirit, to seize what you have already granted me."

Chapter 6

Winning Faith is Sowing Faith

Winning seeds of faith

We have seen that faith without action is dead faith. And what is a better way of activating life than sowing seeds? One way of activating our faith is, therefore, by sowing seeds of faith. Harvest goes hand in hand with sowing (**Gen. 8:22**). No matter how much he wishes or waits, prays or fasts, a farmer can't reap a harvest where he has not first sown seeds or crops. A sportsman can't become a champion in a game he has not exercised or practiced. There is a seed he must sow before he can reap success. The great inventors we celebrate today became so by investing a lot of their time and other resources in locating secrets. They took time to dig up facts, think through issues and locate solutions.

One of the reasons we fail or stagnate in some areas of our lives is because we do not sow the seeds that would bring about the fruits or results we want to see. Some of us go to work but do nothing. We simply while away time, gossiping and criticising our government, our employers, supervisors or this and that. But in life, we reap what we sow, not just what we wish, desire or even pray for!

Sowing directly into the Kingdom of God

One way of exercising our faith for profit is to sow directly or to service the needs of the Kingdom of God. God gives us a principle: "*Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these other things will be added on to you*" (**Matt. 6:33**). We are supposed to seek first the Kingdom of God and whatever it requires.

This includes living a holy life and bringing souls to Christ. But many of us, instead of seeking God first, often seek His goodies first. We often seek God's righteous hand of favour or blessings, but perhaps not so much God Himself or His righteousness. We more often ask to receive than we are willing to give. But we are not supposed to be 'God-give-me ...' kind of Christians (**Prov. 30:15**)! We are supposed to be "givers" - addressing the needs of the Kingdom of God.

Make it your daily agenda to promote the work of Christ in any way you can, by giving out for His causes. Provoke God's favour by engaging in godly exercises of tithing and sacrificial giving for the salvation of souls.

Sowing into the lives of others

"The extent to which a person rises," said Pascal the great French Christian philosopher, "can be reliably measured by the degree to which sacrificial love for others controls that person." To promote the Kingdom of God, thus, also means meeting the needs of God's people. And it carries a big reward, for the word says, *"Be generous and you will be prosperous; help others and God will help you"* (Prov. 11:25). So as the word of God says, *"Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it; never tell your neighbour to wait until tomorrow if you can help them today"* (Prov. 3:27-28). This is sowing and no one sows any seed in the garden of God and fails to reap much more.

The Kernel of Wheat principle

One of the greatest principles of God is that life comes through the giving of life, and fruitfulness through falling into the ground and dying: *"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds and yields a rich harvest"* (Jn. 12:24). We are fruitful and blessed by God only to the extent we are willing to die to our self-interest and pleasure and live to the interests of God. The 'death' to which we are called is the death of the false self, organized around self-concern: 'my self', 'my family', 'my children', 'my money', 'my car', 'my business'.

Until we substitute "my" with "His" (God's), until a person puts God before all these 'my-s' in every aspect of his life, until a person is willing to live for a cause greater than himself, he cannot find or live life in its fullness. That's why the Lord says, *"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it"* (Lk. 17:32-33). Mark this principle!

Doers, Not Hearers

You see friend, everything that God does is based on a certain principle of His Kingdom. As the God who doesn't change, He can't violate the same principles which He Himself set up. If He says this is the way you get saved, you won't get saved any other way. If He says *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy"* (Matt.5:7), it means a person won't receive mercy from God, if that person is not willing to be merciful or to forgive others.

One of the biggest problems in the body of Christ today is that many of us daily hear the word and principles of God, but few diligently put them into practice. As a result, few get the rewards that can only be reaped by those who have put the word or principle into practice. All of us want to prosper financially, but do we diligently apply the biblical principles of prosperity? Do we, for example, give our tithes and other moneys for winning souls, or for other causes of Christ through His church, without fail?

For many of us, perhaps not, or often when we do these things, we do them in small measure or with a lot of reservation. But the word of God gives a principle, without practising which, you won't get the results: *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you "* (Lk. 6:38). God's principle is that what we sow is what we reap, and the measure in which we do it is the same measure in which He rewards us. But the more you focus on your self and close your doors to the needs of Christ, His people and His Church, the more you lock yourself out of God's favour.

Let's be doers, not just hearers of these principles, if we really want to realize the great promises behind them. *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock... But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand ..."* (Matt 7:24-26); *"be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"* (James 1:22). If you want to make a break-through in any area of your life, apply the biblical principle concerning that particular area. Every day apply it; build your daily agenda around it and see if God is a lair!

Don't get possessed

Don't get possessed with your circumstance, problem or need in life. With what you have, get out and do something for God. If you have no job, money or child or spouse, whatever, thank God for the life you have and reach out to others. In Christ's name, help them in their needs, as if you have no needs of your own. Don't be jealousy of others, for this will only make things worse! Help with Church work, such as cleaning, dusting pews. Join a church ministry or any other group that is dedicated to reaching out to people in Christ's name.

We were not created just to live, enjoy ourselves and then die. Not at all. The word of God reveals a very important truth: we do not receive many of the things we ask from God, because we ask them for our personal pleasure (James 4:3)! We were not created to be opportunists, living a consumer lifestyle, amassing property or wealth here on earth for personal pleasure. No, we came to add value to the Kingdom of God and to solve problems of mankind on earth.

God created every person to meet a particular need of the Kingdom, of someone else in the world. It is on the basis of this that we are rewarded. No body has too little to give. Ask for the grace to sacrifice your time, money, effort, interests, pleasure, life, even your rights and privileges for the good of the Kingdom of God and His people - in order to meet their needs, to alleviate their suffering and to bring the love of Christ to them. We were created to make a difference, not just a living, as someone said!

Let someone somewhere have a reason to thank God that you were born unto them, and God will richly reward you for it. You can't be a faithful servant who is committed to Christ's causes on earth and miss your reward. When the promotion of God's causes becomes the focus of your life, you can expect God to make you the target of His blessings. This is because: "*God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them*" (**Heb. 6:10**).

The Case of King David

I greatly admire people like David. They were moved by everything about God. There was nothing inside him but God. He loved God and gave Him his all: "*With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God ... Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple ... Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?*" (**1 Chron. 29:2-5**). It is a challenging question for us. *Who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?* Consecration means total dedication, love, commitment, and devotion to God and His causes. Many of us would want to have the kind of favour, relationship and friendship David had with God.

But how many of us can say like David, "*With all my resources (time, talents, skills, experience, money, property, life) I have provided for the temple of my God (for the salvation of souls, for the spread of the gospel, for the needs of Christ's people, etc... ?*" David was not thirsty for material things, personal glory or the cares and comforts of this life. He simply wanted to serve God and his generation with all his heart, body and soul. He had a great passion for God's Kingdom. He sought the Lord out of deep love and always gave to Him the best of what he had (including his time). Because he had such unparalleled affection for God, he enjoyed many blessings from God. No wonder he never lacked any good thing throughout his life (**Ps. 34:10**). Things followed him automatically.

Everything about the Kingdom of God moved David, and so everything about David moved God! For while he was busy seeking the promotion of God's Kingdom, God was also busy adding to him everything he needed. David faced many troubles and problems, but he overcame them all. He never lost a single battle in all his life! This is the winning faithful heart we need to have. Ask for it.

We need and want many things in this life, but the starting point is to get to a point in our lives where we are big-hearted; where we are moved by every Kingdom issue; where we are not pre-occupied with our personal cares, comforts and pleasure, but our hearts are in God and for God. Then nothing we will fail to get from God! While we are busy seeking the prosperity of God's Kingdom, He will also be busy adding to us all those other things we need or want. Be, therefore, sold out to God in giving your all for His causes.

It is about diligence and dedicating our entire lives to promoting the good and Kingdom of God and His people.

- ❖ When God is looking for money and other resources to carry His gospel to those who haven't heard about Him, be there to contribute to it. Don't say, 'I need this money to pay for my house rent, my children's school fees, my bills.' Christ Himself has advised you that: *"Seek you first the kingdom of God ... and all these other things will be added on to you"* (Matt. 6:33)! God knows you need to pay your bills, but He also knows better that the best way for you to settle your bills easily is to seek first the kingdom.
- ❖ When God is looking around for someone to provide for His needy people, be there. Don't say God or someone else will take care of them. It's you to do it.
- ❖ When God is looking for someone to speak a loving, comforting word to the sick, bereaved or lonely, the lost, those falling, be there to do it.
- ❖ When God is looking for some one to counsel the ignorant, be there to do it.
- ❖ When God is looking for some one to volunteer an unpleasant task in your home, community, church, work place, be the first to offer your self to do it in His name.

Be the channel of blessing through which God can reach the lost and the less fortunate, to accomplish whichever task He desires. Refuse to be satisfied with just having a good marriage, good education, good income, a good job, a good house, car, farm, money and other assets and properties for yourself and your family's well-being. Such things tend to be the ultimate goal and pre-occupation of many of us, but we need to understand that living an inward looking, consumer life-style is simply a waste of destiny!

No Christian can truly enjoy salvation or the life of Christ, without minding that others also do the same. No true Christian can enjoy listening to the gospel a 100th time, when there are many who have never heard of the same gospel for their first time. Desire to be a true influence for Jesus. Be committed to servicing the needs of the Kingdom of God and mankind. Every day you wake up in the morning, in whichever condition or circumstance you are, say to the Lord: *"Good morning Lord Jesus. Thank you for the opportunity you have given me to live yet another day. Lord, what can I do today to add value to your Kingdom and to mankind? I am fully available for you - use me today!"*

Every time think of how to contribute to God's Kingdom; how to bring people to Christ and how to make others truly happy and enjoy Christ. Ask God for the grace that everything about Him just turns you on. This is the faith in action and it is the winning faith. We will get everything we need and want only when we get to a point where our lives are nothing but a living sacrifice, fully dedicated to God and His Kingdom causes. It is the intensity of our love for God and His Kingdom that determines the measure of blessings we live to enjoy, even in this life.

Our blessing is continuous as we increasingly multiply in blessing God and His people. The best way to get what you want is to give what you have. You can always use what you have for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom and acquire what you desire in your life. This is sowing. The *giving and receiving* principle is not just a barter trade business - 'Lord I give you this and you give me that' kind of gimmick.

God loves people who are genuinely passionate about His Kingdom, who are sold out to and for His Kingdom. He will, in turn, be passionate about their welfare and success. Be lost in the love and pursuit of God and His Kingdom, and He will add onto you all that you need and want. The Lord says: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind"* **(Matt. 22:37)**. Give Him your total heart, soul and mind. It is the intensity of our love for God that determines how wide His windows of heaven open for us. Until our Christianity enters the realm or territory of total death to self, and total consecration to Christ and His causes, we are not yet there!

It is what we do to faithfully serve God and His people that determines the measure of grace and glory God will release upon our lives. God is looking for highly focused cadres (disciples) of Christ, who daily take it, as their primary mission on earth, to promote the Kingdom of God with whatever they have. Let it be your goal to be a highly focused 'cadre' or disciple of Christ Jesus, whose daily agenda is to take what God has given you in terms of - Time, Talents, Breath, Body Temple, Finances and other Resources — and trade with it, with the aim of bringing maximum profit to His Kingdom and people. You can't be sold out to God and His Kingdom this kind of faith and miss your reward!

It's *not* what we have to *do* to get God bless us. His heart, His nature is to bless us continuously. Remember, He saved us before we even came to know Him! But we need to abide by or come in line with the principles God Himself set up from the very foundation of the world to guide our relationship with Him. *"While earth remains, seed and harvest, ... shall not cease"* **(Gen. 8:22)**. Sow seeds of faith everyday, for whatever you want to reap or see happening in your life. And never get tired of doing good. The word says, *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up"* **(Gal. 6:9)**.

The Value and Power of Sacrifice

Many Christians don't get what they desire from God because they don't apply His principles found in the Scriptures. And they don't apply the principles because doing so involves pain and sacrifice. But winning faith is all about sacrifice. Indeed another reason why many of us often make slow or no progress at all in some areas of our lives is because we are not willing to die a little, to suffer the pain or discomfort, which 'sowing' or applying the 'Kernel of Wheat' principle requires.

But there is no gain without pain; there is no life without first dying (**Jn. 12:24**). Fruitfulness in any area of life (be it righteousness, family, ministry, business, name it) comes through sowing the relevant seeds into the 'ground'; through falling into the ground and dying (to self-interest, temporary pleasure, comfort, convenience).

The greater the sacrifice, pain or cost you suffer while sowing in God's ground in this way, the greater the harvest you reap. It is the degree of your sacrifice that determines the degree of God's reward. Look at the following examples:

❖ In a great act of personal sacrifice and kingdom love, a poor widow gave to God the only two silver coins or shillings she had to live on. Jesus praised her, more than the rich who gave less than the true value of their earnings: "*I tell you the truth,*" Jesus said, "*this poor widow has put in more than all the others.*"

All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Lk. 20:45-21:4). You can be sure her eventual reward was beyond measure! But how many of us only give to God when we have an abundance or a surplus from which we are picking? How many of us only offer to God what remains after we have paid our bills, met our wants, desires and pleasures? But the woman gave "*out of her poverty, all she had to live on!*" It is a sacrificial faith like this that moves God!

❖ When Mary Magdalene broke an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus, some of the people present said angrily to one another, "*Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.*" But Jesus, who knew better the value of sacrifice and the dangers of a mean, withholding spirit, said: "*Leave her alone ... She has done a beautiful thing to me ... I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her*" (**Mark 14:1-11**).

Come to think of it. She gave a gift worth more than her "*year's wages*"! If Magdalene could give to God more than all her year's earnings put together, you and I should surely at least give a tenth of our income (tithe), when we get it, for Christ's causes, without fail - if we are really serious with God!

❖ **ABRAHAM** gave away the only son of his, Isaac, to be killed as a sacrifice for God. In return, God poured blessings upon him, giving him countless children and making him the "*Father of many nations*" (**Gen.17:5**). The power of sacrifice! If Abraham, a very old man could sacrifice his only child, without minding that he would never have another child in life, what about you and me who have a lot more "*children*" (money, resources, education, experience, talents, skills, influence, time, etc.)?

❖ **DAVID** so loved God he said *“With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God ... Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple ... Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?”* (1 Chron. 29:2-5). This is the same sacrificial giver who said: *“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing”* (2 Sam. 24).

In return God so blessed David that throughout his life, David never lacked anything good. The power of sacrifice! Whereas a prosperous Christian says, *“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God offerings that cost me nothing”*, one that won’t prosper will not put the biggest currency note he has into the offertory bag. During offertory time in a church service, he searches his pocket for one of the smallest currency notes or coins and this is what he puts into the bag, because it doesn’t cost him or her much!

❖ **JESUS** sacrificed His princely status and comfort of heaven, and came to earth to offer His life for the liberation of fallen humanity. But Peter, ceased by that mean spirit of self-preservation, tried to dissuade Him from so doing. Jesus rebuked the spirit saying: *“Get behind me, Satan!” “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it”* (Mk. 8:33-35).

Jesus went ahead, suffered terrible persecution and eventually painful death at the cross. But what happened at the end of it all? *“God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Phil. 2:6-11)!

The power and value of sacrifice! Before you can be promoted in any area, before God can raise you to any great position – spiritually, physically, socially, economically, whatever, you will have to first fall into the ‘ground’ and ‘die’ to self for the Kingdom’s sake. Before God can distinguish you in any way, you will have to first distinguish yourself as a faithful, kingdom-loving and sacrificial Christian.

It is this kind of sacrificial life or faith that God truly honours and doubly rewards (both in this life and the life to come). Of course many Christians of our generation, who tend to focus more on personal cares and comforts of life (and have little or no concern for the lost souls and the welfare of the underprivileged or disadvantaged), may scoff at this kind of life. Many of our prayer-request lists often centre on asking God to give us promotions, property, good cars, houses, farms, husbands, wives, visas and such things.

But what really gives Christianity beauty and colour is not the state-of-art aero plane, Mercedes Benz or 4-Wheel-Drive vehicle you have; it is not the money, property or magnificent house you own; neither is it the high position you hold in society or any organization. Rather, it is the sacrificial life you live for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom, the salvation and well being of God's souls, just like the case of Mother Teresa and others seen above.

God is not really interested in how rich or educated you are. He is not really interested in your position or social class. Rather, He is more interested in how relevant you are to the needs of the gospel and humanity. I am not saying that material wealth or high social classes are bad. Not at all. But to focus on or pursue personal cares and comforts of life, more than the kingdom of God - the winning of lost souls for Christ and the promotion of humanity in His name - is a misplacement of priorities, and eventually a waste of destiny.

Living for a cause greater than your self (and your family), for God's sake is the true depth of Christianity. God distinguishes His servants only to that level to which they sacrifice their lives and resources and consecrate themselves for His purposes and causes. This is winning faith.

Radical faith produces radical results

Like the example of Jesus and the above people has shown, your success in any area of life will depend on the degree of sacrifice you make for the Kingdom of God in that particular area, in faith and love. It all depends on how radical you are. Don't covet or envy someone or what they have, when you are not prepared to walk in the sort of radical giving or sacrificial faith as they walk in!

Begin to make radical acts of sowing or investing in God's causes and Christ Jesus will faithfully reward you in a radical way for it. *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Cor. 9:6)! "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you " (Lk. 6:38).*

Spiritual, just like worldly sports champions, come out of rigorous, tireless exercise (sowing). You can't become a godly financial star, for example, without engaging in rigorous, tireless spiritual financial exercises. If people who make regular physical exercises go on to become sports stars, what about those who make spiritual exercises, by sacrificing their resources and lives for Christ's causes? Such spiritual exercises are far more valuable and promise life both for the present and the future (1 Tim. 4:8).

You can never possibly out-give God. He will always be ahead of you! Pray for the grace to die to self and to exclusively live for God and His kingdom causes.

May the Lord Jesus, by the power of His Holy Spirit, infuse in you a faithful, loving and sacrificial heart that pours itself out for His kingdom causes, a spirit that is willing to sow or invest sacrificially. You can't have such a heart and miss your reward!

Be Patient

A man or woman of great faith is a person of great patience. Planted seeds do not turn into a harvest overnight. Many of us lose out on our blessings from God, due to impatience. We want God's blessings, deliverance, promotion, yesterday! It isn't always so. Whatever your problem or need in life is, *"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens"* (Ecc.3:1). Be patient. There is a due time in God's agenda for every believer's rising, promotion, blessing, deliverance or reward. But this time only comes after your faith and patience have been proved. God is a covenant keeping God, who can't fail to honour His word.

It might be weeks, months, years or even decades before your dedication, sacrifice or prayer is rewarded or answered. But rest assured that God is ever faithful, ever loving, and ever-watching! He will reward you or answer your prayers at the right time. His timing is never too late or too early. It happens just at the right time. God always gives the best to those who leave the choice and timing to Him. Remember, *"He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think"* (Eph. 3:20)!

Ask God for the grace to despise delays, and wait on Him. Ask Him for the strength to persevere in your calling, in whatever situation you are.

Consecration to God, however, is only made possible by the help of the Holy Spirit of Christ Jesus. Without Him, we can do nothing. He is the One who infuses or puts into our hearts an intense love for God, and delivers us from selfishness and a narrow-minded pursuit of short-term petty, personal goals. Ask Him to give you that heart and to walk in that kind of love and dedication, for when God is truly enthroned in our hearts, everything in heaven and on earth becomes automatically ours.

Chapter 7

Dealing with Enemies of Faith - Defeat, Failure and Discouragement

We often give up too easily. When you pray for something, and instead of getting a response from God, things become even worse, you lose hope and give up. Many believers in Christ give up thinking that they have tried hard enough and faced enough defeat in life. But the fact is that many of the people who have made a mark in their lives and on this world have been men of great faith.

A brief look at the life-stories of some of the most successful men in history - Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Edison - although perhaps not all of them necessarily "devout" Christians, nevertheless shows that the greatest victories in life often come from great faith, even in the face of great defeats and humiliation.

- **Abraham Lincoln** - throughout his life suffered many more defeats than victories, but because he never gave up, he won the highest office of the land. Look at his life:

At age 22 - Lincoln goes into business. He fails.

At age 23 - He switches to politics, runs for legislature. He is defeated.

At age 24 - Lincoln returns to business. He fails again. He goes back to politics.

At age 29 - He stands for office of the Speaker of the House. He is defeated.

At age 31 - Lincoln stands for the office of the elector. He is also defeated.

At age 34 - He turns to Congress. He is defeated.

At age 37 - Lincoln tries Congress again. He is elected.

At age 39 - He seeks re-election to Congress. He is defeated.

At age 46 - Lincoln tries the Senate. He is defeated.

At age 47 - He, not discouraged, decides to go for the office of vice President, instead. He is defeated.

At age 49 - Lincoln goes back for the Senate. He is defeated again.

At age 51 - Not minding all these defeats, Lincoln decides to go for the ultimate prize - the Presidency. He is elected President of the United States - going into history as one of the greatest Presidents of the United States of America!

Thomas Edison - Inventor of the electric light (1879)

- Edison for two years searches for the proper filament or thread, which would give good light. He fails to find one.

- Edison sends people to the jungles of the Amazon and forests of Japan in his search for a perfect filament material. They too fail to find any.
- Edison tests over 6,000 vegetable growths (baywood, boxwood, hickory, cedar, flax, bamboo) as filament material. None of them works.
- In 1879, after he had performed 1,200 experiments, Edison succeeds – he makes a light bulb using carbonized filaments from cotton thread. This is the source of the magnificent electric light bulb we enjoy today!

Asked how he felt after doing so many experiments (1200), unsuccessfully, Edison replied that every time an experiment did not achieve the desired results only convinced him that there was a different and better way of arriving at the desired results. In other words, he viewed what we would call failure merely as a good lesson leading him closer to the final goal. What is a record of faith, perseverance and determination in the face of apparent failure or overwhelming difficulties from these two great men?

If you have once, twice, thrice, or more, pursued an idea and failed, never ever give up, if you are convinced it is a godly one. Never give up on an idea or project or mission or any undertaking where God says you can succeed. A faith warrior cannot entertain the spirit of “defeatism,” or have a “losing mentality”. For the Word of God says: “Everything is possible for him who believes” (Mark 9:23); and that I “can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need” (Phil. 4:13).

Do not entertain obstacle thoughts

Always keep trying, as the Spirit of God leads you. Never take “No” for an answer, unless it is God who says it. If God says He would heal you, even if it takes how many years, keep believing His word and wait on Him. If God says that you will prosper, believe it even if circumstances show to the contrary. Every failure in effort is first a failure in believing. Failure always waits on the path of weak faith and least persistence. Persist in faith.

Do not allow thoughts of impossibilities to becloud your mind. Do not allow any one to conclude your story, before it begins or ends. You can build a house under those harsh economic circumstances you are in, for example. You can prosper in that business or ministry. You can overcome those weaknesses and bad habits by Christ Jesus who strengthens you. You can succeed against all those problems and difficulties you are going through. You can still be healed of that disease. You can overcome those problems or challenges in your business, marriage, job, house, your environment. You will get out of that prison or whatever is keeping you in yoke, bondage, or debt. You can do everything perfectly by Christ Jesus who strengthens you. Do not carry obstacle thoughts.

The Bible says that Abraham, *"Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not **waver** through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised"* **(Rom. 4:19-21)**.

His age had no place in his mind. Although he and Sarah were both past childbearing age, his mind was closed to all negative factors. He refused to consider those things that could cause him to stagger. Rather, he chose to consider the ability, integrity and faithfulness of God. He did not allow negative thoughts to stand in his way to his miracle.

God has already freely given us everything in Christ Jesus. He has given us health, wealth, wisdom, power, righteousness, success, victory, everything. We should be prepared to fight vigorously to possess the kingdom of God, which Jesus says, *"...suffers violence and is seized by force"* **(Matthew 11:12)**. This is as true for the Kingdom of Heaven as it is for everything that Christ has freely won for you and for me. Move out in violent faith and seize from the enemy everything Christ has already won for you.

Chapter 8

Dealing with Enemies of Faith - Guard Your Mind

Close your mind to all negative thoughts, imaginations or reasoning

The mind is the battle ground for success or failure, progress or stagnation, prosperity or poverty, freedom or bondage, health or sickness and disease, victory or defeat. It is the battle ground between positive and negative thoughts, ideas and imaginations. Your actions and reactions are controlled by the thoughts that take root in your mind. The Bible says in **Prov. 4:23**: *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."* In **1 Pt. 1:13**, the word also says: *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober..."*

Your mind is key to a victorious life of faith. The mind is so important that it is the main target of Satan's attacks in the person. The mind is the eye of the man. What it sees and accepts shapes a man's life and determines his state. We don't have much control over what comes to our minds, but we can determine the things we dwell upon in our minds. I agree with one man who said that the devil would rather have more blind minds than blind eyes. I think this is true because the devil cannot succeed in defeating a person whose mind he has not been able to hold captive by negative thoughts, ideas or imaginations. The enemy cannot reach you, except through your mind.

The moment he captures your mind, he has got you. For when he takes control of your mind, you start doing his will. When he took control of Peter's mind, Peter instantly became Satan. It took Jesus to cast out the devil that had taken over Peter's mind. Jesus said to Peter in **Matt. 16:23**, *"Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."* Remember this is the same Peter of whom, just moments before, the Lord had spoken of the following words: *"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah ... I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (**Matt. 16:17-19**).

Peter the rock had in a short time turned into Peter the Satan! Why? It's because his mind had been taken over by the worldly mean spirit of self-preservation. As a result, Peter could no longer see things the way God saw them. The devil had misled him to be carnally minded and, as the Bible says, *"For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace"* (**Rom. 8:6**). Judas the Iscariot lost his sense of value and decided to sell his Master Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver.

This was after the devil had entered his mind and Judas had bought his deception. The Bible says: "*Then Satan entered into Judas surnamed Iscariot...*" (Lk. 22:3).

The main entry point of the enemy into the believer's life is through his (the believer's) mind. Guard it as much as, if not more than, the way you guard your eye. Surrender your mind everyday to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to take control of it in the name of Jesus Christ.

Casting down negative imaginations

Negative imaginations are negative thoughts that the devil brings to your mind as a means of bringing you down. Something comes to your mind; for example, that you are not going to "make it" simply because so and so who looks like you also didn't make it; or because of this and that reason. Something comes to your mind that you are going to fail because of this and that reason. Imaginations, if entertained, will undermine a person's faith and make one a captive. Every time you find yourself arguing against the word of God, just know that the devil is behind it. His ministry is to make you captive to wrong ideas, thoughts and imaginations, so that you become an enemy of the truth.

Don't buy into the devil's ideas or suggestions. If the imaginations or thoughts coming to your mind are contrary to the truth as revealed in the Word of God, know that this is Satan and dismiss his ideas immediately by invoking the Word of truth. The Word of God advises us to be "...*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Cor. 10:3-5).*

Wrong imaginations are the thoughts or lies the devil brings to our mind in order to bring our faith down. The mind is the battle ground for success and failure. Our actions and reactions are controlled by the thoughts that take root in our mind. If you allow negative, worldly patterns of thought in your mind, they will in turn produce negative, worldly patterns of behaviour. We are a product of our thoughts, "*for as a man thinks, so is he*" (Prov. 23:7). You cannot rise above your thought life. Always quickly dismiss any thoughts or imaginations that are contrary to the truth of what God says. "*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life*" (Prov. 4:23).

That's why he makes your faith the major object of his attacks, by telling you that 'it's impossible', 'there is no way out of this,' 'give up - you won't make it.' But knowing well that the devil is a natural liar, simply refuse to be influenced by any voice other than the voice of God. "Nothing is impossible with God" (Lk. 1:37)! God is still looking for people who, like Mary and the Angel Gabriel above, can dare to believe that nothing is impossible with God!

Thoughts are so powerful that they either make you or break you. Winning Christians are like courageous explorers with a sense of daring. They possess such a high sense of faith and security that they are willing to face mountains with a sense a certainty.

The more the situation proves negative, the more the circumstances look bleak or contrary to reality, the more, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we should press on. Winners never quit and quitters never win. Pray that at any time the Son of Man comes to answer your prayer, let Him find steady faith in you. Then you will be rewarded richly.

It is important for us then to watch our thoughts pattern. The Bible says you are a product of your thoughts "*for as a man thinks, so is he*" (**Prov. 23:7**). Many of us often get defeated because we think or dwell on other things, apart from the word of God. We get caught up in thinking the problem. When anything seems about to happen, we are already lost in thoughts about the possible consequences, instead of thinking on what God has said about such situations. If you keep thinking the problems, you will find it very difficult and even impossible to get out of them.

Clean up the Mind

Many of us often rob ourselves of God's blessings by entertaining negative thoughts. Your thoughts play a key role in your life. You cannot grow beyond your thought life. Think or dwell on the word of God. It will produce life in your life and you will be successful in everything.

Free yourself from calamity, defeat, failure, demoralization, stagnation, back-sliding, by casting down any thoughts or imaginations that are negative or contrary to the truth revealed in the Word of God. Perhaps you are sick or poor or in debts or any other area of challenge, and the enemy tells you that you are finished, for whatever reason he gives. Counter him by applying the Word of God to that situation. Declare to him what the word of God says about it. Learn to force this down the devil's throat! Let the devil know that you know better the word of truth.

Seeds!

Thoughts are like seeds. If you sow it, it will germinate and grow. The Bible says we will always reap what we sow. If you want success, sow success seeds. Think success thoughts. See yourself successful. Don't allow any other negative or contrary thoughts. You never can rise above your thought level. It controls and dictates your actions. You will be exactly what you think of yourself. Thoughts are images. When you think or dwell on a particular thing, images are painted on your mind.

Do not allow thoughts of impossibilities or failure to becloud your mind. You can build a house or a successful ministry under those harsh economic circumstances. You can get married any time. You can do any job by Christ who strengthens you. You can prosper in any environment where God places you. You can make it in any place and under any circumstances. You can succeed in that business. You can get healed of any sickness or disease - whether the world calls it 'terminal', 'incurable', or whatever name. You can get freedom out of that prison or whatever sentence. You can enjoy a happy and successful marriage. You can get the money you need. *"Nothing is impossible with God"* (Lk. 1:37)! Do not carry obstacle thoughts. Your thoughts make or mar you, promote or demote you, propel or keep you in stagnation. If you think failure, you will talk failure and get failure. If you think success or victory, you will get the same.

Mind your Focus

Peter began to sink in water, because he shifted his focus from Jesus to the possibility of drowning, after seeing the storm (Matt. 14:25-31). No problem in life will sink or defeat you, until you take your eyes off Jesus and instead focus on the problem. Always focus on the Lord, not the problem. Problems or waves will always be there in life, but focus on Christ who is above all things. When you focus on the problem, God looks small; but when you focus on God, you see how small your problem or need really is. Acknowledge the problem, but recognize and focus on Jesus who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth over all things (Matt. 28:18). We are advised in Heb. 12:2 to be *"Looking unto Jesus..."*

But this is where many of us often miss it. We often focus on and identify with the world in the natural, instead of focusing on and identifying with Jesus. We end up getting what the world gets, because the word says, *"according to your faith let it be to you"* (Matt. 9:2)! There are evil days and seasons of fire, but they eventually come to an end. Ask God for the faith to walk with Him through them. Keep looking to Jesus and His word.

The Dangers of Focusing on People

One of the reasons the faith of many Christians doesn't produce positive results as contained in the promises of God is because, we often tend to focus on and trust more in people, in things or in circumstances, than in God. We run to people before we run to God. We share their problems, concerns or needs more with people than with God. But which people or things often betray or fail to deliver.

Many of us Christians are often lost in our natural environment where we find ourselves, instead of being connected in faith and trust to the supernatural God through prayer. We are always looking to people around than to God. We bank upon circumstances; we are moved by the natural.

But what we often don't seem to realize is that all natural laws, people and things are subject to spiritual laws and authority; for whatever is from above is above all. When you walk after the Spirit in prayer, you dominate the natural laws and circumstances. God controls all things by the word of His power; not by the mood, generosity, actions or policies of people, governments, institutions, organizations, weather, etc.

The word of God says that we should instead look up. *"I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth"* (Ps. 121:1). Stop looking around at the physical environment. Stop looking around to people, institutions, connections, etc. The help of man is worthless, the Bible says in Ps. 60:11. Of course God often uses our fellow men and women to meet many of our needs, wants and desires. But people are merely channels; they are not the source. Focus on the source, not His channels. Your help comes from above, not from people.

The Word of God warns: *"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord ... But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It doesn't fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit"* (Jer. 17:5-8).

Do not focus on the visible. Do not focus on people or what they say or do. If we are more focused on what we see, think or what others think or say, than what God says, we will find ourselves lacking in courage and wavering in our faith. One of our problems is that we get attached to people or methods or ways that worked for us in the past, and we keep going back to them, instead of focusing on and going to God who led such people to us. By always looking back to a certain person or place or source which worked for us in the past for the answer, we seriously limit what God can do for us. He's much greater than any human source. And He's never limited or dependent.

If God is our primary focus of attention, and we are constantly in tune with Him through prayer, everything in our life should fall into line. Let your hope in everything, therefore, always be built on nothing else, but Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God.

Constantly link up with His Spirit in you through prayer. Only He can transform you from the body of sickness to one of sound health; from a poor, debt-ridden and struggling Christian to a prosperous and secure one; from a weak, falling Christian to a strong and righteous one. As long as your focus on and trust in Jesus stands, the devil will stand to respect you at all times! In all circumstances, those who look onto Jesus in faith always end up smiling, for they can't be put to shame by anyone or anything (Ps. 34:5).

Chapter 9

Dealing with Enemies of Faith - The Fear Factor

Fear is one of the greatest enemies of faith, and can prevent many from obtaining great things and achievements that God had otherwise prepared for us. Look at the example of the Jews. The Jews were ordered by God to escape from the Egyptian slavery and go to the Promised Land. This would be after crossing the Jordan (**Exodus 7**).

But after migrating for two years, they stopped at the border of Canaan, and could not exercise enough faith in God to cross over to the Promised Land. They feared reports they had heard that the Canaanites who were occupying that land were super-giant men, who would eat them up as soon as they had crossed the Jordan. Only Moses believed the minority report of spies Joshua and Caleb, which had shown that the Canaanites were actually not a credible threat to the children of God.

But the rest of the group remained stuck in their fears of the 'mighty' giants of Canaan, and would not cross over. As a result, the march to Canaan had to take them another 38 years. For God put them in a holding pattern of wandering, until after they had mastered enough faith to cross over, or until after the fearful among them had died (**Exodus 7**).

Many of us are like these Hebrews; the fear of hearsay, the fear of the unknown and the imaginary can prevent us from great attainment. When the Hebrews chose to fear the imaginary giants of Canaan, they suspended their future and success for decades. Nothing suspends success like fear! Today, many of us similarly achieve below our potential or halt on the brink of success and great achievements for fear of imaginary things. How many of us fear, for example, to apply for some jobs or positions where God would perhaps richly bless us, simply because we fear that other applicants are "better" than us, "more experienced," "better connected," have better "qualifications," etc?

The opposite of faith

Fear is a powerful controller, which prevents us from obtaining God's promises. The fear (of failure, defeat, harm, problems, challenges, death, humiliation, scorn, condemnation, society, public opinion, discomfort, costs, etc) is the number one motivation in the lives of many of us.

But, like the Hebrews, our success can be put on hold for many years, if not indefinitely because of our fear of imaginary things or people we know only by hearsay, reported to be more experienced, taller, better connected, talented or more deserving than us.

Never fear any person, however experienced, tall, well connected, talented or placed they might be. If they too have received Christ Jesus, just like you, they have the same spirit as you have; and if you have received Christ Jesus and they have not, you are actually for more and better connected than any of them. David who had the Spirit of God in him brought down the mighty Goliath in battle, despite David being very young, small and inexperienced.

You have the superior Spirit

This is because, like David, if you are in Christ Jesus, you have a far superior and mighty Spirit of God inside of you, far better than any one who lacks it - however tall, experienced, talented or skilled he or she might otherwise be. Always consider yourself not to be better or worse than any of your fellow Christian, because you share the same Spirit of God. But you must consider yourself far superior to every non-believer, because He, the Spirit of Christ Jesus *"who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world"* (1 Jn. 4:4)! You are extremely superior and powerful, because you are connected to the real source of life, the life-giving Spirit of Christ Jesus, of God the Father. This is not an expression of pride, but a perfect understanding of who you really are.

Fear is the opposite of faith - we are afraid because we feel powerless. We feel that we can't change something. Fear is not just a distressing emotion; it is the spiritual force of Satan's kingdom. Faith is the force of God's kingdom. Fear is an evil spirit; it is a demon.

Satan uses deceptions to create fear in us. He knows that if he can deceive us into being afraid, fear will control our lives, instead of faith. But boldness, driven by faith in God and His word, leads to success. We Christians must know that because of our position, authority and protection in Christ, Satan, the flesh and the world can't defeat us. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you get rid of the evil spirit of fear. He is the medicine for it. God's Word says, *"God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (2 Tim. 1:7).

Know, therefore, that every spirit which God did not put in you, it is weak, because it is on foreign, strange and slippery territory. Throw it out! Resist it, with the help of the Holy Spirit of God in you, and it shall flee. The Bible says that we have power to resist the devil, and that if we use it, the devil will flee from us (James 4:7).

Whenever you notice fear in your life, resist it by quoting the Word of God. Satan is a defeated enemy in the life of every person carrying the Spirit of Christ Jesus. When we stand up to the devil, he has no option but to flee or back down. Don't be fearful in the face of Satan's or the world's challenges and attacks. We have complete power and authority over him in Christ our Lord. Pray for this power now!

The spirit of insecurity weakens our faith

Another great enemy of faith, and a form of fear, is the spirit of insecurity, which borders on anxiety and lack of self-confidence. You may or may not have heard about this story about the fall of King Saul. Whatever the case, let me use it here because it clearly shows how the spirit of insecurity undermines faith and can lead a person to make very costly mistakes, or to lose great things which God had prepared for him or her.

Saul had been anointed by Prophet Samuel as the first king of Israel (**1 Samuel 13**). He was leading the nation of Israel in battle against the Philistines. The Philistines had gathered at Micmash to come against Saul and his army. The Lord was directing Saul through the prophet Samuel. Samuel instructed King Saul to go ahead of him to Micmash and he would follow in seven days. Samuel would then offer a burnt offering on behalf of the people of Israel. The pressure began to build, as the Philistines gathered around Micmash preparing for battle. The people of Israel began to fear this battle and began to scatter throughout the countryside.

Saul was getting fearful. Samuel did not show up on the morning of the seventh day. Finally, Saul became even more fearful of the impending attack. He decided to take it upon himself to offer the burnt offering. Soon after he had done this, Samuel showed up and said, "*You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, He would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure ... because you have not kept the Lord's command*" (**1 Sam. 13:13**). Shortly after, Saul lost his kingdom.

Manifestations of a spirit of insecurity

Saul had a form of insecurity that many of us have today in our private lives, in our families, in our places of work, in our relationships. We are insecure about so many things in our lives. We are insecure about our past, our present, and our future. We worry about what to eat, about house rent, transport, health education, jobs, contracts, so many things. We imagine that an illness is going to attack our bodies, or even kill us. We worry about who will take care of us if we are sick; when we are old; or if we are poor.

We worry about things in our families, their safety, etc. We fear that we will lose our ministry, jobs and become impoverished. Some worry about what their children will become or what will affect them.

Some fear that their spouses will leave them. Some men fear that their wives will sleep with other men and the other way round. Some of us are over-protective, over-critical, and overly suspicious or judgmental of our neighbours, workmates, spouses, workers, etc, because of one thing: the spirit of insecurity.

Many of us, because of this, like King Saul, often opt to take control of situations in our own powers, but outside the will of God. A man who is insecure about his partner may limit her about many things she should do or even people she should interact with. The same may apply to an insecure woman. They become angry or critical at the slightest innocent movement or acts of their spouses. A man who is ruled by a fear or insecurity of becoming poor can become so mean that the family suffers a lot.

A person whose sense of security on a job lies more in people employing him, than in God who created and deploys him, may harbour such fears of losing his job to the extent that he becomes too depressed even to eat or share love with his family. A Christian woman who fears that she might never get another chance to get married can go with any man that comes, even if such a man is a Muslim or some other non-Christian. A fear-ruled motor car driver impatiently crosses the road out of fear that he might be cut off or locked out by incoming traffic, but instead ends up causing a deadly accident.

Some of us are often so driven by fear and insecurity that it motivates us to try to pre-empt or over-control circumstances or people under us. Our fear or insecurity can badly affect the people under our control or the people we love or interact with. Whenever you take control of a situation prematurely, impatiently or out of the will of God, it demonstrates you are led by a spirit of fear or insecurity. It is a warning sign that your faith, your confidence and trust in God is weak. And it is something that happens to many of us, but one that we must overcome, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Legitimate fears or concerns

Now, of course, we all have legitimate concerns about our health, our jobs, our finances, our families and life in general. A person who is not concerned at all with or about anything risks running into problems. Somebody once remarked that Adam lost his wife Eve, because of lack of concern. It was when Adam left Eve to roam carelessly that she picked up the devil, which destroyed both of them, and which has caused us so many problems to this day. There is therefore a place for legitimate concerns.

But when such concerns begin to drive us or become a dominant feature of our mind set or approach to life, instead of putting our total faith in God, it is a clear demonstration that a spirit of fear or insecurity leads us. But often many of our fears are groundless. We often worry about many things that aren't real, or which things will never come to pass.

Our fears often have no basis because, to that point, there is no credible threat to call for these thoughts; and most importantly, because the Word of God says otherwise to many of the life situations that threaten us.

The word says that: *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).* If you are a believer who loves God, and walks and works according to His purposes, you need not fear anything that life presents. Everything in your life will have a good ending, because it is all in the hands of the loving God and friend who fathered you, deployed you where you are, and is looking after every detail of your life.

Do you see any signs of over-control or panic in how you relate to other people or life circumstances and challenges? Are you fearful of failure, losing a marriage, ministry, or falling sick, losing a job, becoming impoverished, or something happening to your children or loved ones; prompting you to rash to conclusions, to panic or to take pre-mature or pre-meditated actions? Are you often impatient or harsh with people, in order to have a particular outcome or something done? These can all be manifestations of a spirit of fear or insecurity. Ask the Holy Spirit of Christ Jesus to clear your heart and mind of these spirits, for *“God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).*

Personal check

A Christian is not supposed to have a spirit of fear or insecurity. Rather, God gave every believer a spirit that can enable him to walk in the freedom of trusting in God and through Him in those around him or her. Anything contrary to this is a foreign evil spirit in your body and it must go out. If you have legitimate concerns about your health, success, your marriage, ministry, your job, your finances, your children or loved ones, or your life in general, you can instead do some the following things:

- One, focus on the present day and what God considers your responsibility regarding the concern.
- Do what you can to fulfill your responsibility and leave the rest to God.
- If it is a fear of marital infidelity or separation, do only that which God wants you to do as a spouse and leave the affairs of your spouse to God to take control of them, for you. He is the one who created him/her.
- Regarding our concerns about our health, for example, we should take our medications, as we should, perhaps go to the doctor, care for our health needs, pray for God's guidance and leave the rest to Him. He is our Creator and knows better how to take control of your life. If it is His will that I go and stay with Him for eternity (or what we call death) what's wrong with that? (Isn't surprising how many of us daily talk of how good God is, but few are willing to go and meet him; nearly every body goes to meet Him reluctantly!)

- Focus on today and leave the tomorrow to Him. When our children go out by themselves, instead of worrying and being afraid we should pray to God to take care of them, believe that He will, and trust Him to keep His word.
- Remember that God is not a human being that He should lie. Yes, bad things do happen and people do lose their children, spouses or things but we must not be anxious, uneasy or worried for something that may, after all, never happen.
- Above all, as the Bible says, “*know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose*”(Rom. 8:28).

Yes, in *all things* -- in sickness or disease, life or death, poverty or debt, unemployment or demotion, imprisonment or mistreatment, separation or divorce, barrenness or stagnation, loneliness or old age, abuse or shame, mention it -- God works for your good, if you have received and walk after Christ Jesus.

Whatever bad or catastrophic thing that may happen to you or your loved ones, if you are a friend of Jesus who obeys Him, He will work good out of whatever befalls you. If you keep trusting in Him, He will turn your trials into triumphs; He will transform your setbacks into stepping-stones to a higher level; He will ensure that your apparent failures turn into disguised set-ups for a stronger come-back; He will turn your challenges into opportunities, your problems into solutions, and your weaknesses into strengths.

Always trust the Lord Jesus Christ to turn your every problem into a possibility, your every challenge into an opportunity, your every stumbling block into a stepping-stone, your every setback into a spring-board, you're your every test into a testimony – because in *all things* (not one or two) *God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose*”(Rom. 8:28).

Fear achieves nothing

One of the worst things about fear, besides paralyzing its victims, is that it achieves nothing. Jesus says:

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt. 6:25-34).

If none of us can, as the Lord says, by worrying, add a single hour to his or her life, then it is pointless for us to worry about anything. The best thing is prayer.

Consequences of a spirit of fear or insecurity

When the spirit of fear or insecurity takes over, it often hinders its victims from being steadfast in their own responsibilities. We may not be able to sleep and then we are sick afterwards and can't do things we are responsible for. Fear can also open the gateway to cause sin to enter. When we are afraid or worried, we are more likely to be impatient or harsh with someone. We may have to lie to others to justify our fear. Some wives may let their fears cause them to try to take over the headship given by God to husbands.

We may be drawn, through fear of what others may think, to a point where we engage in arguments. Fear can cripple us emotionally, if we don't put the situation into God's hand and trust him to take care of it and us. Besides, everything you fear, you may end-up experiencing. This was Job's experience - "*The things I greatly feared have come upon me*" (Job 3:25).

If you live in the fear of failure, you are likely to end up in failure. If you live in the fear of death, death will likely kill you long before the number of your days is fulfilled. If you live in constant fear of tomorrow, you won't enjoy your today. Fear is a terrible spirit, which must be resisted with the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why the Bible uses the phrase "*fear not*" about 365 times in the scriptures.

Misrepresenting the promises of God

Satan knows the promises of God, so he misrepresents God's security by trying to get us to buy into false securities, such as friends and family members. But Jesus is the only foundation that we can safely rely on. Many churches, marriages, friendships, jobs, ministry callings, etc, suffer because of insecure people. As one critical observer noted, some of us wear a wounded spirit that sends out a message of insecurity. This insecurity is like a magnet that may draw in a person impatience, abuse, criticalness and disrespect.

Whenever you are attacked by the spirit of fear or insecurity about anything, remind the devil behind it that: *"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want ... He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for [He is] with me; [His] rod and [His] staff, they comfort me.... Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever"* (Ps. 23).

- ❖ If your faith and trust is in Christ Jesus, no man or woman under the sky can succeed in blocking or overturning your destiny;
- ❖ If your trust is in Christ Jesus, no force of the world or hell or both combined can prevent His purposes from being fulfilled in your life;
- ❖ There is nothing that life demand or presents that can defeat a Christian who trusts in and relies upon the Lord Jesus;
- ❖ *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:30-39).

Christ is Lord over every circumstance and over every area of life. Always have a deep, unshakeable confidence that you are secure in His love. God will give you the grace to make it through *any* situation or problem that comes your way in life, if you just give it over to Him, believe Him where He said He would handle it for you and trust Him to keep His Word, against all odds. The Bible says, *"Fear of man will prove to be a trap, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe"* (Prov. 29:25). The great David says, *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold..."* (Ps. 18:2).

Faith looks at situations through God's eyes, not the eyes of our limited understanding, nor the eyes of the world. A man or woman of faith does not panic, for he or she knows something more than the current circumstance. He knows the ground on which he is standing. Faith does not panic, but realizes that what looks like devastating circumstances may be God's plan to bring glory to Himself by demonstrating His power.

The word of God states that, *"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"* (Heb. 13:6). The devil is powerless, as long as your faith in Christ Jesus is at work. That is why he makes your faith the major object of his attacks. As long as your faith stands, the devil will stand to respect you. Your faith will transform you from the state of sickness into that of divine health; from failure into a success story; from a chronic or habitual sinner into a saint; from prison to freedom; from rags into riches. It will break the gates and doors that had locked your destiny.

Trust in God

There is more to Christianity than meets the ordinary eye. We should remind ourselves that God is God, and not only trust that He is always with us, but also that He will always do what He says He would do. If you have Christ richly dwelling in you, no matter what happens around or to you, God will walk with you out of, or, through it. David says that *"In God I will praise His words, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me"* (**Ps. 56:4**).

Psalm 34:4 says that *"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."* Seek out the Lord when you are afraid. Fear is a spirit from which only God can deliver us. Talk to the Lord when you are afraid and he will talk back to you. God will deliver us from every evil fear, however great or small. Instead of turning to some other form of escape, when we are afraid, when we are faced with problems or suffering, we should turn to God.

He says, *"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"* (**Jer. 32:27**). God in **Is. 41:102** says, *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* God in **John 14:27** says *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* The **Heb. 13:6** says with confidence, *"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"* **1 Peter 5:7** says, *"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."*

Lose not your Confidence

Holy Spirit-inspired confidence is the treatment against fear. What the enemy attacks in his opposition is the individual's confidence. If he can strike terror into your heart, then he has overcome you. That is why there is always an exaggeration of strength in battles, to weaken the enemy. Satan hangs about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, says the Bible (**1 Pt. 5:8**). But why does a lion roar, if it is really powerful? The answer is simple: to paralyze its prey with fear. Once its victim is immobilized or weakened by fear, the lion can easily subdue it and kill it. This is because fear leads to loss of courage, and without courage, we can never be able to win over our battles.

Lack of confidence has made victims of many of us Christians, which the devil uses to attack and to defeat us. The enemy, silently in your mind or through other people, speaks exaggerated imaginations or words, in order to strike fear in you or to wear you out. The moment you listen to and buy those inflated or exaggerated threats, you are finished. That's why the word of God advises us: *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward"* (**Heb. 10:35**).

Confidence triggers the anointing in battle, whereas fear makes a captive of a would-be winner. Don't cast away your confidence. Do not entertain threatening or discouraging words in your mind or from other people. David refused to be moved by Goliath's threats and instead traced the root of his confidence in God. He won. The Word of God says that God *"is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us"* (Eph. 3:20).

Stop sitting down at your desk imagining that that project is impossible. Nothing is impossible with God. If the Spirit or power of God is at work in you, nothing is impossible for you. When you and I have the Holy Spirit of God in us, we are power-packed and above an impossibility. We are able to make way, even in the thickest of forests, the darkest of moments, the driest of seasons. We can produce light even through the thickest darkness.

Be fully persuaded that God has power to do what He has promised (**Rom. 4:21**). Look beyond your own limitations or the limitations of your environment, and trust that God would accomplish what He promises. It is this confidence in God, which overlooks all outside or environmental factors and circumstances that God honours and richly rewards. If you are faced with a challenge of sickness, take Jesus as your personal physician. The Bible says, *"I am the Lord that heals you."* As someone correctly observed, if you take Him as your personal physician with the same seriousness with which you take Him as your Saviour, you will stay healthy always.

Chapter 10

How to defeat the Devil attacking your Faith

The Bible urges to be prepared to engage in "... the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Faith is so important that it has to be fought for, as it is what the devil wants to take away from you. When a man loses faith, he is finished. But as in any war or battle, it is those with the right weapons that win. In this chapter I would like to share with you some of the tested and trusted weapons you can use against the forces that daily try to undermine your faith.

The word states that: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ"* (Phil. 4:6-7).

The above Scriptures are pointing at three things:

- o **Prayer,**
- o **Petition,**
- o **Thanksgiving**

Worrying about tomorrow is wrong because we don't know what tomorrow holds. We should just deal with today and ask for God's grace to manage the rest. As Jesus says, no amount of worrying can add a single hour to a person's life, or a single hair to a person's head. So we should always pray, instead of worrying. Instead of fear, we should run to God in prayer about anything and give it unto Him to solve, and not worry about it.

• Prayer is victory power

Do not be anxious about anything. Pray. To be anxious means to be restless, fearful, worried or uneasy. Prayer is the main medicine for the spirit of fear or insecurity, for every problem of life. The best way to have peace of mind from oppressive fears and insecurities is to put what we fear, or are insecure about, into God's hands.

We worry about what is going to happen to us; but the best thing is to pray for the factual circumstance we are facing at that moment and put what *may* happen into God's hands through prayer. Prayer is victory power. Each of us faces numerous trials throughout each day, week, month or year.

God invites us to talk with Him about our every concern; to cast all our burdens, cares and troubles on to Him. Whatever challenges and problems you are facing, the best way to overcome them is to pray to Christ Jesus on all occasions and with *all kinds* of prayers and requests, as the Holy Spirit leads you to.

Pray in the Spirit

Pray in the spirit. “*God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and trust*” (Jn. 4:24). A prayer-less Christian is a powerless Christian, and a person who worships God but not by the leading of the Holy Spirit only wastes his time. We are advised to pray in the spirit, in order to be victorious. Praying in the spirit means praying by the leading of the Holy Spirit, in the way that is fit for your need, and by the grace of God. It is the opposite of praying as a matter of practice, routine or instinct, obligation or duty. Some of us tend to pray, not because we are led by the Holy Spirit to, but because it is a Sunday or time or any other day set apart by the Church for prayer. We, therefore, pray as scheduled. But such prayers may not be the best.

The Pharisees were very keen on prayer and had set time in the morning, afternoon, evening, and had special days or festivals (like we have Easter, Christmas, etc.), but the Holy Spirit was not in them doing this. They had set certain hours and days for praying, as a matter of practice and routine, and regardless of their needs and feelings. The prayers to be offered were also known well in advance, and the order in which they would be offered was also pre-determined, if not all written down. They were merely doing these things more as a religious duty, practice or obligation or out of routine, but not under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We need to avoid this kind of praying, because it is not praying in the Spirit. The Bible here is saying that “*pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests*” (Eph. 6:17-18) – meaning that do not base on or restrict yourself to specified prayers or days and times of praying. Do not base yourself on pre-determined, crammed prayers or those that are written down in “prayer books.”

- Repetitions and many words are not necessarily effective prayer.
- Lots of emotion also does not necessarily make for effective prayer.
- The absence of emotion does not necessarily lead to effective prayer.
- Loud calling out or shouting does not necessarily lead to effective prayer.
- Well-written or scripted prayers do not necessarily lead to effective prayer.

Effective prayer results from an active dependence on the Holy Spirit of God within us, as we acknowledge that we don't know how to pray, and as we open ourselves to His leading and His prompting. Instead of following prayer books or crammed prayers when our hearts are not in it, we do better to concentrate on following the Spirit to broaden our prayers, so that we come to know God's will better; so that our hearts desire what God's heart desires. We cannot pray effectively in our own power.

A person who prays in the Spirit may have no written prayers; neither does he need to have pre-determined days and hours of prayer, or prayer requests, except as the Spirit leads him. He prays all kinds of prayers and requests, all the time as and when the Holy Spirit of God leads him to. Most importantly, he prays from the heart and not from the head. Always ask the Holy Spirit before you pray for anything, to lead you into prayer and scripture reading. God wants to act on behalf of His children if they will call on Him.

Avoid, therefore, prayers that are recycled or recited from the head, rather than from the heart; prayers that are recited merely out of religious practice, obligation, tradition or routine. God is only interested in the desires of your heart, your soul, and will only answer what comes from within the depth of the heart; not what someone is merely uttering by his mouth or counting on his fingers out of religious practice, obligation, tradition or routine. I should stop priding myself in how many Eucharistic masses or services I have attended, in how many rosaries or other prayers in a book I have recited on a given day. I should desire, instead, to catch a revelation of what I am praying for, regardless of whichever words I use and how long my prayers last. The prayer of faith is what makes the difference in any area of need.

Pray continually

Many of us want to have the power of God's Spirit operating in us in the same way it was operating in Christ Jesus. But do we know the secret? Prayer. Jesus often used to wake up very early in the morning and go for prayer. He also used to go to quiet places often and pray. Jesus was always with His Father in the Spirit and this is prayer. Pray all the time.

"Pray continually" (1 Thes. 5:17) – not only in the morning and evening - all the time! *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph. 6:18)*. There is victory power in continual, Spirit-led prayer. Don't pray only when *'you feel like it'*! 'When it is hardest to pray, we ought to pray the hardest', someone beautifully said it. If Christ the King prayed so often, how much more does His subject like you and me ought to pray?

Some of us pray only when we have needs or problems. But this is a sign of a poor relationship with our Father, our God. Always keep on praying. If the attitude of your heart is towards God, then He will be the centre of your existence. In every situation and circumstance, you will find yourself naturally discussing it with God. This is prayer. He will be your first thought, not your last. You will run to Him for guidance, rather than taking your problems to other people.

It is important for us to see the need for continual prayer. The early Christians knew just how important continual prayer could be. Prayer was not just an early morning, afternoon, evening or Sunday time activity.

It was a way of life. **Acts 1:14** says, "*These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*" In the Book of **Acts 2:42** we read, "*And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*"

Make sure you pray not only when you have problems, but all the time. We should not turn God into a witch doctor or problem fixer – running to Him only when we have problems. Have a continual personal fellowship with Christ. Let Him be your full time friend and companion through His Holy Spirit. A person who has a personal relationship with Christ Jesus or His Holy Spirit is that person who is talking to and listening to Him continually, all the time. This is a relationship.

And never make speculative or trial prayers to God as some Christians do. Every time you pray to God for anything, be confident that: He has got what you need; He is able to do it for you; and that He so loves and cares enough to provide for you. If you don't believe this don't ask Him, because "*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*" (**Heb. 11:6**).

If you don't have this basic faith ask for it; He gives it freely to them that ask for it. But the truth is that no Christian can go down praying. You can't be defeated by anything in life, as long as you keep trusting and seeking God, in prayer, in Jesus' name. You can't be defeated by anything, unless it has first defeated your prayer life, your faith in Christ Jesus. Never lose faith in Him, even when things are not responding. "*Everything is possible for him who believes*" (**Mk. 9:23**).

You can reinforce your prayer with fasting

There are in life, however, problems and mountains that prove to be stubborn to 'ordinary' prayer. They stare you hard in the face and refuse to bow or to go. What do you do if you're confronted with such? "*Then the disciples approached Jesus in private and said, 'Why could we not drive it out?'*" He said to them, "*Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting*" (**Matt. 17:19-21**).

Yes, with faith we can extinguish all the fiery darts or missiles of the enemy, the Bible says. But there are certain "mountains" of a kind that will require a reinforcement of your faith: "*This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.*" Fasting is giving God the place that food or any other favourite thing in your life had occupied; it's a separation from this unto God. In fasting, natural pleasures give way to spiritual values. When you fast, you are creating an atmosphere for your spirit-man to grow.

When you fast, make sure you also read God's word and pray. Otherwise, fasting, which is not accompanied with prayer, meditation or reading the Word of God is, as one person put it, nothing but a hunger strike. Faith combined with prayer and fasting forms a deadly missile against the enemy. Try this combination, whenever you are faced with an unbending problem in your life. Intimate prayer and fasting, combined with reading of God's word, will take you out of the body and put you right in God's presence.

• Petitioning

The Scriptures have said *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and **petition**, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ"* (Phil. 4:6-7).

Petitioning means *"beseeching the Lord"* (Exodus 32:11); *"pouring out the soul before the Lord"* (1 Sam. 1:15); *"praying and crying to heaven"* (2 Chron. 32:20); *"seeking unto God and making supplication"* (Job 8:5); and *"drawing near to God"* (Ps. 73:28). We are to pray for everything and in specific terms. As you talk to God, for example, pray that your inner person may be renewed, always sensitive to and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Pray about your problems and needs; pray for wisdom and guidance; pray for strength to resist temptation; to persist in your trial, challenge, problem or suffering; pray for comfort -- pray for everything (Phil. 4:6). Praying and petitioning includes petitioning for our own needs and intercession for others. Do not be selfish and narrowly focused on your problems and needs alone! You are not alone in your problem or suffering.

Your problems are the same problems many other people are going through somewhere. Since we are one body in Christ, be, therefore, sensitive to other people's needs and pray for them as well. We need to pray for others, as we would have them pray for us. Are you struggling with sickness? poverty? frustration? thought life? stagnation? relationships? loneliness? unanswered prayers? If you are struggling with any these, then you can be sure that many other people do too. The more we pray for others, the more God also listens to our needs. Remember it is more blessed to give than to receive!

Giving thanks and praising God

The Bible has again said that, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with **thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ"* (Phil. 4:6-7). The Scripture above says that *"...with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* It is wisdom to give thanks to God in everything, before even asking Him for anything.

The prayers of many of us Christians are focused on asking God for this and that, forgetting to thank and praise Him for the many things He has already done for us.

Have you learnt to say, *“Thank you Lord Jesus,”* under whatever circumstances you are in (when you are sick or jobless or in a financial difficulty; when your heart is broken due to this and that)? Well, you may say that only a fool would give thanks under such circumstances. But there is a secret. *“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thes. 5:18).* Thanking God is a powerful spiritual weapon of faith, which shows that you trust God, even when things are going wrong. Learn to say *“Thank you Lord”* even when the whole world is crumbling around you, for the Lord is in control over everything and cares for you **(1 Pt. 5:7).**

He personally visited this world and saw or experienced all our problems and suffering from a human point of view. But He won’t bless you, if you are worried and unbelieving; if you lament, complain, criticize, find fault, or nurse grudges, instead of trusting in Him only. From the time you wake up in the morning until you go to bed at night, let the words *“Thank you Lord Jesus”* not depart from your heart, from your mouth! *“Thank you Lord because I know you care and have a perfect plan for my life”; “Thank you Lord because I know you will deliver me from this”; “Thank you Lord because it could have been worse”.*

Before you ever ask God for anything, before you ever present to Him your need, problem, concern or anything, first bring to your heart the many good things He has already done for you and thank Him for them. No matter what you’re going through, first give thanks to and praise God; you will obtain the promise. Says the Word of God: *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thes. 5:18).*

Bring God in every situation, through your thanksgiving and praises and see the difference. Divine presence equals signs and wonders. Always have a reason to thank God, and never ask Him or pray for anything, before thanking Him for what you already possess.

At all times, never murmur, grumble or complain. God hates murmurers and people who grumble or complain, instead of praying to Him. Those who murmured in the wilderness were destroyed. Their murmuring and complaining turned God against them. If we are continually thankful to God for the things He has done for us, including those we do not see, or those that are going wrong, He will correct them and pour more blessings on us, not least His Holy Spirit.

The secret of giving thanks and praising the Lord

Though often paid the least attention, thanksgiving and praise is as powerful as prayer, if not more powerful. This is because, before we ever pray for anything, God already knows we need it. Do you know that two of the most profound miracles Jesus did were as a result of praise? When He fed 5,000 men in the wilderness, thanksgiving was what multiplied the loaves (**Jn. 6:5-12**); and at the graveside of Lazarus, praise was what brought him back to life (**Jn. 11:41-44**). God inhabits the praises of His people; so the power is released as you praise God. When you live a praiseful life, God's presence abides with you; and when He abides with you, He compels your outer environment to change. At every point and in whatever situation you find yourself, still give Him thanks.

Joy gives to praise and praise is what keeps the heaven open. It is what keeps the rains of blessings falling. It is wisdom to give thanks to God in everything. Someone once remarked that the things you sorry about can only make you a sorry case! There is sense in this. David knew this fact very well, and that's why he used it to deadly effect in his life. *"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name"; "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits"* (**Ps. 103:1-2**).

David was not mad. When we praise God for what we have, rather than concentrating on what we do not have, we show that we are mature. If you bless Him for your health, He gives you even greater health. If you praise Him for the little you have, He gives you even more. Stop crying about the money you want, praise Him for the life you have.

Without His gift of life, there would be nothing to cry about. Nothing pleases God more than our consistent expression of faith. And what better way to do this than to tell Him, "Thank you Lord"? As we approach God with a thankful heart, He makes Himself strong on our behalf. Lay unto your heart the many good things He has done for you and never stop rejoicing and praising Him

Do you find it difficult to be thankful to God, but easy to grumble, murmur, criticize or complain about people or things? You are not alone. Many of us fall in the same category. But we need to change, with the help of the Holy Spirit. If we are continually thankful to God for the things He has done for us, including those we do not see, or those that are going wrong, He will correct them and pour more blessings on us. Pray for the grace to thank, rejoice and praise God in every situation you find yourself in.

Always set aside a special time to remember all the good things the Lord has done for you and your loved ones, and thank Him in a special way for them.

He will open up His large window of Heaven and pour even more blessings on you, because you are a mature and understanding son or daughter of His, who can be entrusted with even more or greater things. At all times and in the midst of any problem or crisis, give thanks and praise to God. It is God's will that we find joy in prayer in Christ Jesus in every condition of life. Remember, God works everything together for good for those who love Him **(Rom. 8:28)**.

Don't allow temporary difficulties, problems, suffering or setbacks to disrupt your trust in God. If you have nothing to eat for breakfast, consider the fact that you were able to sleep and wake up. Not everybody was able to! If you have lost anything at all in life, God is the reason why you haven't lost every thing, including your very life! Thank Him all the time for His goodness. Thanking and praising God is the quickest way to receive from Him.

The devil loves to keep us empty by getting us depressed, sorrowful, and frustrated and mourning, instead of praising the Lord and thanking Him for what we have and hope to have. That's why the Bible says: *"The vine has become dry and the fig tree is feeble ...even all the trees of the field, are dry; because joy has gone from the sons of men"* **(Joel 1:12)**. Always count your blessings and thank the Lord; He will multiply them!

Chapter 11

The Lord's Different Reactions

Doubting

To doubt is to waiver in opinion. A doubter is someone who is not consistent, who is unsettled in opinion or belief; a person who is inclined to disbelieve; who is fearful, worried, or suspicious of the outcome of things.

Do you see yourself in one of the words above? Many of us Christians have doubt from time to time. It is one of the strongest weapons of the Devil. With doubt, the devil can cripple you. When doubt comes, fear comes. When fear enters, faith leaves. When faith leaves, Jesus can no longer help you and me.

Have you noticed that Jesus spoke rather harshly of believers who doubted; but He spoke very admirably of people who had unwavering faith? Let's look at some of these incidences:

❖ *"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"* -- This was after Jesus had told Peter to walk on water; but after Peter had gotten out of the boat and was walking toward Jesus, who was also walking on the same water, when Peter looked at the wind, he was afraid, and began to sink. Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, but reprimanded him for his weak faith. (**Matt. 14:25-31**).

Peter was able to walk on the water when he focused on Jesus, but when he began to focus on the physical situation, it caused fear, which is doubt, the opposite of faith. Doubt caused him to sink. You will not sink until you begin doubting God's Word. Focus on Jesus, not the problem. God stands by His Word, and the integrity of it is such that no forces of evil or hell combined can change what He has said or prevent it from coming to pass. Focus on His Word alone and do not doubt. When we focus on our problem, God looks small. But when we focus on God, the problem looks small and disappears.

❖ *"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"* Jesus said, after Martha, the sister of the dead Lazarus, had doubted that Jesus could bring back Lazarus to life. Lazarus had already been buried, rotten and was all smelling (**John 11: 38-40**). Even if your situation is beyond remedy in the human sense, with God all things are possible. Do not lose your trust and hope in Him.

❖ *"Where is your faith?"* Jesus asked His disciples, after whose boat and in which Jesus was also travelling, had been tossed by a storm of wind on sea and the disciples started panicking (**Luke 8:22-25**).

You see, even when God appears to be asleep or deaf, or not caring at all about your problem or situation, behind the scenes He is actually seeing and is in control. Fear not, even in situations of apparent loneliness or abandonment, for you are not really alone. He is very near. He is with you.

❖ *"... Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"* Jesus, disturbed by His disciple's lack of faith, said this. This was after the disciples were concerned about lack of bread, even after Jesus had only a few days earlier fed 5000 people on five loaves of bread in their midst (**Mark 8:1-9**). Do not have a short memory, I once said to myself! Always trust that the God who helped you in difficult situations in the past, He is the same God and will do the same for you today and in the future.

❖ *"O unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?"* Jesus told his disciples, after they had failed to heal a boy who had been possessed by a spirit that had robbed him of speech. This was because their faith was weak and they did not care to pray for greater faith (**Mark 9:29**). As Jesus said, *"Everything is possible for him who believes."* And as the boy's father prayed, we of weak faith also need to pray, Lord, *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief."* Every one that allows God to remain God, and asks Him to strengthen them in their weakness, end up being promoted and blessed! Always ask Him to strengthen you in your low moments.

❖ *"...O you of little faith."* Jesus said this to His disciples, while teaching them about the habit of getting worried about the daily physical needs of the body and life. He said: *"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith. And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek His kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well"* (**Lk. 12:27-31**).

If God is always there for things that have no human life, He is even more so for His very own, for whom His Son shed the most precious blood.

❖ *"When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick man, Son, your sins are forgiven,"* (**Mark 2:5**). The friends of the paralytic had so much faith in Jesus' power to heal their friend that they tore a hole in the roof and threw him in the room where Jesus was. When Jesus saw this action, He pronounced the above words of forgiveness and restoration to the man. A man or woman of faith never lets any physical, social or other barrier to keep them from seizing what God has freely provided for them. He will seek the Lord until he finds Him.

❖ *"For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter",* Jesus responded to the faith of a Syrophoenician woman, whose little daughter had been possessed by an evil spirit. For she begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter, to which the Lord teasingly responded, *"First let the children eat all they want, for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."* But because of her faith, she did not waiver or back down; instead, she responded: *"Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs"* (Mk. 7:24-30). Winning faith does not waiver or give up, even in the face of apparent setbacks. Never back down on what the Lord says is yours, even when circumstances or people try to discourage you.

❖ *"I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith,"* Jesus said to a centurion who had a slave who was ill and about to die. But as Jesus went to heal her, before reaching the house, the centurion sent friends to tell him, *"Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant will be healed"* (Luke 7:1-10). Trust in the super-natural power of God to change anything. God doesn't depend on circumstances or on you working up things. His word alone is enough to turn any situation round. Believe it; stand on it. Do not make calculations. His word is enough. God does not need to take you to the USA or U.K to be able to prosper you financially, for example. He can make you prosperous wherever you are.

Jesus said (in Matt. 9:29), *"According to your faith let it be done to you."* It is according to our faith, not according to anything else, e.g., our cry or how much or long we have suffered. Faith is so important in receiving God's provision for health, wealth, righteousness, deliverance, victory, success, freedom, power, salvation, whatever. That's why the Bible says: *"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord"* (Lk. 1:45). It is our faith that compels God's performance.

Doubt is one of the major weapons the devil often uses. If he can succeed in puncturing your faith with doubts and fears, then you are already a victim. Until you lose faith, you remain a winner in all situations. The word of God says, *"The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"* (Prov. 18:14). You never get broken outside until you're first broken inside. But if your inner man remains strong, the outer man will be strong.

Unbelief is a work of the devil, aimed at robbing the believer of his inheritance. God loves and commends men and women of extraordinary faith. He grants their requests, sometimes immediately. Whatever is paralyzing you, whatever is making you unable to move or change, bring it in faith to Christ Jesus in faith and it shall crumble.

Chapter 12

The Winning Power in God's Word

Many of us Christians fail to receive most of God's promises simply because we do not take Him at His word. We tend to take the words of God like the words of men. But as said many times, God is not a human being that His word can be doubted, or that He can promise and fail to deliver. Do not receive the word of God as if you are receiving the word of man.

There is a world of difference between the word of God and the word of men. As the Bible says, the word of God works effectively in those who have faith in God: *"For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe"* (1 Thes. 2:13).

It is a two-edged sword

The word of God is like a sword which does not miss the target at which it is directed: *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow ..."* (Heb. 4:12). Whatever God says or promises is true and will come to pass, no matter how long it takes, or regardless of the path it takes: *"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal"* (Ps. 119:160). That is why Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"* (Mk. 13:31).

The promise of God might appear to delay but it will not fail: *"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it"* (Is. 55:10). This is the word of God. It fails not.

"Eat" the word of God as often as you eat food because: *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ"* (Rom. 10:17). Instead of wasting your time in gossiping, idle conversations and observations, reading worthless newspapers or magazines, devote much of your time 'eating' and 'digesting' the word.

Any word of God that takes root in your heart makes you a success in that area. When the word of holiness enters you, it makes you a master over sin. The same is true with prosperity, divine health. This is why we need to be meditating on the word *all the time*. It determines the quality of our life. *"My son, attend to my words; incline your ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart."*

For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh" (Prov. 4:20-22). No person can live a quality of life that is above the knowledge and faith in the word of God that is in his heart.

Locate the "bullet" word

In any problem or challenge you find yourself, locate what the word of God is saying about that particular situation; then administer it to your situation and stand on it in firm faith, regardless of what is happening.

- If it is sin or an unbending evil habit in you, locate the right word, e.g., tell the devil that because *"He (Jesus) Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness ..."* (1 Pt. 2:24), it is impossible for me to be defeated or ruled by sin or any evil habit! Even if you are spiritually weak and falling into sin now and again, don't write yourself off, because you have something special about you – Christ Jesus. The Bible says, *"... let the weak say, I am strong"* (Joel 3:10). Just insist in faith that you must have the righteousness of Christ Jesus, because you have the strength and backing of the blood of Christ Jesus.
- If it is fear, weakness or temptation to engage in sin, based on 2 Tim. 1:7, say with conviction: *"God has not given me a weak, corrupt spirit that can be swept along by every wind of temptation or lust of the flesh; what God has given me is the Spirit of power, love and a sound mind."* I am loaded with the Spirit of power – power over the flesh, the devil and the world!
- If it is poverty, remind the devil *everyday* that he is wasting his time, for you will become rich because by *"... the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for (my) sakes He became poor, so that (I) through His poverty might become rich"* (2 Cor. 8:9). Even if you don't have money, don't label yourself a poor person, because you are really not one. Insist that that, *"Christ redeemed (me) from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for (me), for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree' "* (Gal. 3:13). I must be very rich in His name!
- If it is sickness or disease, remind the spirit behind it that it won't succeed, because *"Surely He [Christ] took up our infirmities (diseases) and carried our sorrows, ... the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:4-5). Rather simply insist that you must be okay because God says so, and He is the Lord of all.
- If it is failure, remind the spirit behind it: *"The world can't defeat me, because I am a child of God through Christ, and "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world"* (1Jn. 5:4). Based on the word of God in 1 Cor. 10:6-13, look at every challenge in your life and say, *"You are too common to become a concern - God will supply me with the necessary grace to overcome you!"*

The 'weather' condition, economic or physical outlook, your situation or circumstances might indeed look bad, but children of the kingdom are not ordinary or natural men and women of the world. They are supernatural; they are connected to the power of Heaven! Never accept to be defeated by anything, because the word of God says that, "*No, in all these things (weakness, sicknesses, diseases, poverty, troubles, challenges, suffering and persecutions), we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us*" (**Rom. 8: 37**)! His will in those who believe in Him cannot be defied or frustrated by the devil or the world. Only we can!

Locate an appropriate word for any challenge you're facing and remind the devil of this truth - for as long as the problem remains. The devil can't stand the truth of God's word for long. Jesus defeated the devil by saying "*It is written ...*" (**Matt. 4:4-10**). You must have a ready answer in the word of God to every challenge!

Any word of God that takes root in your heart makes you a success in that area. When the word of holiness enters you, it makes you a master over sin. The same is true with prosperity, divine health. This is why we need to be meditating on the word *all the time*. It determines the quality of our life. "*My son, attend to my words; incline your ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh*" (**Prov. 4:20-22**). No person can live a quality of life that is above the knowledge and faith in the word of God that is in his heart.

His word is greater than the wisdom of professionals

Stand on the word of God, in spite of negative events, contrary circumstances and opposition. God is God. He does not speak idle words. As the Blessed Marry advises us, "*Whatever He tells you, do it*" (**John 2:5**). Whatever Jesus tells you, believe it and do it - even if it does not make common sense, it makes supernatural sense that really wins.

Even when all facts available indicate that what you want to achieve or do seems impossible, rest assured that there is something greater than those established facts: it is the living word of God. With all the facts available, it seemed impossible for Peter to catch any fish at that time of the day. Professional fishermen always go fishing at night, but here was a man (Jesus) telling the greatest expert at fishing, to let down his fishing net in broad daylight. A stupid idea to any fishing expert. But Peter knew better that Jesus does not speak idle words.

Said Peter: "*Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at your word, I will let down the net*" (**Lk. 5:5**). He caught more fish than he had ever done in all his fishing experience.

Ignore the appearance of things and the circumstances. Christ Jesus is Lord over every thing – the sea, the sky, the land, the seasons, the weather, over any kind of power, authority or force – in heaven, on earth, underneath, wherever. Those who stand on God's word, trusting in Him, they might look foolish in the eyes of the world, but in the end they are glorified.

Forget the words of professional fishermen, medical experts, economists, financial analysts, weather and other forecasters. What they say may actually be true facts, by human standards. A Doctor can diagnose a person as having cancer or HIV, and indeed he might be right. But there is something greater than his established facts: the word of God. God does not speak idle words. If He has said it, believe it, and all contrary situations will fade away. His word will always prevail, contrary to all the laws of fishing, economics, science, medicine, contrary to all known or established facts, principles, precedence and procedures.

Being 'fully persuaded' by His word

I like this phrase – being 'fully persuaded'! Scriptures use it in reference to Abraham, who was 'fully persuaded' that what God had said He would fulfill, however contrary the circumstances or the often so called realities appeared: *"... the faith of Abraham...Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, ... And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded, that what He had promised, He was able also to perform"* (Rom. 4:16, 18-21).

Like our grandfather Abraham, any Christian that wants to fly high must be *fully persuaded* that what God has said He means it, and He will perform it, however contrary the circumstances or the situation might appear or actually be; however long it takes, whatever it takes. God is God. He does no change. Whatsoever will change God's word must change God Himself first. But as we know, God cannot change. He says, *"I am the Lord, I change not..."* (Malachi 3:6). God's Word is the cure for every problem in life; for every attack of the enemy. That's why we are advised to take every word God says about a particular situation or problem very seriously.

Find out His right word and administer it to your situation. The Word is quick: living and powerful. It can combat any form of sickness or problem and win. It is powerfully alive. It is capable of healing any manner of sickness or problem. It penetrates into the spirit and the soul of anything, of any one. It can get into your entire system and work wonders there. It can penetrate into the spirit and the soul of your oppressors, tormenters or torturers or any one denying you your rights, freedom, peace and joy.

It carries out operations in our bones and marrows. It can secure you any kind of victory you desire, be it spiritual, financial, emotional, physical.

Keep God 's word in your heart. It is not the one you have in your head; it is the word in your heart. The Bible says that, "*Keep them in the midst of your heart*" (**Prov. 4:21**). God wants you to create time for His word. He says in **Prov. 4:20**, "*My son, attend to my words.*"

No person can ever be able to live beyond the level and quality of faith he has in God's word. Any word of God that enters you makes you a success in that area.

Keep looking to the word

In **John 3:14**, Jesus is likened to that fiery serpent of brass, onto which the Jews looked and got healed. If the serpent of brass could bring health to any one who looked at it, looking onto Jesus will bring even greater health not only for the body, but for all areas of life. The Psalmist knew the secret of looking onto the Lord. The people of old looked unto the word and they were not ashamed. As long as you keep the Word in sight, it will produce the desired results. Says the word of God: "*They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed*" (**Ps. 34:5**).

Keep looking at the word of God. Keep looking at Jesus. When bad or difficult situations come against you, do not focus on them; focus on what God has said about you and them. **Heb. 12:2** advises us to be: "*Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith...*" Keep looking at God's word until it transforms you from the body of sickness to the body of divine health; from a poor, begging and debt-ridden person, to a prosperous and lending person; from a timid, cowardly person to bold and powerful one; from a failure in life to a very successful person; from a sinful, weak and falling Christian to a fully righteous and strong one; from any form of imprisonment to total freedom.

There is power in the word of God – power to move us from the natural into the supernatural; from the ordinary into the extraordinary and from ourselves into His likeness; power to bring us into the same level of glory with the Lord Jesus.

Focus on Him who speaks the Word

Whatever you want, keep looking onto Him and Him and Him alone. Keep looking at everything He has said about you in His Word. Do not look at or attend to symptoms. He said, "*attend to my words.*" We have nothing to worry about when we attend to His word. If you are sick, and you notice that certain symptoms are trying to show up in your body system, do not focus on them.

Focus on His word - *Surely, He has borne my sicknesses upon His own body and by His stripes I was healed* **(1 Peter 2:24)**. If you are tempted and you notice that certain sinful tendencies are trying to show up in your thoughts, words or behaviours, do not focus on them. Focus on the words: *"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live in righteousness ..."* **(1 Peter 2:24)**.

There are many things that will want to draw your attention from His word, but refuse them. Attend to the word only, and your victory is assured. No believer has ever been disappointed after applying the word of God appropriately, for the word carries God's life, and His integrity backs it up.

Forget about every other thing around you and concentrate on what God has said. Close your eyes and ears to everything and focus on the Word. It will do you good in times of trouble. Know the problems and troubles here below and before you, but refuse to focus on the problems. As earlier said, Peter the apostle, lost his chance of walking with Jesus on the water successfully because he shifted his thought to the possibility of drowning. This was after he had seen the storm and the mist.

He took his eyes off the Master, and instead concentrated on the apparent mountain, challenge, problem or threat. He could not go very far. Focus on the source of solution - Jesus the all time Saviour - the author and finisher of our faith. Knowing what God has said about your particular problem or situation or desire and knowing how to apply it, will make you a success in every challenge you encounter.

The one behind the word is faithful

The Lord is faithful and He is ever loving. *"For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations"* **(Psalm 100: 5)**. *"Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them - the Lord, who remains faithful forever"* **(Psalm 146:6)**. What more do we need? The world may try to change your God-ordained destiny, but always remember *"He upholds all things by the word of His power"* **(Heb. 1:3)**.

The Lord sees the smallest details of each and every person on earth, and whatever your problems, concerns and needs are, God thinks about you. The Bible says, *"The Lord looks from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men"* **(Ps. 33:13)**. Success or deliverance is certain if the Lord has promised it. Although you may have to wait and plead month after month, or year after year, without seeing anything coming, hold on to your faith.

Simply get committed to His word, for if your faith does not fail you, if you remain focused on Him, He will reveal Himself to you very strongly in the end.

The scriptures say, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is committed to Him" (2 Chron. 16:9). "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you ... " (John 15:7-8).

The devil will always try to attack your mind, by bringing to it all sorts of negative things and potential obstacles he can see around, to challenge all you claim to know. He will constantly use occurrences and situations around you as points of reference. Don't be diverted or deceived! Always tell him what God says, and that what God says is final, no matter what people or circumstances say. That is why the Bible recommends that we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

As earlier said, if Satan can't get your mind, he can't get you. God is more particular about what we think. He understands the thoughts of man. He knows what we think. He wants the Word to become the focus of our thoughts. In everything, think in terms of God's word. Shift your thoughts from situations, circumstance, symptoms and feelings. The devil (like any other good liar) has a lot to say, but for me I have no time to listen. If he insists, I pull out the Sword (Word) of God and flash it in his ugly face! He flees. Concentrate on whatever God says about your health, your prosperity, your righteousness, your success, your future, freedom, your entire life. That is the secret of winning Christians. Anchor your thoughts on that, and allow it to make up your thinking.

Stock the word of God in your heart

No one can maintain the flow of signs and wonders that follow believers without an attitude of this nature. Anything that fails to kill a believer's faith in the word of God, he has already defeated it. Men and women of supernatural sense have continuous victory over negative thoughts and imaginations, because they stock up their hearts with scriptural information (words of God); which they apply to every situation or challenge that the devil presents in their hearts and minds.

You must begin to read and think success thoughts, if you must be successful. This affects all areas of life. You cannot succeed in any area where your thoughts are not established upon. Make a definite thought commitment. Read and think on what God says about your success, your health, your prosperity, your victory, your freedom, your area of need or concern. Build that image. Allow it to be real to you. Give it all it takes. You will face challenges while you are renewing your mind to think success. The devil will tell you it is not possible. You cannot make it. He will present you with a number of apparently sound reasons why you must back out. That is the battle you must win. Be careful of what you think.

Many have had their minds bound and they only think and predict trouble, problems, failure or defeat. For example, there are very many who believe one cannot have a marriage without quarrels and troubles. They have accepted that quarrels are a normal way of family life.

The devil actually coined a saying, which he has sold to many; it goes like this: "If two people (married couple) agree with each other all or most of the time, it means that only one of them does the thinking." That 'conflict in a family is normal and healthy.' What deception. Watch out; if Satan can get your mind polluted like this, he has got you. Whatever you picture yourself getting into, you'll get into it. You look at your tomorrow and say, "what a bleak tomorrow", and here it is, someone wisely warned.

Think the word

Think success not failure. Think prosperity not poverty. Predict victory not defeat. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. If you must think anything, it must be what you desire. Think positive. Think of good things happening in your life. Think success. Think of vibrant health. Think prosperity. Think of things that are of good report. This is because these are the kind of things the word of God predicts for us. Why should we contradict it? The word of God in **Phil. 4:8** says, "*Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are **honest**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are **lovely**, whatever things are **of good report**; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, **think on these things.***"

See yourself blessing others, making others happy, and not dying as a beggar. Build a mental picture of a glorious life that rises above the limits of your salary, your educational or family background, your environment, your past or present circumstances. This is winning faith. Do not calculate or speculate on how God's word or promise will work out in your situation or life. Pray that you come to a place of faith in God and His word that, whatever you see around you does not move you. Do not be led by your five senses - sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing. Depend on your sixth sense - faith. As one great man of faith confessed: "Even if I do not see it now, it does not make any difference. I know it is there. God has sent it and I receive it."

The fig tree

When Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree, nothing visible happened to that tree at that time. Some of the Apostles might have thought that Jesus' curse had not worked. But when the disciples came back through that same route a few days later, they were surprised the fig tree had actually dried from the roots to the top. Men and women of great faith in the word of God start giving their testimonies the moment they believe God for their miracles.

Often it will appear foolish to people around us, but as we believers know very well, the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God and the 'foolishness' of God is wiser than the wisdom of man (if it is really wisdom they have).

Sometimes what comes to our mind may come from our friends or it might be what everyone is saying or doing. But a believer who wants to see great things must not take the world's view of things on face value. He must probe into the truth of such views, relating everything to the word of God, which is the final authority in all issues or areas of life. It doesn't matter how many people are doing something. If it is wrong, it is wrong.

Never listen to what the devil is saying. At all times be mindful of what God is saying. Tie it around your neck. As one man said, anything that draws you away from the word of God is your own killer disease. It is trying and struggling to squeeze life out of you. For every one negative report somebody or the devil brings to you or to your mind, supply him with ten other good reports of God, to counter the evil one. If troubles, problems, poverty, sicknesses or diseases knock on your door, don't panic or say, "I am finished". Rather, settle down and organize scriptural truths (words of God, such as those above) and launch a counter-attack on that enemy, and he will flee! That's how winning Christians walk out on and over the devil and the world in all areas of their lives.

It is not how long we have been Christians that matters, but how much word of faith we have in us. Get acquainted with God through continuous studying and hearing of the word. This is your sure anchor in life. God created us for victory, through His word. Let the word of God become your identity. Build your daily agenda around it. Build the word into your system and it will keep you successful in everything. If and whenever the devil comes to attack or clog your mind with wild imaginations and thoughts, ask the Holy Spirit, the living water flowing in your side, to give you at once a fresh baptism of mind-renewal.

Speak the word in faith and boldness

It is not enough to have the right word of God and believing it. You need to speak it as well. If you believe His word in your heart, you should speak it in boldness. Some believers speak things that are contrary to their faith. We say we have faith, but the things we speak depart from what we believe. This is another hindrance to a successful life. We need to confess the truth of the word of God about the situations we are fighting. Our faith must find expression in words, for it to bear fruits.

The word we believe in our heart, formed by the mouth and released in words, is a creative force. If we do it in faith, it is as powerful and effective as God speaking it. After you have believed God's word, do not allow any negative statement from your lips. Stand against it consciously.

The power that will liberate you from ill-health, financial poverty, weakness and sinfulness, your every problem, is in your tongue. Whatever you believe in, say it loud with your mouth. By expressing our faith in words, we become co-creators with God. That is what God expects of us.

Learn to take your stand on God's word. Do not compromise it. Unbelievers (and the devil as well), will come to respect you as you speak the word of God from your lips in faith. Our victory comes through the faith-loaded words that proceed from our mouths. The Bible says the word is sharper than any two-edged sword. When we speak the word in faith, we are agreeing with God, and when we agree with Him, we prevail.

Aim for the supernatural sense and conquer your world

God still is Lord over every circumstance. Let not the appearance of things ever prevent you from pursuing what God says you can achieve. Always insist that you can do everything by the power of Christ Jesus who strengthens you. You and I can succeed in many more ways than we think. God has given every person the ability to fly, the power to achieve and to realize his or her potential. We can therefore do everything God says we can. We must mobilize trust and confidence to pursue the things God is calling us for, without fear. One of the most frequent commands of Jesus in the gospels is *"Fear not"*. God says : *"Be strong and courageous"* (**Joshua 1**).

God is not a human being that He can lie. His mind and wisdom are infinite and eternal, beyond our understanding. If he says that: *"All things are possible for those that believe"* (**Mark 9:23**) He clearly means "all things" and not one or two things. We should not isolate some things or situations as "possibilities" and others as "impossibilities". God is the God of all possibilities (**Mark 9:23**). When God says that: *"All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted"* (**Mk. 11:24**), He clearly knows and means what He is saying. If He says I can do it, yes *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me"* (**Phil. 4:13**).

Having located the Word of God, always be sustained by the fact that *"God is not a human being, and He will not lie. He is not human, and He does not change His mind. What He says He will do, He does. What He promises, He makes come true"* (**Numb. 23:19**).

Why trust God for too little?

Many of us Christians have a tendency of limiting God. We limit Him to what we already know or have already seen or experienced; this, instead of going by what He says. We trust Him for too little things. But we need to trust God for big things. Trust Him to do things so big that they cannot happen unless He is the one who has made them happen.

That way, when they happen, there will be no mistaking who did them. And your faith and trust in Him will be raised to new levels.

If you and I want to experience God in our families, our businesses, our work, our relationships, our lives at the practical level, we must be willing to trust Him for more than what our natural abilities can accomplish. God likes to show Himself in the midst of unlikely circumstances. This is the place that God receives the glory. God always forced Israel to trust Him for the supernatural. This is how glory was brought to the Father. It is no different in our times. The world is looking for real faith that moves mountains. Perhaps you are the instrument that He wants to use to demonstrate real faith to the unbelieving world. It will require courage, faith, action and risk. You may risk finances, reputation, or being misunderstood. This was the risk of all leaders in the Bible. But it was a risk worth taking.

When God's promise of success is urging you on, unlike the Jews, we should be prepared to move on to find greater success, whatever the odds may be or look. Never allow your previous experience, the experiences of others or the appearance of things to deter you from doing or going for what God says you should. His word is what matters. The only limit to our goal is His will and what He says, not what human beings say or know. Jesus said often, "*According to your (own) faith be it done unto you*" (**Matt. 9:29**). This means that how much you receive from God may largely depends on how much you believe Him for. You are what your faith is. You may never get any victory that is bigger than your faith.

Be steady

All winners in this life and the life to come are graduates of steadfast, unwavering faith, even in the midst of extremely dark moments or difficult circumstances. They are sustained by a deep conviction that God is God and that if He says 'Yes,' He means 'Yes'; if He says He would do something, He does it, no matter how long it takes, no matter how bad or difficult things or the situation might appear in the natural or common sense. We must take calm composure in the fact that God not only loves and cares about us and the problems and challenges we face daily in this life;

He is also not a human being that He can be limited in His means. Let your faith therefore always depend solely on God and not on people or on your environment.

A man or woman of faith is that person who has developed trust and confidence in God or His word, which trust goes beyond the people or physical object in his or her environment. Such a person's faith is not dependent on economic, political, social or any other weather or environmental conditions or outlook. It is not dependent, for example, on the state of the economy or any other prevailing circumstances.

God's Word is the ultimate key that unlocks every kind of problem, need, challenge, or situation of life. Believe His word.

Build your hope on nothing else but Jesus Christ and His mighty and unfailing word. Never build your hope on the way people do or manage things, e.g. on the budget of your organization, country, or your national economy, or the global economy. God controls all things by the power of His word. The moods and decisions of people, the state of the season, the weather or the policies of people or governments, whatever, are all subject to His Word or will.

Be, therefore, courageous in your faith and refuse to depart from what you believe in -- no matter what others say or think about it or about you. Courage to stand firm in our convictions comes from understanding where our true source and loyalties lie -- the King of kings, the Lord of lords, Christ Jesus -- the *way* to anything desirable, the *truth* of any matter, and the *life* of everything visible and invisible.

Chapter 13

"Lord, Give Me More Faith"

Ask for greater faith

A human being does not have the spiritual strength to believe and trust God, without the Lord increasing his or her faith. Faith is a *gift* of God that is kept alive by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 4:31**). The Apostles felt inadequate and requested the Lord, "*Increase our faith*" (**Lk. 17:5-6**). Every person that allows God to remain God and request Him to strengthen him in his weakness ends up victorious. Ask Christ, "*...the author and finisher of our faith...*" (**Heb. 12:2**) to give you a deep spirit of faith and the power of conviction and determination to stand on His word, come what may.

Never be moved by the way things look or by what people say. Real power lies in the spirit realm, not in the physical world; and Christ is the chief custodian of this power. He likes people who despise delays and negative circumstances in their lives and hold on firmly to His word (**Jn. 11: 38-40**).

Faith warriors and mighty conquerors are made by God, not by themselves. They are men and women who consistently win in battles through the power of the Spirit of God operating inside of them. They are men with the hand of the Lord upon them. This is the power backup of God. This is the Spirit of the Lord. This is the anointing. As a result, they know no defeat in life.

If you lack faith or boldness or both, simply ask the Lord to increase these in you. This, however, is not the end. It makes no sense to say, "I want a stronger faith," and then turn our backs on the means. The Bible says, "*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ*" (**Romans 10:17**). You have mustard seed faith. But that mustard seed will not germinate unless it is planted in the proper environment. Plant your mind in the Word of God every day.

Says the Word of God: "*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful*" (**Joshua 1:8**). Water your mind daily with prayer and reading. If we will only spend some time with Him in His Word and prayerful meditation everyday, we will experience God at work within us. Meditation is another means God uses in increasing our faith. It is good for us to look back and see how God has been at work in our lives and the lives of those who trust Him.

Do you want to stand strong in faith to the glory of God in your life? Then read and listen to the Word of God and carefully reflect on it *frequently*, if not all the time. *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Ps. 1:1-3).*

Do not spend your time gossiping or talking about this and that, or whoever would care to listen about your problems. Instead, get immersed in the word of God and in prayer. Meditate on it whole day and night. Put it into practice. Do whatever it tells top do.

If you meet a believer whose life reflects victory, who looks like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruits all the time and prospering in whatever he does, you have seen someone who meditates on the Word of God on a constant basis, and who walks with the Holy Spirit every day of his life.

From Faith to Trust

Quite often we believe God but not really trust Him. Those who trust in God totally depend on Him as their super-Father. We are not in a contractual relationship with God, but in a son/daughter-father relationship with Him.

Trust in God. Faith believes that God can do it, but trust says, *“even if He does not do it the way I know how or would have expected, my position remains the same, I know He will act in my best interest. “If I die, it means that would be the best thing for me, according to Him who knows much better than I do.”* This is trust. It goes beyond faith. Faith can fail (**Lk. 22:32**), but trust cannot fail. Confidence can be cast away (**Heb. 10:35**), but trust cannot be removed. Anything and any one can fail, but whatever you place in the hands of God is secured forever. That’s why the word of God says, *“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people both now and forevermore” (Ps. 125:1-3).*

Unwavering trust in the love of God, the integrity of His word, and in the power of the blood of Christ Jesus on the cross, in the face of anything, is the secret of winning Christians. If you have got to a point in your Christian walk where your trust is not in yourself (your education, your skill, your experience, talents, abilities, wisdom, etc.,) or in people (your contacts, your spouse, your relatives, your children, employers, contacts or connections) or things (your property, investments, finances, the state of the economy, the resources you have, the government in power, the people you know) – but your whole trust is in God the Almighty, the integrity of His Word and in the love of Christ Jesus on the Cross, then you are in for great things! Praise the Lord for that level of growth in Christ you have registered.

Trusting is the way to triumph. How far we go in entrusting our problems, needs, our fears, concerns, our future, our lives, our everything to and in God determines how far we go in succeeding and flying in life. People who have put their total trust in God in everything know no defeat in life! They are men and women that can only be defeated when it becomes possible to defeat God Himself who is in and for them!

Always put belief before experience

Many people wait to first see or experience results, before they can believe the word of God that promises it. But the consequence is that we end up getting little out of life! The word says, *"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe [not see] that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him"* (Heb. 11:6).

Our belief or faith in the word or promise of God will always set the pace for our receiving from Him, because *"...what is seen was not made out of what is visible"* (Heb. 11:3). If you want to see great things, first believe God for them, for our faith or belief must come before our experience. Inside God's word is embedded His life, His creative force. The God who said *'let there be light'* and there was light is also the same God who says *'be fruitful', 'have dominion', 'be righteous', 'I heal thee' 'fear not'*.

If the spirit of darkness obeyed God at creation, why should the spirits of poverty, sin, sickness and disease defy Him now? Nothing can stop the word of God from being fulfilled in the lives of those who believe. This is because God's word carries His divine nature and eternal life itself, which is superior to every other form of life, power, or authority; any situation or condition. But it's faith that turns on the living forces which are in the word of God, to bring about the results you want. Even though there is current in the wiring system of your house, you still need to turn the switch on, in order to be able to have light.

Quite often when hard times come, we have a tendency to lower our expectations and end up settling for less than what God wants us to have. At other times, we believe God but not really trust Him. But those who trust in God totally depend on Him and nothing else.

The best way to deal with problems and hard times is to harden your faith in Christ Jesus. We believe in the God who is too strong to lose control of any situation; who is too loving and faithful to ever abandon us. We are not in a *contract[ual]* relationship with God. We are in a *Son-Father* relationship with Him, through Christ (Rom. 8:15-17). There is, therefore, *nothing in all creation that is "able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:39).

So as the word says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but *in everything*, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God....” (Phil. 4:6-7). Faith in Jesus is the key that unlocks every situation in life and raises a believer beyond the heights of his or her dreams.

If you want to see great things, don’t live by *common sense* as the world does. Live by *supernatural sense*. This is seeing and believing things as God sees and says them; not as the world does. How much we receive from God often depends on how much we believe Him for it (Matt. 9:29).

There was a time when my eye sight was failing badly. I could no longer read the normal size letters on the computer. I was advised to get glasses to improve my sight. But I said, ‘Lord, this is unacceptable to me! Your word says my “*eye is the lamp of the body. If (my) eyes are good, (my) whole body will be full of light*” (Matt. 6:22-23). My eyes must remain good! If Moses, at the age of 120 years had his eye-site basically sound, how can my eye sight be failing, when I am less than a quarter of his age?’ The sight problem immediately disappeared!

I didn’t take comfort in the fact that many of God’s good and faithful people normally wear glasses. (And I don’t blame any one’s faith for that.) But it was abnormal for me to wear glasses. I saw it almost as a reproach to my faith. When my sight was restored, it was as if God had literally touched my eyes, saying, “*According to your faith let it be to you*” (Mat 9:29)! I have since heard so many testimonies of Christians who, as the Spirit of God led them, threw away their glasses and their sights were fully restored.

There are many others who, after carrying the crushing burden of a ‘terminal’ or ‘incurable’ disease (such as ulcers, high blood pressure and the like) for years, they courageously threw out the evil regime of heavy daily medication, injections or food restrictions in their lives, and they were completely healed! I am not suggesting that you do the same, but as the Spirit of God leads you, always be prepared to act courageously in faith to get hold of whatever Christ paid for you on the cross. It is Christ Himself who says, “Everything (not some or certain things) *is possible for him who believes*” (Mark 9:23)!

Never give up

Never ever give up where God says you can. Never ever give up on His word, on His promise. Remember the Canaanite woman who came pleading to Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter and wouldn’t take “no” for an answer (Matt. 15:28)? Finally, Jesus said, you have great faith, your request is granted. Great faith persists until the victorious end. Be courageous in your faith and refuse to depart from what you believe in, no matter what others say or think, no matter what conditions prevail, no matter how long it takes before you see results, no matter how negative things turn.

Ask the Holy Spirit, our beloved *Helper, Enabler and Friend* to give you the courage to stand firm on your convictions, and never to be overly concerned about how things appear, what others think or say. Remember, no great achievements can be made in life without strong and firm faith in God and His word.

All winners in this life and in Heaven are graduates of *steadfast faith* in God and the integrity of His word. That's why the Bible calls it "*the good fight of faith*" (**1 Tim. 6:12**). It is a fight, as it requires a deep sense of conviction, patience, perseverance, courage and determination to stand on what you believe, on what the word of God says, against all odds, and regardless of what people say or what things look like. We fight against hardships of all kinds (temptations, sickness, poverty, fear, enemies, all kinds of problems and challenges), but because of our steadfast faith in Christ Jesus and His word, we win in all these. Always look past your present circumstances and problems, and know that, "*The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it*" (**1 Thes. 5:24**).

Let your faith depend on nothing but on the word of God; on nothing but the love of Christ as shown in the spilling of His blood on the Cross. If God could give away His very own Son to die on the cross for a sinful people, He can as well do anything for the people He has already saved. Refuse to be dampened or discouraged by the way things look, work or by what people say. Develop a trust and confidence in God and His word that goes beyond everything in your environment. Seek and trust Him to deliver you through all the difficulties, problems and challenges of life, remembering that we are talking about the God:

- ❖ Who is too strong to ever lose control of any situation.
- ❖ Who is too smart to ever need any body to help Him carry out His word.
- ❖ Who is too wise to ever make a mistake.
- ❖ Who is not a human being that He could lie, forget or fail.
- ❖ Who is too loving, too faithful to ever abandon us.

Faith in God's love and His word is the ultimate key that unlocks every kind of problem, need, challenge, or situation of life, and propel a believer to heights he had never dreamt of. With faith you can shut down the mouth of any devil anywhere: "*Above all, taking the shield of faith where with you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*" (**Eph. 6:16**). All - not one.

In order to impact our world, our communities, our environment for Jesus Christ, each of us must be reflecting a supernatural faith in the Word and love of God that is demonstrated through deeply held convictions. Are you living a life of deep conviction that drives you to hold on to the Word of God, come what may? Or are you still walking by the five common senses (sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing)?

If you do not believe the Word of God with such great conviction, ask the Holy Spirit to so fill your life today, so that the mighty power of faith is truly reflected in your life. Ask and you shall receive.

Build your faith and hope on nothing else but Jesus Christ, His love, and His work on the cross. At all times and in all circumstances, stand on His Word, for the integrity of His Word cannot be destroyed - not even by the strongest forces of hell and the world put together.

Invoke the word of faith until it yields results to your situation

Take in God's word about your every need, problem, concern or situation. Build your life around it because of the following, amongst other grounds:

- ❖ The word of God is truth (**John 14:6**). You can stake your life on it. Anything that will change the word of God must change God Himself. But as He says, *"I am the Lord, I change not..."* (**Mal. 3:6**). *"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not deliver?"* (**Num. 23:19**). Any man or woman can lie or change their mind, but not God. *"Let God be true, and every man a liar"* (**Rom. 3:4**).
- ❖ It is the word of God that works to change any situation in life, such as poverty, sickness, fear, any other need, problem or challenge. It is *"... the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe"* (**1 Thes. 2:13**).
- ❖ You may not see it with your naked eye, but there is life in the word of God. It is this life (of the Spirit in the word) that works to change any situation. *"For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow ..."* (**Heb. 4:12**).
- ❖ Under no circumstance will the word of God fail to come to pass, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"* (**Mk. 13:31**).

If God has revealed any truth to you, through His word, say about promoting or prospering you, healing or delivering you from any bad situation, take it as He has spoken it, however contrary the situation might appear, however difficult things might look on the outside, however long it might take to be realised. *"For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay"* (**Hab. 2:3-4**).

- ❖ The word of must prevail. It must yield for the one who believes it, speaks it and hold onto it.

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Is. 55:10).

- ❖ From time immemorial, it has not been heard that God spoke a word or made a promise, which He did not fulfil. "... *Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave through His servant Moses*" (1 Kgs. 8:56).
- ❖ There are many things in this world, which can be broken. But one thing is different: "... *Scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35).

This is the kind of faith that moves mountains; that makes saints out of sinners; that brings light in the midst of darkness; that makes winners out of losers; that makes billionaires out of paupers; brings abundance regardless of the state of the economy; health in the midst of sickness; success out of failure. It is the kind of faith that makes flying "eagles" out of ordinary Christians.

Pray for greater faith today to be able to win in life and enjoy it in its fullness, in Christ's name.

Remember the following:

- ❖ Always look at the 'person' (God) who makes the promise and not the circumstances surrounding you. If God could create you and me and the world in which we live, what else can He fail to do for us, if He has promised to do it. The Lord sees the smallest details of each and every person on earth, and whatever your problems, needs and challenges are, God thinks about you. Connect with Him and you will the results for yourself.
- ❖ Faith without action is dead faith. Whatever you believe God for, take a step of faith; move to seize it and God will meet you on the way. The devil does not like you at all! He will never let you take what Christ has already given you, unless you stand up violently to Him in faith.
- ❖ You must pass the test before your faith is proved genuine. The harder things get, the more you should seize opportunity to operate at a higher level of faith. The longer or darker it gets before the Lord answers your prayer or intervenes in your situation, the closer He actually is; and the closer you should move too. "*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me*" (Psalm 23:4).
- ❖ Stand on the Word of God, in spite of events, contrary circumstances and oppositions. God is God. He does not speak idle words.

Even when all facts available indicate that what you want to achieve or do seems impossible, even when the situation looks past remedy, you rest assured that there is Someone who is greater than those established facts.

"Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4).

- ❖ Despise hard times, troubles, suffering and delays. Do not panic. If your faith does not fail you, and you remain focused on Him, God will reveal Himself to you very strongly in the end, however hard or painful it might be; however long it takes.
- ❖ Focus on God, not on the problem. When you focus on the problem, God looks small. But when you focus on God, the problem looks small and disappears. Let your hope in everything, therefore, always be built on nothing else, but Jesus Christ, the wisdom, power and love of God. You will not sink until you begin focusing on the problem before hand. Focus on Jesus, not the problem. God stands by His Word, and the integrity of it is such that no forces of evil or hell combined can change what He has said, or prevent it from coming to pass.
- ❖ The mind is the eye of the man. What it sees and accepts shapes a man's life and determines his destiny. Never let negative thoughts or ideas stand in the way to your miracle. Thoughts are so powerful that they either make you or break you. Anything that is contrary to the word of God must never be allowed to find a place in your mind. Do not be anxious about anything. Put every situation into God's hand and trust Him to take care of it. The devil is powerless, as long as your faith is at work. That is why he makes your faith the major object of his attacks. As long as your faith stands, the devil will stand to respect you at all times.
- ❖ Winners never quit, and quitters never win. Pray that at any time the Son of Man comes to answer your prayer, let Him find steady faith in you. Then you will be rewarded decisively. Lord, *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief."* Every one that allows God to remain God, and asks Him to strengthen them in their weakness, end up being promoted and blessed. Ask God for greater faith and trust in Him.
- ❖ *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).* Constantly stay tuned in to the word. It is your lifeline. To it add prayer. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by *prayer and petition, with thanksgiving*, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ" (Phil. 4:6-7).
- ❖ Always know and insist that you can do, prevail, achieve or obtain or win in *everything* by the power of Christ Jesus who lives in and strengthens you.

How much you receive from God depends on how much you believe Him for. You are what the size of your faith is. You will never get any victory that is bigger than your faith.

- ❖ "Everything is possible for him who believes" (**Mark 9:23**). No force of hell can limit you. Pursue what you believe in, and what belongs to you, and you will win in Christ Jesus' name.
- ❖ I cannot be defeated by anything in this world – unless it becomes possible to defeat Christ Jesus who lives in me.

Believe and trust in God. Those who put their total trust in God know no defeat in life (**Ps. 34:19-20; 37:25-26**). They can only be defeated, *IF* it becomes possible to defeat Christ in whom they trust! A man of faith believes that God has the best will for him at all times and in all things. This is *trust*, and with it, nothing in life will shake you. "*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken...*" (**Ps. 125:1-3**). Let your faith rest on nothing but the love of God and the blood of Christ Jesus. If God could give away His only Son to suffer painful death for a sinful, wicked people, He will stop at nothing to do the very best for those He has saved.

The **LORD JESUS** is the way, the truth and the life (**Jn. 14:6**) of anything required, wanted, needed or desired in life. There is nothing that life demands or presents that we can't find in Him. There is no circumstance too hard; no wall so strong; no mountain too high; no person or system so obstinate or hard that the power of God working through Christ Jesus can't break down or lead us around.

If your faith and trust is in Christ Jesus, no man or woman, devil or anything in and under the sky will succeed in blocking or overturning your destiny. If your trust is in Christ Jesus, no force of hell or the world or the under-world or all of them combined can prevent God's purposes from being fulfilled in your life. There is nothing that life demands or presents that can defeat you if you put your trust and hope in the Lord Jesus. In Christ Jesus, God has given us practically everything we need to live a complete life (**2 Pet. 1:3**).

In Christ Jesus, you have a friend and Lord who is too strong to lose control of any situation; who is too loving and faithful to ever abandon you. Surrender to Him all aspects of your life, *daily*. Walk after His Holy Spirit in you, wherever you go and in whatever you do. Put Him first in everything you do. Walk with Him all the time. Remember, "*He rewards those who earnestly seek Him*" (**Heb. 11:6**)! He is always present, always loving, always faithful, always there for you and for me, and indeed He is extremely worthy of all our trust and confidence, **Halleluiah!!**