

- MAY 2023 -

COMPASS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL



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FOR
SALE!**

Temiloluwa Ola

Practical thoughts for a productive day

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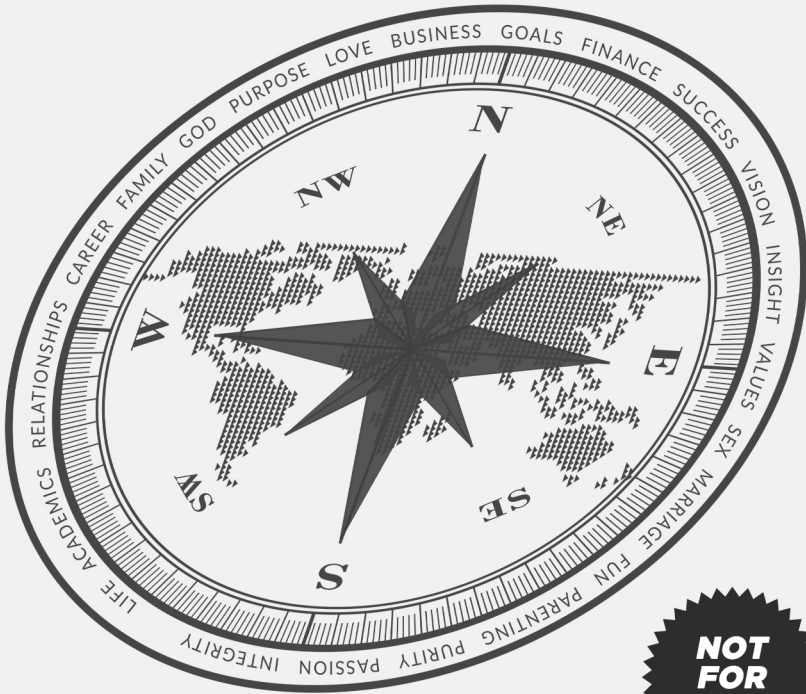
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Introduction

Every day has a lesson hidden in it. We can only draw it out if we are patient enough to look closely! Our pains can become a point of thanksgiving. Our smiles can become another's push for another mile.

What do you gain reading this devotional? There should at least be a practical thought that can make your day productive.

The story should lift your spirit. The letters should come to life. You can spot where you are in the middle of a simple story. But more, you can spot who you will be at the end of a thought.

I simply want to be a part of your story-
See you smile when you would normally frown;
See you grow instead of standing on a spot;

See you choose what is right without a fear of what might go wrong;
See you pursue life with a cause just like Christ who died on the Cross;

See you read up God's love letter to you as you beam with smiles each day;
See you love your dear ones and dare your limitations and obstacles;

See you run this race to end while taking each day with grace;
See you when time ceases to count and give you a high five that we finished the race with Joy!

I write because I love God and I love you.

Do not forget! The Compass Devotional is not a substitute to your Bible Study. It is only a complement of it.

The Lord bless you and multiply you all around.

Feedback

God bless the day(March 10th 2023) I stumbled on your tweet on - "THOSE YOU DROP THE STANDARD FOR". Thank You Sir for giving out value for FREE. I was so blessed that I quickly followed, screenshotted the tweets and clicked the link to join the WhatsApp group.

When I noticed you drop the daily devotional, I was so happy that I began sharing on my status, and to my siblings group.

People would read and enter my DM, thanking me for posting, sharing lessons gleaned and how blessed they are.

Even my class representative, when I was in school, had to add me to his group and asked that I share the daily devotional with them. God is using you Sir to bless lives. Keep up the good work.

How you begin each devotional with captivating stories with spiritual instructions, especially the ones about you and your Beloved "Irewamiri" - I love Godly marriages and homes. God Bless you, Sir. When I saw the link to download COMPASS, my joy knew no bounds. Every morning, I look forward to what God has to say to me through you. Keeps me wondering how Lawyers become great Ministers of God. Thank you for answering and honouring the CALL OF GOD on your life.

More Grace, fresh anointing and fresh fire upon you Sir! God bless you for me.

- CHISOMAGA, ABUJA

I look forward to the devotional every morning because each message has been refreshing and instructive. The first time I shared it on my WhatsApp status, someone pleaded that I keep sharing it. Just last week, someone else chatted me up and told me the devotional I share has been a great blessing to her. Well done, sir. The Lord bless you and the ministry. His grace abounds towards you. You will not run dry. I pray Kingdom financiers (including me) arise to support this.

- JUSTINA OYEDEJI, ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE

To the glory of God, the devotional is relatable and very practical. It has really kept me in check. Especially the one entitled " Why do you have to check it? It's a blessing.

TGod bless you, Pastor.

- MICHAEL, GHANA

Thank you so much sir for what God has blessed us with through you. It has been an amazing journey. I started reading from someone's status, got your link, and started posting on my status as well for others to see I posted late one day and someone noticed.

It's been a good journey for me, with so much wisdom and depth. God bless you, sir! They come with relatable stories and lessons from each day. I can't get enough of them. God bless and increase you, sir!

- TOLULOPE, IBADAN

I usually read the devotional on my friend's WhatsApp status, and then as I was reading one day, I saw a link to join the WhatsApp group on the flier. I have been so blessed by the devotional and nuggets too. One of your posts came timely last week, I was in a very bad place and didn't know what to do, your write-up was the answer I needed. Thank you Pastor for writing these devotionals in a way that I could relate with. Thanks for the graphic titles and stories too. God bless and strengthen you sir. Thank you for yielding to God sir.

- ESTHER AMOS, ENUGU

I got to know you from Twitter just a few months ago. The devotionals on marriage have made me get a different perspective on marriage and my roles therein. Not yet married, but believing to be soon, and I'm going to be the best wife to my husband.

- DESIRE, UGANDA

I've been following you for a while now and your content captivated me. My walk with God improved when I started reading them. I always look forward to reading them as it has become part of my bible study. God has really really helped me and I'm blessed. A close friend of mine also testify to knowing you from his days in Eruwa(poly) and he testified that you are a child of God and he also loves your content. I have been posting since day one and my contacts have been greatly blessed. God bless you, sir. More grace and unction to function in Jesus' mighty name. May you continue to be on fire for the Lord. May your marriage continue to be sweeter and sweeter in Jesus' name

- INIOLUWA, OGBOMOSHO, OYO STATE

Feedback

After my morning prayers, this devotional is my next activity and I always share the image version of it on my WhatsApp status and it has been blessing lives.

One of the days, I just felt like not sharing it, after some hours that morning, some persons on my contact list messaged me asking for the devotional of the day. In their words, it has been blessing them too. I felt so fulfilled that day and I also shared the group link to some of them.

Most times the devotional speaks directly to what I am going through personally and as a family with my wife. Sometimes I and my wife always end up our morning conversations with the message of the day from ATOM devotional.

May God continue to bless and enrich you and your wife and also grant you all your heart desires for the family and your ministry in Jesus' Name, Amen.

- JEREMIAH UGWULEBO, PORTHARCOURT

Your messages have blessed me in no small way sir, I'm someone that has battled with unforgiveness/anger for a long time, although the Holy Spirit to a good extent, has curbed me and cut out the excesses over time. I read a particular devotional where you addressed unforgiveness, saying the devil always come around those who have his package. I made a resolution from that instant, and it has become my favorite daily quote - (offences will always come, but I choose not to be offended, I don't keep the package of the devil). Since then, I let go of hurt easily.

Not just the forgiveness aspect, I have gotten encouragement countless times from the devotional, that sometimes I just keep scrolling through to re-read them. I also post on my WhatsApp status some times, and I get amazing replies from my viewers.

Thank you so much sir. You're a blessing!

- REBECCA OSEYI, EDO STATE

I am Marie Laurel from cameroon. I love and appreciate the way God used you to speak especially to me everyday. It has been doing much good to me at all times and making my crooked really straight. More grace to you sir.

- MARIE LAUREL, CAMEROON

This devotional has really been a blessing. After my quiet time, the next thing I check out for on my phone, is the devotional. I have also been sharing and my sisters and a lot of my contact list are part of the devotional community.

Every devotional always comes with power and as though they are written to address every season in my walk with the Lord.

Thank you Pastor and Mummy for this impact. The Lord keep you and may His anointing over your life keep increasing. Amen!

- NANCY GABRIEL, NASARAWA

The content from the devotional goes beyond here, I share and post on my status as a way of spreading the gospel. I enjoy the relatable stories and it is very relevant to present days as well as historical and biblical, honestly holistic.

Thank you so much Sir

- OPE POPOOLA, UNITED KINGDOM

Thank you for the wonderful devotionals that you do send to us every morning. Sincerely speaking, each devotional relates to my life in one way, and I am happy because I get answers from the devotionals and also directions. I thank God for bringing you my way. And I pray that God will continue to anoint you and your oil shall never run dry. God bless you and the ministry tremendously, sir. Thank you very much.

- OLUWABUSOLAMI, LAGOS

Pastor Temiloluwa and everyone working with you, thank you for your consistency in delivering the word through this devotional. I came across your tweets and everytime I read, I would be encouraged. I am encouraged to also start sharing the image version of the devotionals with my contacts.

- DUDLEY CHIDZIVA, ZIMBABWE

This devotional has been a great blessing to me and those around me. It is like my daily manna. Thank you for yielding to God, thank you, sir; for sharing your life experiences and how you react to them by the help of the holy Spirit to instruct us. More of God's insight and grace.

- PATRICIA, ABUJA



When You Travel Out, 90% of Your Prayers Are Answered” – Statements That Promote Lukewarmness

Text: Leviticus 6:12 NLT

“Meanwhile, the fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must never go out...”

I was having a meeting with a couple of proteges and I focused on those who had left Nigeria for other nations. As we interacted over their spiritual growth, one common trend to all of them was “Pastor, our prayer life is not as strong as before”. I knew something was not right.

It took some weeks but a statement some people make struck me differently. You hear people say it when they describe the “prayerfulness of Christians” in our nation. What is the statement? “When you travel out, you will realise that ninety percent of your prayer points are answered because they have a system that works”.

There are people whose prayer altars are now gathering dust. They find it hard to pray, fast or study. In the worst-case scenario, some have abandoned what they call “this God thing”.

Friends, if your prayer life dips because you are now in a place where your needs are met, there is a challenge with your doctrine of prayer. Remember, the doctrine is the regulator of character.

That assertion is based on the premise that “Prayer is transactional”. Most people go to God because of their needs. If prayer is basically because of your needs, you will stop praying once your needs are met.

It is the “lost son” syndrome. You will go to the Father saying, “Give me”. Once you get it, you forget the father. The only time you remember the father is when there is another need. It is a transactional relationship.

But prayer is more than transactions. Transactions are fine. At least Jesus taught us to ask for “Our Daily Bread”. He taught us to ask for “Deliverance from Evil”. But remember that was never the starting point.

Prayer is first and foremost relational and not transactional. Even when I have all the bread and I am delivered from “road accidents”, and

“armed robbery” because I am now in a system that works, I do not forget that prayer is about:

- **OUR FATHER**- This points to a relationship. He provides. He protects. He heals. He delivers. But the finest revelation you can have of God is that He is our Father. I pray because I have a Father with whom I love to relate with.

- **HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME**- This points to reverence. Even if all my needs are met, I pray because I revere Him. I adore Him. I know what it means to honour and fear the Lord.

- **YOUR KINGDOM COME**: This points to the royal life of a believer. I am a prince of God’s kingdom. There are a lot of things that do not look like the culture of His kingdom. I stay in prayers to see souls saved, saints edified and revival breaks out wherever He has planted me.

- **YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH**: This is God’s desire and it must be your drive. It is not everything in your vicinity that looks like the will of God. Why don’t you pick up a list of those things and pray? Comfort has closed down churches. Picnics have replaced prayer meetings. Nudity is driving out modesty. Witchcraft is disguised as prophecy.

Can you see that prayer is not just transactional now? If you stop having prayer points because you are now in comfort, you are already defeated. Comfort can be a form of persecution that kills passion for the Lord and His will. Deal with it.

CONFESSION

I do not slack in the place of prayer. I keep my altar of prayer aflame. I am alive to my priestly functions.

“So I Woke Up Late Again”

Text: Mark 1:35 NKJV

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place, and there He prayed.”

Just as we were about to head to church on Sunday morning, Danielle asked me, “Daddy, we have prayed right?” I said, “Yes we prayed at 5:30 am but you were still sleeping”. The next thing she said shocked me, “So I woke up late again”. I was awed. Her definition of waking up late was missing family devotion. Her awareness stirred something in me.

A child will be careless if parents do not lay a solid foundation that teaches the importance of keeping to time. Indiscipline is also learned. Having a consistent time of family devotion can be your child’s first home training on the importance of timing.

You cannot just pray at any time that is convenient as a family. You are raising the next generation to be careless without knowing.

There are days you pray at 6 am, at other times, you just rush devotion in the car and on Saturdays, you wait for everyone to wake up before you pray. We should not mention many days that there are no family devotions. Dear young couple, develop the habit of praying together as a family before your seeds begin to arrive. Personal devotion should not replace family devotion. Each has its unique role. Pray together!

Dear parents, you are training an entire generation- you cannot joke with that responsibility. For some of us, our first Bible training school was family devotion. It taught us the word but it also taught us the discipline of time and the power of consistency.

Once a child is becoming aware of timing, maturity is already taking place. A man that does not value time is a child locked up in

adult skin. A child that understands time is a man locked up in baby looks.

One of the great virtues for building a great life is the discipline of time and consistency. Great nations value time and do not joke with consistency. Go and check out nations that are underdeveloped and their attitude when it comes to time and consistency.

Dear parents, you are raising nations. Jesus developed awareness early in life. He knew there was the business of His Father. He had a consistent habit of fellowshiping in the Synagogue. He also stood up and took responsibility. There is no doubt that Mary and Joseph played great parental roles also. Joseph was keen on hearing and obeying God promptly. Mary was keen on doing the will of God.

If God wants to bless the world with a great seed, would God gladly use your family?

CONFESSION

I am intentional about raising a kingdom family. My home is consistent in the practice of devotion.



What Are You Building Your Marriage on?

Text: Isaiah 9:8 KJV

"The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel."

Right after the meeting, the family walked up to me and said, "Pastor, the word you gave to us is very accurate". As we interacted, I got to know that the wife had made up her mind to pack her load that season and leave her matrimonial home. God sent a word that brought peace to the storm. But another thing struck me, the man said, "I was praying as we came in for the meeting that the Lord should send us His Word and intervene in our situation". God did.

God's Word is transformative. It is so potent that as it is spoken, things begin to happen. And one thing we get to receive in the gathering of believers is a word from the Lord.

God's Word does not return to Him void. It fulfils that which He has sent it to do.

"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it. (Isaiah 55:10 – 11 NLT)

The Word of God comes to you this day. In the name of Jesus, you are healed from every disease and delivered from every trouble. We rebuke the storms around you. We say "Peace. Be still".

He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death. Let

them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them.

(Psalms 107:20 – 21 NLT)

Again, you must ensure that you fellowship with God with an expectation. Expectation will store faith in your heart. Faith will draw virtue. By the virtue that flows, issues are addressed. Never fellowship with God without an expectation.

Finally, it is easier for a marriage that is built on the Word to withstand the storms of life. If your marriage pays lip service to the Word of God but pays heart service to the lifestyle of celebrities and strange counsel of self-appointed destructive agents of divine institutions, storms will destroy your marriage.

"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock." (Matthew 7:24 – 25 NLT)

What are you building your home on?

CONFESSIO N

My heart is constantly open to your word. Your word works wonders in my life. Your word calms my storms.

DAY 04

A Testimony of Transformation: How To Be Free From a Life of Sin and Addiction

Text: John 8:36 KJV

"If the son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

He had spent some of his teenage years living in a Pastor's house. He felt he was being choked. Once he got the freedom to step out of school, he slid into sex and drugs. He was getting into gambling. He had seen one of the popular foreign musicians as a role model. He wanted to look like him no matter the cost. He was a low-budget version! His life was a mess. He had to be withdrawn from school. He found his way into the church. He would come to church and return to his drugs. One good thing was that he kept coming. He said once that his body would be shivering with a desire for drugs even while in church.

But one day, he left the church, as usual, to go smoke some of the stuff. That day everything changed. The desire to quit was suddenly overwhelming. He could not smoke his hemp. It felt strange. Something had died on his inside. Constant exposure to the Word of the Lord has changed his story. He also got baptized in the Holy Ghost and that was the beginning of a new life.

First, life has no meaning without the Lordship of Jesus. A sinful life is not a free life. Stop thinking sinning is the freedom to do what you want. No! A life of sin is a slave of the devil. How do you know you are a slave? You cannot stop of your own volition. Just try to stop using your will. You can try for some days but you return to your indulgence. Sin is slavery.

A sinner is a servant of sin- "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin..." (Romans 6:17 KJV)

Second, sin wants to have dominion even over the believer but constant exposure to the Word of God is what makes it impossible

for sin to rule over us. No matter what, make sure you are constantly exposed to the Word of God.

The Word of God is your defence against sin. When sin tries to penetrate your life, it can only be resisted by the Word. David said that we must hide the Word of God in our hearts if we will not sin against the Lord. In every temptation of Jesus by the devil, Jesus had to reply with "It is written". Keep the Word in your heart.

The Word of God is a cleansing agent. It cleans us up.

"that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26 KJV)

By the Word, spots, wrinkles and blemishes are dealt with: "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27 KJV)

If you stay long enough with and in the Word, your life cannot remain the same. Do not let the devil lie to you to stop staying around the Word and studying the Word because your case is bad. He is a liar. The Word works. That addiction will bow to the Word. Stay there! Do not leave the church. Stay there!

You are free in Jesus' name!

CONFESS I O N

I am liberated by the word. Sin shall not have dominion over me anymore. I overcome the desires of the flesh.

DAY 05

Have You Knocked?

Text: Matthew 7:7-8 NKJV

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you....and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

We were preparing to hit the road for the day. I was the first to get into the car. While I was settling down at the wheel, I heard a knock on the door at the passenger's side. It was Danielle.

As I opened the door, she said to me, "Daddy, I have been knocking on the door". I responded, "I opened it as soon as I heard your knock".

Jesus said to us, "Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened unto you". It is a principle of prayer.

Do not assume that doors will just open unto you- knock on the doors. Do not assume that your needs will be met automatically- ask!

This was perhaps the error of the son of the prophet who died in debt and used his sons as collateral. He never cried out to the prophet. When he died and the problem he created was choking his widow, she ran to the prophet. The answer was in asking the prophet.

Prayer is not an assumption. Prayer is intentionally and deliberately asking, seeking and knocking.

Do not just assume that people are meant to help you. Assumption creates hurt.

Can you imagine someone standing at your door for about two hours without knocking? The person then gets angry when you opened the door to do something else. Would that not be weird?

Do not assume people know what you are going through. If you need help, ask for help. Do so without a sense of entitlement.

A lot of people walk our streets with a sense of entitlement. The truth is people only help you out of their volition. Do not become entitled. It is a privilege to be helped.

God is always willing to open doors for you but are you asking, seeking and knocking?

CONFESS I O N

I do not stay mute and languish in a sense of entitlement. I ask and I receive. I knock and doors of opportunities are open to me.

DAY
06

There Are Lines You Must Never Cross

Text: Philippians 4:19 NKJV

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

While the filling of the foundation of the church building project was going on, there was a bill that needed to be paid. I have instructions that payment be made by noon while I travel for a retreat.

About two hours before the deadline, we needed seven thousand naira to balance it up. It was not a big deal. I felt it was too small to ask the Lord for. I just wanted to transfer it to the project account personally. When I picked up the phone to do it, the Lord said:

"When you transfer this one, will you take over the project from here? Is it your project?"

I was shocked. I repented and asked the Lord to meet my need. It felt small and insignificant. About some minutes to noon, the account was still the same. But by 11:57 am, the exact amount needed landed in the form of 4000 naira and 3000 naira. I was in shock.

Beloved, there are seeds you sow because you desired to and there are seeds you sow because the Lord commanded it. On the journey of faith, obedience to instructions must be totally complete. Sowing a seed must not be done emotionally. Let it be done in faith especially when you know that the Lord has commanded it.

It is important to obey the Lord of the Harvest. Dear young minister, do not raise a seed simply because there is a need. Raise the seed because the Lord commanded it. If you remove the Lord of the Harvest from

the equation, you have reduced the seed to mere contributions. Never let your need take over the leadership of God.

Abraham had a need. He wanted a son. When his need took the lead, he did not refuse the suggestion to sleep with his Egyptian maid. Out of Hagar, he produced Ishmael. Ishmael was never God's plan; it was man's impatience to help the Lord fulfil his prophecy. When God would demand the sacrifice of Isaac, he called him "your only son".

Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22:2 NKJV)

Beloved, do not labour in what will not count. Do not labour in what God has not placed his seal. Do not fall into the trap of "helping God" stabilize the ark, it can end in an Uzzah moment. Listen! You are not the Lord of the Harvest. Do not let emotions take over when there is a need. Listen to the Lord. And when he commands, obey completely.

When you wait on God, your faith is strengthened. Your patience is built. And when God shows up, He shows up big! Wait. Be patient. Isaac is coming. Do not run into Hagar. Do not birth Ishmael.

CONFESSIO

I wait on the Lord. My heart is strengthened. I receive the divine reward for waiting and trusting.



"I Don't Know, But Jesus Knows"

Text: Psalm 149:6 KJV

"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand."

My Mum once shared a story: When I was still a toddler, my brother was pushing me around in a baby pram. An accident happened. The baby pram stumbled. I rolled out. I fell. I shrieked and went quiet.

She was in shock. She carried me to the bathroom and poured water on me. I jerked to life. She administered painkillers. I kept crying at intervals. It was the same all night. She carried me at night and kept singing, "I don't know but Jesus knows". It was then I slept off peacefully.

Are you going through a season where you lack explanations? It seems all human explanation has failed. I am sure men like Joseph and David were in such seasons several times.

Joseph must have looked at his dream and his reality; such a huge disconnect. David must have remembered the day that Samuel poured the oil and the night out in the cave running for his life; such a huge disconnect.

One of the seasons, when faith is tested, is on the days that you would have no idea of what to do humanly to change the narration. Beloved, those are the days that teach us to trust.

Think of Abraham, he went without knowing: It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8 NLT)

What did Abraham do during all those moments?

And being not weak in faith...He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief;

but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; (Romans 4:19-20 KJV)

When you are in seasons or moments where what you say is "I don't know", do not stop giving glory to the One you know; God.

There is only one way to feed your faith when unbelief and doubts rage. There is only one way to strengthen your faith; keep giving glory to God.

When life beats you so hard, convert it to a seed of worship. Most of what is written in the Psalms today are words of David giving glory to God when "he did not know".

He wrote a Psalm when he was running for his life from his son, Absalom. How do you explain that your son wants you dead? He wrote a Psalm the day the Lord rescued him from Saul. He wrote a Psalm the day he had to pretend to be a madman, drooling all over in front of Abimelech. Have you been in such situations?

Beloved, if you know how to convert your storms into songs, I tell you, the wind will not last! If you can look at barren situations in the face with singing, dancing and rejoicing, you will force them to produce fruitfulness.

The devil hates people who sing in the midst of their mess. He knows when God is exalted, hell loses its grip on any man. Why? Heaven is too high for hell to reach. So, what are you waiting for? Change the narrative now.

CONFESSION

I worship in the midst of storms. I win my wars with the weapon of my worship. I convert my storms into songs. Faith is stirred in my inside.

Issues Are Different From People – Love People, Solve Issues

Text: Ephesians 4:15 NLT

“Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.”

A childhood friend and I fought back in our secondary school days. It got a bit tough. He had the physical might and I had the mouth. I used my mouth. I abused him when he got home and told his mum what I said. His mum visited my parents that night and said, “Even if Temi and my son have issues, he should not have used such words on him”.

Years after, my wife and I were in the middle of an issue. I raised my voice on her while stressing a point and the Holy Spirit told me to apologise. I apologised for raising my voice. I even hugged her and then we continued discussing the issue. It was promptly resolved.

One way to steward relationships properly is by learning the art of managing issues without attacking people. Many people allow issues to degenerate really fast into attacks on persons. If you are a believer, you have the help of the Holy Ghost if you will listen to him.

For instance, if a friend or a spouse begins to say things like “That is what you ‘always’ do”. The moment you put in the word always, you have moved from the issue to attacking the person. It is easier for the relationship to degenerate faster that way.

Many have lost quality relationships because they do not know how to manage issues. In discussing issues, people say things they do not mean without the intention to be mean to people they truly care about.

If you succeed in keeping the warmth in a relationship even when the issues are quite touchy, you will resolve the matter quickly.

A senior pastor shared the story of a Professor in their neighbourhood who kept writing petitions against the church. After a while, he decided to visit him. He went with a huge basket of gifts. When the Professor saw him,

he said, “Pastor, I was ready for war but your approach is peaceful”. They ended up having a conversation. The professor and his family ended up attending the church.

If you are patient, issues will be solved and bridges will be built. Look around you, your poisonous utterance has severed many bridges. If you cannot boast of long-standing relationships, you must have reflection time—what am I doing wrong?

Some have lost great relationships because they claim they always “say the truth”. Does it mean there are no people around you who love to hear the truth? It may be that you say the truth without love. Even truth must be spoken in love.

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. (Ephesians 4:15 NLT)

The ability to speak the truth in love is proof of maturity.

When you raise your voice, apologise. When you attack character, apologise. When you use manipulation, apologise.

The enemy is the issue. Do not turn your friend or spouse into the enemy. Attack issues, not persons.

Is it clear?

CONFESSIO N

I am mindful of my utterances. I do not speak to destroy. I speak to build.

A Cautionary Tale: My Experience With Smuggled Porn

Text: Psalm 1:1 NKJV

"Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful."

I made friends with some of my classmates at the State University. I had settled in fast. I began to fall in love with some of the music of that season. I would borrow music discs from another colleague to listen to at intervals.

One day, I borrowed some music discs as usual. When I got home, I began to play them. Then I saw a blank one without any inscription. I played it. Alas! It was porn. I was curious. I sat down to watch it and then returned it to the pack.

Some minutes later, my colleague came to my place and said, "Temi, there is a plain disc in the pack. Can I have it? The owner needs it" (if you know the distance between our houses). I returned the disc pretending like I had not watched it. He left, hoping that I had not seen it. We never discussed it.

Friends can smuggle things into your life. If your foundation is weak, bad friendships can tear down the whole building. It took a while for me to recover from the grip of porn on my soul.

Anytime the devil succeeds in planting a seed, he will always return to check for the harvest. The best is to ensure that he does not succeed.

Bad friendships will mislead you and will end up corrupting you. Bad communication corrupts good manners. It is not friendship if you are only deceiving one another. It is not friendship when truth cannot be spoken in love. It is not friendship when a bad character becomes the driver. If it is not propelling you towards spiritual growth or capacity development, or character development, it is not worth it!

Friends are not neutral in life- they will always bring something into your life. You must be cautious in choosing your friends.

A friend suggested to Amnon to rape Tamar. That was the ticket of Amnon to death. A friend supported Judah as he engaged in casual sex with a prostitute, not knowing she was his daughter-in-law.

The person who has your ears has your life. The devil needs just a man to smuggle corruption into your soul. Look at the terrible tendencies and habits you picked – at what point did it begin? Who was the messenger of corruption that you accepted?

Beloved, friendship is not built by pretence and packaging. Good character, desire for growth and truth must be at the foundation of your friendship.

This is how Apostle Paul puts it: "So, stop fooling yourselves! Evil companions will corrupt good morals and character". (1 Corinthians 15:33 TPT)

Say with me: I give myself to godly associations and I am intentional about the relationships I keep!

CONFESSION

I do not give room for pollution and corruption. I hoist the flag of purity in my body, soul and spirit.

DAY 10

I Saw The Questions Before The Exam

Text: John 14:26 NKJV

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

I was in my second year in the University as a law undergraduate. We had a course that was not too interesting – Nigeria Legal System. I tried my best to review that course daily. When we were to have our first test, some of my colleagues panicked. I did also. I had to choose between fellowship or studying for the test. As I approached the library, I paused and said a prayer:

"Father, I do not want to miss fellowship because of the test tomorrow. I am tempted to "stab" fellowship but I desire to ask that what my colleagues will read in eight hours, help me understand in two hours".

The first miracle was that I stepped into the library and had a nudge to sit in another area. I obeyed and began to read.

As I read the first topic for the semester, there was a quote, "An attempt to define law is like fetching water with a basket". Out of nowhere, I saw the word "Discuss" right after the quote. It was like a dream. I looked again and it was not there. I treated that question like I was in an exam situation.

As I moved to the second topic, I heard the Holy Spirit say, "Go to the last topic". "Ah, I cannot skip three topics in between". But then the Lord said, "Did you not ask me for help?"

The last topic was about the Three Tests for the Validity of Customary Law. This time around, I framed a question myself and treated it. After about 1 hour and 15 minutes, I was done with the two topics and I sensed that I should head to fellowship.

All night, I was scared! Out of fear, I still read a bit of some other topics. In the test hall that morning, I heard colleagues discussing areas I did not understand. Fear rose but there was an inner peace and rest I could not explain.

When the lecturer came into the hall. He wrote two questions on the board:

1. An attempt to define law is like fetching water with a basket. Discuss.
2. Critically discuss the three tests for the validity of customary law.

Ah! I had a mixture of excitement and awe. It was the neatest test I ever wrote. I had an eventual "A" that semester. The general result was not that palatable.

First, never be in a hurry to delete God and godly schedules when you are pressured. He is the one to run to. He is your helper. He wants to be there for you. Do not be quick to reduce your commitment to God because of pressure. No!

Pressure is deceptive. It wants you to make decisions without divine leading. Calm down. Pray to the Lord. Ask for help. He will show you what to do. Those who were destroyed by famine in the scripture did not seek the face of the Lord in hard times.

Second, the Holy Spirit is our helper. If you are a lazy "Christian" student (which is an oxymoron). Never hide under prayer to cover up your ineffectiveness. If you ask the Holy Spirit for help and you did not do your part, He will still come but He would not find anything to use.

When it rains on the land of a lazy farmer, something will still grow- weeds. Rain can only multiply what is there. No matter how much you anoint the hammer of a lazy carpenter, his lack of skill will still keep him in the prison of lack.

Let's close with one scripture I love:
"People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the Lord".
(Proverbs 19:3 NLT)

Talk to God. Be Hardworking.
Grace speaks where hard work and diligence have tilled the ground. Zero multiplied by a billion is still zero. Do not forget!

CONFESSION

I yield to the prompts and leading of the Holy Spirit. I do not give in to pressure to forsake God .



Lessons From One Rotten Tomato

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:33 TPT

“So, stop fooling yourselves! Evil companions will corrupt good morals and character.”

A dear father sent some people to the market to get him tomatoes. There was just one spoiled one among the pack. It began to leak its juice into the whole pack. By the time they realised, a lot of the tomatoes were contaminated and spoiled.

The association you keep in life is key. Your association is never neutral. It impacts your life. You are a reflection of the association that you keep.

A teacher once said, “If you have five foolish friends. You did not count well. There is actually the sixth one”.

One of the disciplines you must master is relationship by destiny. Destiny is not just a destination, it is an adventure of faith with God. You want to be certain that you are on that journey with those who share the same values as you.

The counsel of the wrong company will reduce you to a nonentity overnight. Rehoboam became king. He needed counsel over a matter. He despised the wise counsel of those who advised his father and took on the pompous counsel of his friends. His kingdom lost 10 tribes in one day.

The right counsel will lift a man. Right circles of relationships are a blessing. The wrong circle can lead to a mess. Some men loved their families and honoured their spouses, but the

company of “stopover to drink before heading home” altered the course of their lives.

One of the blessings of pastoral counsel is that it points out a wolf in sheep’s clothing to an innocent sheep. Do not joke with the counsel of a true shepherd.

“Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” (John 10:5 NKJV)

The counsel of a great shepherd will protect you from contamination. He separates you by counsel and instruction from things that can corrupt. Right counsel can preserve your life.

Which company are you in?

Remember the words of Solomon: He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed. (Proverbs 13:20 NKJV)

CONFESSION

I incline my heart to the right counsel. My path shines as I follow the right counsel.

Advice for Newlywed Couples

DAY
12

Text: Colossians 4:6 TPT

"Let every word you speak be drenched with grace and tempered with truth and clarity. For then you will be prepared to give a respectful answer to anyone who asks about your faith."

We have a monthly couples hangout in our Local Assembly. One day, we asked ourselves what the first quarrel in our marriages was. Almost everyone had a challenge with communication in marriage in one form or the other. There were simply disagreements over what the spouse said or what the spouse meant.

The importance of communication in marriage cannot be overemphasized. You have someone to share the rest of your life with therefore you must get it right in communication.

What we do not realise most times is that even something as simple as how food is presented communicates worth and value. For instance, some men eat better when they are out of their houses e.g. when visiting friends than at home. The spouse wonders what the challenge is.

It is simple- people go the extra mile when receiving guests. They bring out the best plates and dishes. Most people keep the best in their home for visitors. We need to repent.

You must master the use of the right words and speaking at the right time. At times, the disagreement is not because of what is said but because of how it was said.

You must master each other's body language. What does that eye signal mean? When we go visit people as young ones and my father begins to shake the car key. That sound meant it is time to go. You must master what the mouth has not

uttered also. It may take time but be willing to allow the bonding.

Listening is a form of communication also. You must ensure that you are a good listener. Ask questions for clarification rather than assuming. Assumption breaks down communication. Do not assume. Don't listen to reply; listen to understand.

One major trap that you must outgrow fast is giving the silent treatment. You must never allow a disagreement to degenerate into keeping malice. Your greeting at home must not become formal. Dear wife, your husband is not the Holy Spirit so he may not know your mind but he sure can hear your words when you speak. Learn the art of speaking rather than the silent treatment.

Finally, when speaking avoid the use of words that attack the person rather than resolving the issue at hand. For instance, do not say something like "You always..." Simply focus on the issue at the moment.

Do not allow the devil a little foothold at all. Resolve all matters on time.

CONFESSION

I do not pull down with my words, rather I lift up. I honour my spouse through gracious words.

DAY
13

If Your Faith is Under Attack

Text: Ephesians 6:16 NIV

"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

On the 4th of January, 1990, my mum was certified dead on a surgical table just before the procedure started (I have shared this story before but I desire someone's faith to be strengthened today. Mum has also written a personal memoir about that day but I want to share a bit from lessons on faith that I picked from Dad). Dad said he just kept hearing heavy thuds where he was outside like the doctors were trying to resuscitate someone. In the middle of the crisis, she was rushed to another hospital where she was certified dead by the Medical Director. Before the final information came, the devil already said to him twice, "Your wife is dead". He said just one statement came out of his mouth, "I did not come here with a dead wife and I am not going back with a dead wife". He said that twice. He repeated it again when a doctor walked into the surgery room with white wrapping cloths. He began to praise God and continued to praise God. That was the only thing he knew to do. He refused to cave under pressure.

In the middle of the crisis, there was a young boy who was really scared of receiving treatment. He went to pacify the young boy till the boy got the injection.

After seven hours of waiting, Mum gave a first sign of life (movement of her hand) by 4 pm and she regained full consciousness two hours later.

First, invest in building your faith. Remember, the just shall live by faith. Faith is for living. Build your faith. One day, even if you do not need it for yourself, you will need it to stand in the gap for someone (your spouse, your siblings, your parents or a dear friend). Build your faith.

Some believers are like King Saul: King Saul made his first mistake by bowing to internal and external pressure. Hear his words:

Samuel said, "What on earth are you doing?" Saul answered, "When I saw I was losing my army from under me, and that you hadn't come when you said you would, and that the Philistines were poised at Micmash, I said, 'The Philistines are about to come down on me in Gilgal, and I haven't yet come before God asking for his help.' So I took things into my own hands, and sacrificed the burnt offering." (1 Samuel 13:11-12 MSG)

Pressure will build when things are not happening at your envisaged time. There is a difference between being unmarried at 25 and being unmarried at 35 or 40. There is a difference.

When you have not gotten a job six months after graduation, we can tell you to be patient but six years after graduation, the pressure becomes real. You will

begin to doubt yourself.

King Saul said, "I took things into my own hands". As much as God wants us to build a sense of personal responsibility, it must not be outside the confines of what His Word permits.

Do you know what Prophet Samuel told King Saul? "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel 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. (1 Samuel 13:13 NIV) Please, no matter how long you have waited, do not do any foolish thing. The pain of regrets is far heavier than the pain of waiting for God's appointed time.

Let me show you where Saul's weakness came from: Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. This was the first altar that he built to the Lord. (1 Samuel 14:35 NKJV) King Saul had no altar. His fellowship with God was poor. His daily devotion was literally non-existing. His first altar was built after he had made many mistakes.

Second, do not forget- when the devil drops thoughts (seeds) of doubt or discouragement in your heart, do not nurse the devil's babies for him. Do not water his seed. Give him no space. Judge such strange thoughts immediately. Do not let it stay. Respond with faith. Faith is the shield that stops the fiery darts of the enemy from poisoning our hearts.

Finally, find opportunities to be a blessing to others in your waiting season. Abraham was waiting for a baby yet he found the right heart and attitude to be hospitable to total strangers. In his waiting, he got his miracle.

A bad attitude is the devil's prison warden that keeps men in open prisons. Naaman's bad attitude to Elisha's instruction would have kept him a leper forever but things turned when he listened to the counsel of his servant.

When your faith is stretched, do not forget these four things:

1. Speak from fellowship and not frustration
2. Shut the devil down by not nursing his babies. Rather, give thanks to God.
3. Find opportunities to be a blessing to others.
4. Do not fall into the trap of bad attitude.

You will testify!

CONFESSION

I do not bow to pressure. I receive grace for waiting on God. My faith is emboldened. I live by faith.



Sensitivity and Obedience Can Prevent Losses

Text: Hebrews 12:25 NIV

"See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks..."

About seven years ago, we had just finished our Sunday service. Those who were in charge of church finance had a normal place they would keep the tithes and offerings. As they placed it there on that day, I had a prompt within me to change where it was kept before I left the office.

I took the cash and placed it somewhere else. About an hour after we left the office, I sent a young man to help pick up something from the church office. He called to tell me that the entire church office had been ransacked. The first place that was turned upside down was where the money would have been. The burglar got nothing. God saw it in advance and prompted me to change where the money was. I feared the Lord that day.

Being sensitive to the Lord and obedience to His instructions can save you from crisis. Someone may be telling you about a business deal or an investment that looks pretty good by all human standards but you just sensed a nudge not to be a part of it. You will end up knowing the reason why the Lord told you not to invest in the business. Obey God even when it does not make sense.

After you have done all due diligence, please do not joke with your spiritual intelligence. A businessman once said that he had a government contract in the bag but he sensed to walk away at the last minute. It did not make sense. Months later, there was a military intervention and the people who began to execute the contract ran into

huge trouble. He escaped.

A dear one brought a young woman once as the woman he intended to get married to. I sensed some things were just not clear. The young lady seems to keep a huge distance from the man after her visit. He discovered some seven months later that she delivered a child. He would have fathered a child that was not his.

God's gift to you as a believer is discernment by the Spirit of the Lord. If you are full of strength but lack discernment, you will fall into enemy traps. If you are full of drive but you do not listen to the Spirit of the Lord, you can have a life punctured with avoidable crisis.

We are in sensitive times. You must be a discerning believer. Do not be forced to make hurried decisions. Listen to the Spirit of the Lord. Follow prompts of wisdom. It can prevent losses in life. It can save you from trouble. Many are the affliction of the righteous but the Lord saves him from them all. Your life can be crisis-free. There is a GPS in the Spirit. Stop trying to find your way without the map. Time will be saved. Effort will be saved. Resources will be preserved. Your life will be protected.

CONFESSION

I am sensitive to the voice of the spirit. I follow God's leading. I have a discerning heart.

DAY
15

Avoiding The Pitfalls Of Comparison: Lessons From The Two Pregnant Women

Text: 2 Corinthians 10:12 NIV

"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise."

I was standing on the balcony of a school compound with a heavily pregnant woman. We were having a conversation. We saw another woman approaching who had just given birth. She was carrying her baby. They both greeted each other joyfully.

The Holy Spirit asked me, "What are they both carrying?" I paused and answered, "Babies". Then He asked again, "Are they both in the same season?" I answered "No". One is carrying her baby in her hands while the other was still in the womb. The Holy Spirit asked again, "What is the difference between the two women?" I said, "Time". Then the final lesson for me was, "Did you see how they both greeted?". I answered, "Yes! They greeted one another joyfully". The lesson sank in.

Beloved, there is no need for rivalry, competition or jealousy on the journey of vision. If you look at other people and it seems like they have gone ahead, be happy for their journey and be genuinely excited about their progress. The difference between your "here" and their "there" is only time. It is just a matter of time and you will be in the same season they are in now.

Paul warned the believer strongly that there is no need for rivalry or competition. Our journey is not the same. We can even be moving in the same direction but running at different speeds. We may not necessarily arrive at the same time.

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

(2 Corinthians 10:12 KJV)

Some people look at others and get jealous or even depressed. Stop doing that. It is ungodly. Do not let the devil have a space in your heart to plant the seed of hatred or resentment.

Never let the wrong spirit be your motivation to do the right things. Your motive carries a lot of weight when it comes to decision-making. Let time tell; some people were the best in their class but are not the best in life. There are times those who seem to be behind you will get ahead of you. There are times life will also put you ahead again. Do not become proud. Life is in seasons.

The man you interviewed for a job today may become the one heading the organization tomorrow. Do not allow the devil to plant the seed of jealousy in you. Stop fighting what you desire.

Many people got stuck in life when they chose bitterness and started building walls rather than choosing joy in humility and building bridges. Learn to be calm.

Rejoice genuinely when others make progress. Do not behave like babies who keep telling their Dad while driving, "Let's overtake everybody". Life is not just about speed. It is about learning the lessons of patience, celebrating with others and kindness.

David and his men were in a hurry to recover their family and their goods but were kind enough to patiently attend to an abandoned sick man that they met on their way. They did not know he was the key to all they were running after. Do not trample on others while trying to achieve your goal. No matter how self-driven you are, do not convert your ambition to a weapon of affliction. Calm down. You will get there!

CONFESS I O N

I am not jealous or envious of others' success and progress. I am not ruled by bitterness. I wait for my time. I rejoice in my waiting season.

DAY 16

Never Disregard The Generation Before You

Text: Hebrews 6:12 KJV

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

I finished speaking in a meeting some years ago, the chief host in the meeting happened to be a father-in-the-faith who had spent many years in ministry with an impact globally. He asked me to sit by his side and said, "Pastor Temi, how is the ministry in Eruwa?"

The next statement he made got my ears standing at attention. He said, "We both have ministries in similar locations. Let me share with you the mistake I made in the first sixteen years of ministry and how to avoid it".

I have practised what he said. The wisdom that flowed from him was legendary. It repositioned me and shot the call of God upon my life to a new level.

Let's hit it straight: One way to remain small in life is to disregard the lessons that flow from those who have travelled the path before you. We all confess and declare these words from the book of Job: Though thy beginning was small, Yet thy latter end should greatly increase. (Job 8:7 KJV)

As much as it is great to confess it, we must not be blind to the keys that will activate the fulfilment of our confession. What is the key? See this: "Just ask the previous generation. Pay attention to the experience of our ancestors." (Job 8:8 NLT)

If your posture is that of pride and "I know it all", you will remain small. Even if a kingdom is handed over to you, you will turn it into a dormitory. Pride reduces everything it touches. These should be the words in your mouth:

For we were born but yesterday and know nothing... But those who came before us will teach you. They will teach you the wisdom of old. (Job 8:9-10 NLT)

Dishonour flows freely these days. The last bus stop before becoming history is "refusal to learn

from history".

Have you heard about the king called Rehoboam? He inherited a wealthy kingdom but disgruntled people. He sought the counsel of those who served his father and also that of those who are his friends. His friends told him to disregard the people. The old men told him not to take the people for granted. He followed the counsel of his friends. He lost almost the entire kingdom except for his tribe.

It is important in life that you should meet your teachers before your tests, it will be easier to pass your tests. But, if you meet your tests before your teachers, your test will become your teacher. Unfortunately, it may be too late.

It has been over 11 years of Nourishing Ground Community Church in the land of Eruwa. I can tell you this:

A man can have the call of God upon his life and still fail. A man can be heaven's choice and still fail. Why? If he refuses to learn wisdom from teachers and fathers, he will struggle to fly. Eli may be blind but "Go back and lie down and say 'speak Lord'" that comes from him can unlock the Samuel that will lead an entire nation. Be wise!

Saul may be wicked but learn from him how not to be a terminal king. David learnt it and he became a generational king. A great vision can die with the visioner yet some visions have served many generations.

What lessons have the previous generation taught you? That's one major key to greatness. Handle it with caution.

CONFESS I O N

I do not walk in dishonour. I do not despise track record of older generations. I follow the great landmark set by elders.



How To Live Your Life At The Christ-Like Level

Text: Galatians 5:25 NLT

"Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

After a very long day, my girls slept off in the living room. Since I knew we would move them to their rooms, I walked into their room to at least make it neat. I needed to lay both beds but I eventually did some shoddy thing in haste.

That was when the Holy Spirit stepped in: "Are those girls queens?", I answered "Yes". He threw in the next question: "Are they your future?" I was already wondering where the question was going, I again said "Yes".

Then the Holy Spirit threw in the knockout punch: "Is this how you will lay the bed that the future will sleep on?"

Every inch of tiredness and mediocrity left my mind. I took a deep breath. I said, "Holy Spirit, I am sorry". Then I laid the bed right. I shared the moment with Irewamiri and we had a good laugh.

Christianity is not boring, you are the one not listening to the Holy Spirit. Christianity is not synonymous with mediocrity, it will never be. You cannot have the Holy Ghost and present that shoddy and untidy lifestyle, no! You must come out of snooze mode. Wake up!

The Holy Spirit is your Helper. He wants to help you live life at the Christ-like level. You cannot do it through self-encouragement. Paul knew this secret and he taught the Philippian Church:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13 NKJV)

There is a strength that is supplied when we rely on God. You will go through makeover

classes. You will be surprised how you turn out.

You know that you would normally give everyone a piece of your mind. Can you imagine you are the same person now responding with peace and calm? Who did it? The Holy Spirit. You really wanted to explode but He teaches you the right words to speak that deflects anger.

He teaches you to be bold yet not proud. He teaches you to be thorough yet not unkind. He impacts even your dress sense. You dress with Christ in mind and not to kill. He brings so much sweetness into our lives. He speaks to the worried soul and calms the frayed nerves. He speaks to the person broken on the inside and fixes every hurt and pain with a precision that no professional can deliver.

If you take your walk with and in the Spirit seriously enough, you will soon notice that you are not who you used to be.

It takes your cooperation for the change you desire to happen. Do not just sing "My help has come", make sure you live like your help has come- be obedient and cooperate with your helper.

CONFESSION

I take my walk with the Holy Spirit more seriously. I am attentive to prompts and impressions from the Holy Spirit. I live a victorious life by the spirit.

Why Are You Struggling To Forgive Your Spouse?

Text: Ephesians 4:32 NIV

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

My mother in the faith shared a story with us: One day, she had taken quite some time to clean the living room. She stepped out for a moment to get some other things done. By the time she returned to the living room, her son (who was still a toddler) had scattered all she took time to clean up. She was annoyed.

Amid the annoyance, her baby still came to her. She picked him up and carried him. That was when the Holy Spirit stepped in:

Holy Spirit: Did your baby boy annoy you?

Her: Yes, he did

Holy Spirit: But he still came to you and you carried him without hesitating.

Her: Yes. What else will I do? He is my baby.

Holy Spirit: Does your husband annoy you?

Her: Yes, he does.

Holy Spirit: Can you treat your husband like you have treated your baby? Why do you struggle to forgive him even after he has apologized?

Her: Silence!!!

That was the turning point in her marriage and especially her love walk towards her spouse. Indeed, the Spirit of God can guide us into all truth. First, the fruit you produce is one of the signs that you have a solid walk with God. When a tree has attained maturity, we expect to see fruit. If indeed you are a mature believer, it must show in the fruit you produce.

Maturity is not known by gifts but by fruit. Maturity is not known by how penetrating your tongues are but by how large your heart is to walk in love. Maturity is not seen in how many people fall under the anointing as you minister in church but in how fast you can ask forgiveness when you are wrong or choose to forgive when you are right.

I saw an interesting definition of unforgiveness. It said it is a state of mental and emotional distress that results from a delayed response in forgiving an offender. It is characterized by indignation, bitterness, and a demand for punishment or restitution.

What do you gain from seeing your spouse go through emotional torture? What do you gain from "I want him/her to feel what I feel"? What do you gain from the silent treatment? Why does punishing your

spouse delight you? Is it not strange?

Wait, let me show you something simple about how the devil takes position in many homes by sending his ambassador (an advanced team) called anger:

"Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life." (Ephesians 4:26-27 MSG)

When the devil wants to get a space to operate in any marriage, he sends anger in advance. If anger succeeds and you refuse to talk to your spouse overnight, you have allowed the thief (the devil) to operate overnight in your marriage. Imagine leaving the house open over the night unchecked for a thief—how many things will be missing?

Some married folks have given the enemy the keys to their marriage. He walks in and out as he wants now. Why? Anger succeeded in chasing love out! He has stolen their peace. He has stolen kind words. He has planted distrust. He is already stealing the souls of the children in the marriage. Do not let him do it. Shut the door now! Change the locks!

Wait a minute: Do you remember how warm your husband's embrace used to be? Do you remember how you used to laugh at your wife's dry jokes? Do you remember how your drive home would be intercepted with random touches of affection? Why would you let anger and unforgiveness steal all that goodness?

Go and fight for your marriage.

Go and hug your spouse.

Go and close the gap.

Let nothing come in between.

Your marriage was meant to be enjoyed till death do you part! Stop enduring. Stop sighing at intervals. Do the needful. It is not that hard! Ask the Spirit of the Lord for help.

CONFESSION

*My marriage is full of love and trust.
Unforgiveness is not permitted in my marriage.
My home blossom and flourish!*



Offence and Withdrawal is a War Strategy

Text: Matthew 11:6 KJV

"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

Sometimes ago, the devil fired an arrow of offence through a situation into my heart. One of the things he began to suggest was that "I should stop wasting my time following my Spiritual Father and my Trainers". He suggested that I should focus on the work alone and not bother myself.

It was a tough season. I entered into prayers and meditation till I was sure that there was no trace of offence in me. I worked hard but also followed harder. I invested more in my relationship with my Spiritual Father and my Trainers. The impact is undeniable.

You need to understand that one of the tools that the devil fight with is isolation and withdrawal. Withdrawal is a deadly strategy in warfare that can swallow men. Isolation makes a man open to the poison of the enemy and defenceless from the arrows of men.

It was the strategy that David adopted in killing Uriah. He told Joab to post Uriah to the fiercest part of the battle where the strongest fighters were. He instructed Joab that the strongest men should withdraw from him and leave him alone to be killed. That was exactly what happened.

In it, he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." (2 Samuel 11:15 NIV)

Never allow an offence to settle in your heart. Offence is the forerunner of

withdrawal. Withdrawal is a strategy of the enemy that eliminates great soldiers. Do not let it happen.

Do not withdraw from loving the Lord and serving the Lord. Do not say "I do not need any man". Do not allow an offence to make you go into your shell. Do not withdraw from the choir. Do not withdraw from following your father. Do not withdraw. Do not let offence be the trigger that kills any relationship. Do not let it happen.

In marriage, do not allow an offence to cause withdrawal from your spouse. In cold, you need warmth. So when you feel cold towards your spouse, draw close. Do not allow that gap. The cold can kill your union. Fight back by drawing close. You do not feel like holding his hand but still hold it. Then talk through it. You will come out stronger.

When the atmosphere is thick and offence is being suggested and you notice withdrawal, the devil is at work. Rebuke him. Do not accept it!

The Lord grant you wisdom. Amen!

CONFESSION

I stay on course in my love for God. I do not entertain offence towards God and men. I do not withdraw from the service of the Lord.

DAY
20

Vulnerable Moments and The Wrong Bosom

Text: Isaiah 28:12 NLT

"God has told his people, 'Here is a place of rest; let the weary rest here. This is a place of quiet rest.' But they would not listen."

Church started when I was still single. I was 25 years old. In those early days, as much as I wanted to obey the Lord passionately, there were questions I could not answer. One day, I went to see a dear teacher in another city. It was a tough season.

As I drove back to town, I was crying on the wheel and singing, "Lord, you called me to this work of ministry. Prove yourself!". Upon arrival at home (For caution's sake, I was not living alone as a single pastor. I stayed with my parents), the first person I saw was a female friend.

I had composed myself. But the way I greeted, hugged, and held on longer than usual, she must have wondered what was wrong with pastor. I pulled away and went inside. It was a vulnerable moment. I needed a bosom to simply cry on.

Friends, there is no Superman anywhere. Always remind yourself even if you are a man of God that there is still "man" in the equation. When Jesus was tempted by the devil and referred to as the Son of God, Jesus replied him by saying "Man shall not...". In temptation, remind yourself that you are a man. A man can fall. A man can mess up. A man can find rest in the wrong bosom. Remind yourself always that you are a man.

I honestly believe that one of the things that Sanson was seeking was a bosom to rest in. He slept in the wrong place. The way it was recorded is profound: After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. (Judges 16:19 NIV)

She puts him to sleep on her knees. It sounds like a baby who needed a place of rest. It sounds like singing a lullaby to a baby. He needed rest but he lost his strength instead.

There are people who today have unspoken regrets of putting their head in the wrong bosom. You told no one but you know you lost some strength. Your vulnerable moment became the enemy's opportunity to strike.

There was a military general who lost a critical battle. He ran away from the battle. He found the

tent of an ally. He ran into the tent to hide. The wife welcomed him. He asked for water and he was given milk. He needed to rest. He was given a bed. But when he slept, the woman picked a tent peg and a hammer and drove it through his chest to the ground. He died. Why? In his vulnerable moment, he slept in the wrong place.

Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an alliance between Jabin; king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite. Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my Lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. "I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up. "Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone in there?' say 'No.'" But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died. (Judges 4:17-21 NIV)

A generation talks about "hugging transformers". That's a really dangerous one. Some people have hugged "death sentences". Be careful where you find rest in your vulnerable moment. Do not go back to the addictions you have escaped. It is a trap. Do not indulge your flesh, it will not end well. I feel like shouting to someone: It is a trap! Do not get caught in the web!

I pray you strength in tough times. I pray you sensitivity in vulnerable moments. I pray that your head will not find rest in the wrong tent. And if you have lost anything to a vulnerable moment, I pray that you will enjoy the restoration power of the Lord. Pray for me too! We are all men.

CONFESSION

I find comfort and strength in God in difficult times. I will not be trapped in the Devil's ploys. I am sensitive in vulnerable moments.



How My Lecturer “Respected Himself”

Text: Psalm 20:7 NIV

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.”

Something interesting happened while I was still an undergraduate that left an unforgettable impression:

We were receiving lectures one afternoon. A colleague of mine left the lecture hall while the lecturer was still teaching. She went to buy Gala and La Casera (snack and drink)

The lecturer spotted her as she was coming back into the hall. He paused his lectures and faced the lady. He had released some angry words about her unseriousness. To drive home his anger, he asked her: “What is your name?” She mentioned her first name and he responded angrily, “Is that your full name? What is your full name?”

When she mentioned her full name, the surname rang a bell and resonated with him. He looked at one of the prominent political figures in my class and said, “Is she the daughter of our father?” The man nodded in affirmation.

The story changed immediately. He said, “Our father’s daughter, good girl. Go and sit down”. The class had a bit of a good laugh. Her father was a top political figure in the state while my lecturer had a role in the same party also. Her father’s name changed the story.

Friends, there is power in a name. There is protection in a name. There are privileges in a name. There are names you hear and the tables will turn. But can I tell you that there is a name above every other name?

Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:9-11 NKJV)

If you are a man in Christ, you have nothing

to fear. You have been called by a new name. Any enchantment against you is a waste of time. Any divination is a waste of resources. No manipulation can stand. Listen! When your name is mentioned in a covenant or a shrine, Christ answers.

Take a look at every means of identification that you have- driver’s license, international passport, or any other. The picture there is always a bust of your head and never a full portrait. When you pull out an ID, the picture of the head suffices. No one requires a full portrait. Once you are in Christ, He has become your head. You are a part of His body. If anything needs you to identify yourself, your head is enough. Christ is enough. Be confident. Do not be overwhelmed with fear.

Hear the prophet, Micah:

For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But we will walk in the name of the Lord our God
Forever and ever.
(Micah 4:5 NKJV)

Today, this week, this year, and for the rest of your life, whatever you do, wherever you go, you will meet people who are walking in the name of one strange god or another but you must be conscious and confident as you walk in the name of the Lord your God forever and ever.

Refuse to be intimidated.

Refuse to be oppressed.

God has made the diviners mad.

He has frustrated the token of the wicked.

You have the name. Call that name now. Come on! Call that name now. Shout that name now. Let that demon hear you. Let that situation hear you. Let hell tremble. You are more than a conqueror! Do you get it?

CONFESSION

*I have victory through the name of Jesus.
I overcome every form of intimidation and
unpleasant situation by the name of Jesus.*

DAY
22

If You Don't Laugh At It, You Will Stay Down

Text: Job 5:22 NKJV

"You shall laugh at destruction and famine, And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth."

Some few months after my mum lost the ability to see physically, she was working in the ministry office (She had resigned from her job as a lecturer). She had the course to step out of her office. Upon returning, she wanted to sit. She forgot to exercise the usual caution of feeling for both arms of the chair to ascertain she was well positioned. She felt just one arm and was confident that she had gotten to her chair. She sat down and landed on the floor with a loud thud.

The associate working in the next office, (Pastor Tunde) heard a loud fall and was deeply concerned about her state. He ran to her door but could not step in. Why? All he was hearing was a burst of loud laughter and praying out loud in tongues. He was confused and turned back. He concluded that she was simply having fun in the Holy Ghost.

Mum said, "A lot went through my mind at that moment but I knew if I would get back on my feet, I would have to laugh at the devil".

Think about it- you have lost your sight! You have "lost" your job and now you are falling in your personal space. It was a great opportunity to call for a pity party. It was a great time to sound sorrowful but she refused to lose the only thing that could get her back on her feet- Her Joy!

No matter what the devil steals, do not let him steal your joy. Once joy is lost, everything is lost. If anything will die, joy is the first thing that the devil will attack.

Prophet Joel gave an image of a farmer who lost all. His entire agricultural investment collapsed. The prophet did not blame economic policies or global meltdown, the prophet diagnosed something different:

The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men. (Joel 1:12 KJV)

Inspiration, creativity, drive, and passion die the moment your joy is lost. Joy is like a fetcher while salvation is like a well (Isaiah 12:3). If your joy is stolen, you will not be able to draw anything from the well of salvation. The devil is a "joy-thief"!

Prophet Habakkuk spoke about another farmer who went through the same thing but he refused to lose his joy. The farmer returned from the downturn

walking upon his high places with renewed strength: Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; The labour of the olive shall fail, And the fields shall yield no meat; The flock shall be cut off from the fold, And there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, And he will make my feet like hinds' feet, And he will make me to walk upon mine high places. (Habakkuk 3:17-19 KJV)

One stream that flows from a joyful heart is laughter. Laughter kills fear in your heart- the type that flows from an understanding that the God you serve is laughing with you in the heavens (Psalms 2:4)

You shall laugh at destruction and famine, And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

(Job 5:22 NKJV)

Look at that depressing situation now and laugh it to scorn. Look at that mess now and laugh at it. Look at that business and laugh again.

If it looks like an attack, look at this story: The nation of Israel was under siege. Hezekiah prayed and a prophetic word came.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him: "The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken her head behind your back! (Isaiah 37:21-22 NKJV)

The first thing heaven deployed was laughter. That was the end of the siege. Please, laugh at it. Shake your head at that siege.

Listen! if you can laugh at it, you will get back on your feet. Mum got back on hers after she "lost" a job, and now she is an employer of labour paying more than 30 people. She is still serving the Lord with joy!

Friend! Laugh. Do not let the devil steal your joy.

CONFESSION

I laugh at famine and threatening situations. I do not wallow in self-pity. I am full of joy in the Holy Ghost.

DAY 23

“When Last Did You Give To Your Parents?”

Text: Exodus 20:12 NIV

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land and the LORD your God is giving you.”

A dear one walked up to me after one service and said, “Pastor, I brought a seed for you”. I would have collected it with joy and said a blessing but I had a prompt to ask him (I am sure it was the Holy Spirit), “When last did you give to your parents?” He said it had been a while. He mentions that he only gives when they ask. I told him, “Send this to your parents”. It seems like a casual conversation but it was the start of a major turnaround for an issue where the parents had refused to bulge- marriage! Everything gathered speed from then. It was almost looking like magic.

(This is not a homily against seed sowing or giving to your pastors. Both are also scriptural. This is simply an admonition on the operation of wisdom to do what is right on all fronts)

One statement that my dear pastor made years back when I was a corps member is still a major principle that helps me in life and it can help you too: God has given me the measure of faith but He has also given me a measure of wisdom. I have learnt to use both my faith and my wisdom to make headway in life.

You can genuinely struggle even when you are deeply spiritual because wisdom is lacking in your operations in life. For instance, there is wisdom in managing relationships. There are people who are “spiritual” but they are terrible when it comes to relating with others.

For instance, the son of the prophet who died in debt and used his sons as collateral had a relationship with the Prophet Elisha that he did not maximise. Did you know that it was the relationship he did not maximise that the

wife leveraged for a solution to that problem? All that solved that debt issue was a relationship. Look at it:

- She ran to the prophet (Spiritual Family)
- She used vessels from her neighbours (Social Family)
- She was helped by her sons (Domestic Family)

There was simply no need for that prophet to have died in debt. There was no need. The solution was all around him.

Some of your prayers are already answered. The challenge is the absence of wisdom. Jesus needed bread to feed 5000 people. The raw material was in the hands of a little boy. What relationship are you despising while you keep sounding ‘deep’? Life is not that hard. Our ignorance can complicate things.

There was a time my parents were having a construction project. When they got to a point of huge financial demand, he walked up to a dear brother of his and asked for help. His brother was super excited to help him. He said he did not want to intrude but he had really wanted to help. A good relationship is a great leverage.

Some of the issues you are having with your parents can be resolved today if you put them into your financial plans. They will shower prayers on you and you will realise that the problem was not the inter-tribal marriage; they probably just were not sure if you will not abandon your family. Be wise!

CONFESSION

I do not abandon my parents. I honour them with my substance. I enjoy the blessings of giving.

DAY
24

When Men Cross Your Mind

Text: Hebrews 12:12 AMP

"So then, strengthen hands that are weak and knees that tremble."

I was in the middle of my morning routine when the name of a dear friend and brother crossed my mind. Amazingly, we had spoken some days earlier. I picked up my phone and called him. We exchanged pleasantries. I said to him, "I pray strength for you today and this season sir". That was how the conversation ended.

He reached out about 24 hours later. He was exceedingly grateful for the call. He mentioned how he had been weighed down. It had been a hard time studying the word and praying. He mentioned that I must have been led by the Spirit of the Lord to call him. He became strengthened. He could face his daily tasks and set goals including writing an examination that season.

Friends, what do you do when someone strikes a chord in your heart? What do you do even when you have spoken with such people some hours earlier?

First, kindly note that divine remembrance is an operation of God's grace. When people's names and thoughts come to your heart, it is an operation of favour. Some people have been forgotten. When people even call you and say, "I just sensed to check on you", it is the Lord's favour. Do you know that the cupbearer forgot Joseph for two full years? When it was time for favour, he had no option but to remember him. May favour remember you today!

Second, never shrug it off casually when people strike your heart. If you have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, press in

by asking, "Holy Spirit, why is 'Williams' coming to my heart?" You will receive instructions. It could be to call him. It could even be to send a token.

Third, there is something called a prayer connection. Cornelius had a prayer desire to know God more. Peter had the desire to be used by the Lord for greater things. As Cornelius prayed, God used the desire in the heart of Peter to create a connection between a spiritually hungry man and a spiritually passionate man. That connection opened the door of ministry to the Gentiles. Never take a prompt for granted.

I have seen instances where men responded to a nudging to pray and it was all that was needed to avert a crisis. There was a time my father was bedridden. It was quite terrible. A veteran in the faith, Papa Mike Oye, was in Benin Republic and God said to him, "Go straight to Matthew when you get to Nigeria". He did and prayed for him.

There are people God cannot trust with spiritual intel. They will take it for granted. They will excuse an urgency in the spirit away. Is that you?

CONFESSION

*I am a channel of blessings to others.
I do not shrug off prompts to be an
instrument of favour. I am a helper,
therefore I am helped from above.*

DAY 25

“When I Was “Toasting” You, Was It Stressful?”

Text: Deuteronomy 32:15 NLT

“But Israel soon became fat and unruly; the people grew heavy, plump, and stuffed! Then they abandoned the God who had made them; they made light of the Rock of their salvation.”

Some time ago, Irewamiri took a trip to Lagos. We got chatting when she was returning and I asked whether I should pick her up in Abeokuta. She asked me, “Would that not be too stressful?”. I did not know when I said to her, “When I was ‘toasting’ you, was it stressful?”

It is so easy for the human mind to forget commitment and become familiar. You must train your mind not to slip into familiarity. Familiarity kills the flames of intimacy.

There are marriages now that have slipped into familiarity. The husband no longer treats the wife like a queen and the wife no longer attends to her man like a king. The man does not go the extra mile for his wife again. Now the meals are casually served. It does not matter even if it is cold.

It is also the same as the relationship of some with the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet Jeremiah had this to say to the nation of Israel:

“Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. (Jeremiah 2:2 NKJV)

The statement would have been a testimony except that it was all in

the past- they went after God but not anymore. They had lost the passion they used to have. They used to go after God but now complacency has taken over their commitment.

When you are in such a position, just one thing becomes instructive- But I have this against you: you have abandoned the passionate love you had for me at the beginning. Think about how far you have fallen! Repent and do the works of love you did at first. (Revelation 2:4–5 TPT)

You need to get that groove back. You need to get the passion back. Your fellowship with God needs new flames. Blow away the ashes and let a new spark return.

Do the same for your marriage- plan deliberately for your spouse. Do something that you used to do when the flames of romance were still quite hot. Give a treat. Offer to do something. Go the extra mile.

In the name of Jesus, the flames of love in your fellowship with God will come aglow. I also pray for a new passion in your marriage. Amen!

CONFESSION

I do not languish in lukewarmness. I do not entertain familiarity in my walk with God. My fellowship with God is enflamed.

DAY
26

Do Not Drift From Destiny Relationships

Text: Ruth 1:16 NIV

*"...where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.
Your people will be my people and your God my God."*

Some few years into ministry, I would regularly attend a monthly ministers' mentoring session with my father in the faith. It was a commitment I made to him. But life happened, I got caught up in the routine and activities of ministry and I thought I had a legitimate excuse because the road trip was becoming more tedious. Our roads were terrible.

One day, in devotion, after we had studied, I received a rebuke from the Lord about how I had drifted from that relationship. I was already about to make some critical life decisions without telling him. I sent him a message admitting how I had drifted from following and learning. I confessed that the Holy Spirit rebuked me also. He welcomed me with a large fatherly heart. His response was simple, "Naughty Boy! Good for you. See you soon".

The counsel I got and the direction I received from him afterwards brought a major shift for me in ministry and helped me in settling down as a married man.

When I told him about marriage, he said to me: "Son, there are two things that must be clear. First, be sure you have heard the Lord. Second, do not marry a woman who does not believe in God's vision for your life. If you do, you will be frustrated for the rest of your life". The counsel for ministry brought a clear road map for a decade. It was so prophetic.

There are relationships in your life that you must never drift from. Even if you seem to have legitimate reasons to be offended, deal with it very fast. It is a landmine. It is an attack on your destiny journey. Never allow the devil to attack such relationships.

There is a very instructive illustration about a

city that was destroyed in the book of judges. Do you know why it was so easy to destroy the city?

Then they... went on to Laish, against a people at peace and secure. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. (Judges 18:27-28 NIV)

Dear friends, it is not wise to live life without divinely ordained relationships. If you perceive in your heart that there are men the Lord would have you to travel with in life, do all you can to make such relationships work. Do not drift from them. Do not get angry. Do not allow offence.

If the devil gets you to drift far enough from such relationships, his arrow is already targeted at your heart. It is a poisoned arrow. He wants to ensure that you are vulnerable enough before he shoots.

Think about it: Before David fell to Bathsheba, Prophet Samuel and Jonathan were already dead. He was so exposed that he fell massively. Samuel is a picture of a solid pastoral and fatherly relationship. Jonathan is a picture of a covenant friend. Just a simple question- Do you have a Samuel? Do you have a Jonathan? Is your Bathsheba moment already close?

CONFESS I O N

I do not subscribe to the Devil's antics to drift away from destiny relationships. I am led into divinely ordained relationships. I receive wisdom to sustain them.

DAY 27

Random Girls, Dating Apps, And The Struggling Brother

Text: Matthew 6:31 KJV

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

A beloved one came to visit me some years ago. He had just landed his second job. We were both super excited about the possibilities of his life. But I had a prompt to ask him about his tithes and he admitted he was not paying tithes as he used to. I encouraged him to always pay his tithe.

(Tithing is a believer's practice of giving the first ten percent of his/her income to the Lord. Note the word "first"). We still saw a couple of times afterwards. It did not even cross my mind to ask him. He was not living in my city. About two years later, he sent me a long message about how he had begun to struggle with certain habits including picking up random girls for dating. This is a young man that used to be on fire for the Lord. I was concerned so I requested a time-out just to encourage him. After I had done all the admonishing and it seemed all was well, the Lord prompted me to ask whether he was still practising "giving to the Lord", especially his tithe. He said "No". The Lord prompted me to ask when he stopped, it was three months after our initial conversation. Then I asked him, "When did this issue begin?" It was right about the same time he stopped giving his tithes. That day he made a strange discovery- his subscription to the dating app and what he spends on average to take out a random girl was the exact amount of his tithe.

Believe me, one of the things that you will struggle with the most in your journey as a believer is the stewardship of your finances. Our Lord Jesus Christ mentioned that money will compete with God in your life. He called it serving two masters – God or Mammon.

"How could you worship two gods at the same time? You will have to hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't worship the true God while enslaved to the god of money!" (Matthew 6:24 TPT)

Money has a spirit. If it is not enough, it moves in the spirit of poverty. When it is just enough, it can move in the spirit of complacency or greed. When it is more than enough, it can move in the spirit of pride. If you want to deal with it at all levels, make sure your heart is tied to the Lord.

One of the reasons why a believer commits to giving unto the Lord first is to learn the fear of the Lord. The Fear of the Lord is a curriculum in the School of Wisdom. It is a basic course. It is the beginning of wisdom.

Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honoured... Doing this will teach you always to fear the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 14:23 NLT) From time immemorial, the devil wants to place a first demand on what he knows the Lord will require from you, especially for the kingdom. Follow the story of the Israelites:

The Lord by favour blessed the Israelites with gold and silver when they were leaving Egypt: And the people of Israel did as Moses had instructed; they asked the Egyptians for clothing and articles of silver and gold. The Lord caused the Egyptians to look favourably on the Israelites, and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. So they stripped the Egyptians of their wealth! (Exodus 12:35-36 NLT)

They left Egypt wealthy. They would need gold and silver to start a new and great life after years of slavery. That's the generosity of God. But then their test came:

"Tell the people of Israel to bring me their sacred offerings. Accept the contributions from all whose hearts are moved to offer them. Here is a list of sacred offerings you may accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze" (Exodus 25:2-3 NLT)

It was needed to build the tabernacle in the wilderness. Guess what? The first thing God placed a demand on was the first thing that the devil and their carnality also desired to have. Rather than sacrifice it to the Lord, they made it into the Golden Calf that they began to worship as the gods who brought them out of Egypt.

All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and moulded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, "O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!" (Exodus 32:3-4 NLT)

Friends, there is no neutral ground here. Your heart is either tied to God and the advancement of God's kingdom or you are building an idol for yourself. Which one are you doing?

CONFESSION

I am intentional about giving to God. I do not withhold my treasure from kingdom purpose. I am blessed as I genuinely give unto God.

DAY
28

One Mistake I Made After Marriage

Text: Deuteronomy 6:5 NKJV

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."

Some few days after marriage, the honeymoon was over and we were back to base. We had our second disagreement. The only thing I knew that evening after returning from work was that I was looking for my wife by my side and I did not see her.

By the time I walked to her in the living room, she was already acting cold towards me. I was wondering what I did wrong. She said to me: "Maybe you got married to your phone. You would have left home all day and by the time you return, I would need your attention but your phone has taken it all". I did not know she had said something to me about three times that I did not respond to. I was lost in the world of my phone. I was hurting her.

I was so used to the same life I had as a bachelor that I had forgotten that I was married. I had to remind myself always afterwards: "Temí, you are now married"

First, phones and gadgets have become third parties in many marriages. The rival in some homes is not persons but gadgets- laptops, phones, and tablets. Some wives desire that they can do something to their husband's gadgets- maybe throw them away.

Dear husband, there are times she is looking at you and thinking, "How I wish he gives me attention as he does to his phone. How I wish his hands are constantly on me like he does to his phone. How I wish he is talking to me as he does to his phone". You need to deal with it. Drop that phone and talk to your wife.

A dear couple went on a date night a while back because they realised they were drifting apart. Guess what: After placing their order, they both picked up their phone and were pressing it. It dawned on them some minutes later that they were here to give each other attention. They also discovered what their challenge was- their phones.

They made a decision that night. Every evening after work, they had a regular place where they kept their phones. It does not get into their room. They tagged it as a third party. At least, no

stranger would follow them into their room so they treated their phones the same way.

There are marital issues that will die natural deaths if husbands and wives begin to give each other the needed attention- your disagreements and arguments will reduce drastically. Warmth will replace emotional wars. Fight for the attention of your spouse. Deal with the distractions. Whatever distracts you can defeat you. Handle it wisely. A proof that you honour your spouse is that you give them the needed attention.

Solomon taught us to give our wife attention:

Your spring water is for you and you only, not to be passed around among strangers. Bless your fresh-flowing fountain! Enjoy the wife you married as a young man! Lovely as an angel, beautiful as a rose— don't ever quit taking delight in her body. Never take her love for granted! Why would you trade enduring intimacies for cheap thrills with a prostitute? for dalliance with a promiscuous stranger? (Proverbs 5:17-20 MSG)

Enjoy the wife you married as a young man!

Do not divide that attention with strangers; especially your phone. Never take her love for granted. Never trade it for anything else.

Finally, when you also gave your life to Christ, you are now the bride of Christ. You cannot keep living like you are not married. You cannot romance sin and unrighteousness again. Your values must change. Your lifestyle must change. Your relationships must change.

Paul said: Don't participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So, live as people of light! (Ephesians 5:7-8 NLT)

Now that you are married to Christ, where is the evidence – do you still talk anyhow? Do you still dress anyhow? What has changed?

CONFESSION

I honour my God with quality time. I honour my spouse with quality time. I keep romance alive for fellowship with God and intimacy with my spouse.

DAY
29

The Ailment That Every Talented Person Must Be Healed of

Text: Hebrews 10:7 NLT

"Then I said, 'Look, I have come to do your will, O God— as is written about me in the Scriptures.'"

I was sitting with an influential man and we were having a conversation. He made a profound statement while we spoke. He said, "No matter how much kingmakers like a man, once he is sick in one form or the other, it would be hard to make such sit on the throne. They will love him genuinely but his sickness would have tied their hands".

It was a statement that refused to leave my heart throughout the day. I kept ruminating on it. Thrones are not for the sick.

There was a king in the Bible that could not reign any longer because he became afflicted with leprosy. The way the scriptures said it is that "another ruled in his place".

Then Uzziah became furious, and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the incense altar. King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. (II Chronicles 26:19, 21 NKJV)

So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

(II Chronicles 26:23 NKJV)

There is a throne ordained for everyone in life and destiny, you must ensure that sickness of the soul or the spirit does not deny you access.

One of the sicknesses that God would deal with before putting you on the throne is the sickness of "Self". God will not allow a man who is full of self on a throne where the destinies of many are involved.

It was one of the tests that Joseph had to pass. Self had to be dealt with. Joseph had a pattern of talking of himself. Listen to Joseph share his dreams in his father's house:

He said to them, "Listen to this dream (I) had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly (my) sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around (mine) and bowed down to it." (Genesis 37:6 – 7 NIV)

Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "(I) had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to (me)." (Genesis 37:9 NIV) God gave the dreams but the testimony was full of self!

Listen to Joseph after he interpreted the dream of the cupbearer and requested that he should be remembered:

But when all goes well with you, remember (me) and show (me) kindness; mention (me) to Pharaoh and get (me) out of this prison. (I) was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here (I) have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon." (Genesis 40:14 – 15 NIV)

Even though God was with Joseph, God ensured that Joseph did not access the throne until the "Sickness of Me and I" died.

Listen to Joseph after he had learnt that self must die and God must be glorified. He was speaking to Pharaoh now in the palace:

So, Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "(It is not in me; God) will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (Genesis 41:16 NKJV)

Did you see that? "It is not in me, God..." That was the moment that God was waiting for. The moment where "Me" died and it was all about God.

Do you have the sickness of "Me" and "I"? Do you have a sense of entitlement because you are gifted and talented?

When I came into ministry, I thought the gift of an orator and the degree of a lawyer was a great advantage but I soon learnt that 'me' must die for the 'message' of God to be delivered. I struggled even though I was gifted but the day I had a shift from my gift to His Grace, things changed!

Hear me: God will not put a "sick and unprepared" vessel on display. He will patiently work on you. Will you let him?

CONFESSION

I occupy my throne in life and destiny. No one will reign in my stead. No one will take my place. Self will not sideline me from reigning in Christ.



How To Overcome The Beggarly Mindset

Text: Deuteronomy 28:12 NKJV

"...You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow."

In the early years of ministry, I went to visit a dear family that I love dearly. Normally, when I visit as an undergraduate, it was certain that I would leave with some good money in my pocket. Do you know the way a broke student announces to his uncle or aunt the day he will be leaving? If he is leaving on Tuesday, he would start reminding them on Friday. It was always a subtle reminder that they should prepare some cash without saying a lot. It always works.

This time around, I announced my departure the day of my arrival. I was to stay for 48 hours. I did not drop any subtle reminders. My uncle and aunt went to work very early and once it was time to travel, I also returned to base.

That evening, my aunt called and said, "Even if you are now a big man and you do not need anything, you should at least let me send something to my sister". The truth was I needed something but I made up my mind that it was time to grow up and live in the consciousness of the blessing of God's call upon my life.

The blessing is empowerment to prosper. Every child of God is blessed. When God called Abraham, he was just one person. But by the blessing of the Lord, he was increased. If you are God's child, you are blessed. If you are called of the Lord, it is unto increase and never unto shame or disgrace.

One of the things you must deal with is the mindset of a beggar. A blessed man is not always looking for opportunities to take rather he seeks opportunities to give.

If you are blessed but do not live in the consciousness of it, you will slave with the blessing on your life. You will be like Jacob in the house of Laban, what took your father a few days to get done, you can struggle for it for 14 years. Isaac got Rebecca from the same place Jacob got Leah and Racheal.

A man carrying the blessing was struggling for bread, brides, and the benefit of employment

until he came to a breaking point and the sun rose over his life in Peniel. The sun that set at Bethel when he slept symbolically rose when he refused to sleep at Peniel.

Everything changed afterwards. One of the most significant things about Jacob was when he met Pharaoh in famine. Jacob was no longer thinking of what he would get. Jacob's mindset had changed. See this:

So Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from before Pharaoh. (Genesis 47:10 NKJV)

Jacob was now the one blessing Pharaoh.

When you live as a blessed student, you will still look for ways to bless your parents even if it is to buy airtime on their phones periodically. You would not keep saying "How much do they give me?"

When uncles and aunts or relatives visit from overseas, you will not hang around them with all your needs on your face. You will welcome them with a gift also without thinking of what they brought for you. You will keep seeking opportunities to be a blessing.

When you are on a job, you know no matter what you are paid, you are blessed already. You have no scarcity mindset. You know you transact with favour. You know the oil of gladness is upon your life.

When God asks you to give, you do it with joy. You do not start calculating how you will survive. You know that God can take care of and meet your needs.

Beloved, you have been redeemed from lack and its accomplices. Live in the consciousness of the blessing. Look at yourself and say; I am blessed!

CONFESSIO N

I am not a beggar in destiny. I am blessed to give out to nations. My season has changed. I am a giver!



What Convinced My Wife To Say “Yes”

Text: Colossians 3:2 AMP

“Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value].”

She recounted to me that the Spirit of the Lord gave her an assignment that evening. The Lord asked her to write down everything she liked about me and everything she disliked about me. That was quite easy. Things she liked were listed and the ones she did not like were also listed. Top of her dislike was the fact that I was in Eruwa.

The Holy Spirit asked her to take a second look at the list and pointed something to her- Everything she liked about me were the fruit of the Spirit and depth of character. Everything she disliked were ephemeral things that had no eternal value.

That was how the Holy Spirit helped her to make her decision looking at things that cannot fade with time.

Beloved, what are the grounds upon which you make your decisions? On what grounds do you say “Yes” or “No”? Your unchangeable condition must always be built on the foundation of what is eternal. For instance, “Should I go for that new job offer?” Well! Ask yourself “Would it afford me more time to build intimacy with God and get committed to raising a godly home?” Do not just say, “Ah! The pay is double. This must be God”.

Why is this important? The devil does not mind you being successful as long as it means you will lose out on your spiritual heritage. The devil can package a physical promotion that actually will lead to a spiritual demotion.

You must build a discerning spirit. You must be able to judge rightly. Your decision will be incorrect if you think “Higher Pay is always from God”. Be warned!

Do you know they offered Jesus a perceived higher position by the public standard- they wanted to take Him by force and make Him their King? Jesus fled.

We would have probably told Jesus today that He does not recognise the “operations of favour”. Jesus knew operations that will leave a permanent scar on His call and destiny. He ran from it.

“When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.” (John 6:15 NLT)

Whether it is marital or career, take a pause and lean on God. Do not call it a testimony until you test the spirit behind it. May you not exchange what will last for the things that will not!

CONFESSION

I live by discernment. I am sensitive to opportunities. I am not led by open doors. I am led by the spirit.



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A hand is shown reaching upwards from the bottom left towards a row of 15 vertical bars of various colors (cyan, yellow, red, purple, lime green, orange, teal, white, grey, light green, blue, red, green, pink, orange) at the top of the frame. The background is a solid dark blue.

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