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DIVINE TIMING

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to Bishop T.D. Jakes; a man who is moving nations and impacting millions of lives around theworld because of his ability to discern divine timing.

Introduction

As a servant of God with over two decades of experience in Christian ministry, I have seen the Lord do awesome things in countless lives and in many nations. I've seen Him raise men and women like myself, who were nothing, and make giants and world shakers out of them. I am a living testimony and I confidently believe that, indeed, "He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the dunghill. He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor." (I Sam.2:8) In the same way, I see God raising people from all walks of life to fulfill His end-time commission with an anointing and power the earth has never before witnessed nor experienced.

However, I also see an enemy who throughout the ages has used whatever means possible to defer, undermine and stop the purposes of God. We should not be ignorant of his devices lest he takes advantage of us and attacks us with one of his most subtle and underestimated weapons: lack of understanding of divine timing. The devil has successfully used this weapon against the people God for thousand of years and is still using it today.

We live in a computer age where most things can be obtained in an instant. Although this age has it advantages, this 'quick-fix', 'drive-through', 'got-to-have-it-now', 'instant-this', 'instant-that' attitude has undermined the process of adequate preparation, resulting in premature exposures. Many have fallen on this treacherous sword.

The breakdown of families and soaring divorce rates can also be attributed to the fact that many people enter into marriage without knowing each other well enough and are unwilling to wait for the process of time to truly reveal the character traits of their spouses-to-be. Others force their children and fiancés into marriages before they have taken the time to prepare adequately, with the result that the marriages end in divorce. This is true, for example, when mothers place undue pressure on their daughters to produce grandchildren for them

before they die, and when younger women trap men into marriage through pregnancy.

Many people bequeath their wealth to children who are unable to properly manage their inheritances because they haven't been adequately taught how to handle that responsibility. This wealth is intended to make the children victors but instead makes them victims by luring them into unhealthy lifestyles that eventually destroy them.

Lack of understanding of divine timing has also had led to terrible consequences for entire nations, especially in the Third World and, worst of all, in Africa. Leaders who came to power through the barrel of a gun have been unable to handle that power, with the result that millions have died, countries have been destroyed and posterity has been left with no secure future.

The Lord Jesus Christ left a priceless and powerful legacy for the Church. In addition, from generation to generation the apostles and men like Smith Wigglesworth, Lester Sumrall, Archbishop Benson Idahosa and many others have also contributed to and left a rich legacy for the church. It will take people who have insight into divine timing and who are willing to move in step with the Holy Spirit to carry on from where others have left off. And should Jesus tarry, such believers will leave a more powerful legacy behind when it's time for them to also leave the scene.

The grave consequences of premature exposure cannot be overemphasized. Many have been caught in its unyielding grip in their quest to "make it" overnight. Many more are skating on thin ice and drawing closer and closer to destruction at break-neck speed, ignoring all cautions of inadequate preparation and timing..

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to blow the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm on His holy hill pertaining to premature exposure. He has directed me to deliver people from the mistakes of their past, to secure their 'now', and to anchor their future and that of generations yet unborn. As you read this book, I pray you will find truths that will help to

discern one’s location on God’s calendar and offer intelligent solutions based on God’s Word.

Chapter One

THE ORIGIN OF TIME

Knowing the origin of something gives one a better understanding of it. On the other hand, ignorance of the purpose of anything will result in its inevitable abuse. Time is no exception. To fully understand time and its origins, we must go to the book of beginnings – where it all began. Time came out of eternity and will eventually give way to eternity. God is a Spirit and dwells in eternity. Before time, God was, and after time, He still will be. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The Scriptures make it apparent that time came into being by divine mandate when God decided to create man in His image. Time came into being to fulfill a purpose. This was manifested when God came on the scene amidst the cosmic chaos and said, "Let there be light and there was light…and God divided the light from the darkness and God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night and evening and morning was the first day." (Gen.1: 3-5)

All things were created by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made (John 1:2). Therefore, in obedience to His commands, eternity gave birth to time by the undertaking of God's Spirit and His spoken Word.

Everything on planet Earth is here for a purpose (Eccl. 3:1). If a part of creation did not have a purpose, it would not have become manifested in time. It's for this same reason that I submit to you that you are not simply a living entity, but are alive for a clearcut and unique purpose. That is why you have become manifested in time. Time was created for us and we were created to worship and have fellowship with God.

God, in His infinite wisdom has set seasons, which come with their unique natures, outlooks, demands and special levels of grace. This setting of seasons makes it easier to undertake the activities that help creation fulfill its purpose. Misunderstanding of times and seasons will result in their abuse. The abuse of time impairs the manifestation of purpose and for this reason the importance of

understanding God's timing cannot be overstressed.

The importance of time

Dr. Morris Cerullo, one of today's leading Christian ministers maintains, "The key to spiritual breakthrough is time." One has to be in tune with the Holy Spirit, in order to secure major breakthroughs in life. Premature exposure, which is moving ahead of God's perfect timing, is the focus of this book.

Appreciating the importance of time and time management is one of the major indicators that distinguish successful people. Nature operates with a remarkable sense of timing, which reveals the mystery of God's word and power. The sun knows when to rise and set, ants know when to gather and birds know when to migrate without any human interference or organization (Jer. 8:7).

Life has natural seasons: summer, autumn, winter and spring, or, as in the tropics, dry (hot) and rainy (cold) seasons. Understanding these seasons enables us to prepare under different conditions and to accomplish our goals. Understanding this also helps because the demands of one season differ from those of another. A perfect illustration of this is clothing. You certainly would not wear boots and a wool coat in tropical weather. Knowing the rainy and dry seasons helps farmers know when to clear the land, sow and harvest. Jesus said, "I must work…whilst it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." (John 9:4)

Understanding the importance of time is the springboard for true and lasting success. If there is true success then there can also be false success, the kind that lasts for a season. Everyone was created for a purpose and was given an exact time to fulfill that purpose (Ps. 40:7). When this time is not used for its intended purpose, it is wasted and lost forever. What makes this issue critical is that at the end of the age all of humanity will stand before God to give an account of what they did with their time on earth (Rom. 14:12).

Think about that for a moment, and ask yourself what you have done with you time so far. The importance of time, understood and used for the right

purpose, determines the final destiny of souls.

Everyone is a steward of time, and time does not belong to anyone. For with man, time begins when he is born and ends when he dies. Having an understanding of time gives one fulfillment as well as success. Using time unproductively is almost suicidal. I challenge you to burn time productively and give light to your world!

Everyone on earth has 24 hours in a day and seven days in a week. What distinguishes one from another is the premium that one places on time.

You are where you are because of what you did yesterday with your time, and where you will be tomorrow is determined by what you are doing with you time today.

According to Dr. Mike Murdock, one of the leading motivational preachers today, "insight about your future is hidden in your daily routine." Look at your daily routine critically and you will gain some understanding about your future. Knowledge of divine timing will make you outstanding, and will usher you into leadership and equip you with wisdom. "They that have understanding shall lead many."

Chapter Two

KNOWING DIVINE TIMING

As a preacher, a question that I am often asked is, how does one understand divine timing or know God's timing? Before we look at how one can perceive divine timing, let's establish a basis, which will enhance our understanding.

God's understanding of time is different from ours. "For a day to the Lord is like a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day unto the Lord." (2 Pet 3:8) Also, the Scriptures say, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but yesterday when it is past and a watch in the night." (Psalm 90) In God's sight, beauty is equal to maturation and perfection, "…for He makes all things beautiful in His time." (Eccl. 3:11) Not our time, but His time. This is where many people miss God. We have personal conceptions and perceptions of time, which differ from God's. We must have the mind of Christ in order to understand His divine timing.

Discovery of Purpose

There are several ways of understanding divine timing. The discovery of one's reason for existence helps in this regard. The reason why many people commit suicide is that they don't see a reason to live; they don't have the perception of God nor His purpose for their lives. As a result of this ignorance, they subscribe to the devil's suggestion to end it all. When you understand your purpose, you can stand up and boldly declare in the face of any situation or circumstance that, "I shall not die, but live to declare the works of the Lord in the land of the living." (Ps 118:17)

When one discovers purpose, one will begin to understand time. People who know their purpose have insight about what should be done and usually work to fulfill it. They do not concern themselves with many things; instead, they focus, plan and make the best use of time. I encourage you to discover your reason for being.

As a young boy, I attempted many crazy things in a bid to "make it" and to be fulfilled in life. I almost died, and, in the process, I lost three fingers on my right hand, an experience which brought me into contact with a nurse who led me to the Lord. From the moment I received Christ and got hold of the purpose for my being, time became meaningful to me.

When you apprehend your purpose, you can't quit or complain about being tired, but must keep pressing on and ignore all opposition until you have completed your assignment.

Observation

Understanding divine timing also comes through careful observation. One's ability to observe indicators and interpret time, or events that carry a message, can help in understanding divine timing. When one observes the sunrise or sunset, one can understand what time it is and take the necessary steps to do what is required for that time.

And he said also to the people, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" (Luke 12:54-45)

Divine Encounter

A divine encounter as experienced in dreams, visions, trances, angelic visitations or the manifestation of the personality of Jesus helps one to understand divine timing. Many Bible characters had such experiences, and many believers still do today. Men like Jacob, who was later called Israel, understood when the time was right to leave Laban's house through a divine encounter. (Gen.31: 11-13)

Jesus, in the Jordan after His baptism, had an encounter with the Holy Spirit and knew it was time to wait on the Father in the wilderness before launching out

into His ministry. Through a divine encounter at Mount Horeb, Moses, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, came to understand God's divine timing for the deliverance of the people of Israel. He grasped the purpose of his being and became a deliverer.

The angel of the Lord also helped Joseph, the husband of Mary, know when and what steps to take to save the life of Jesus when he was an infant. These visitations of divine encounters gave the people knowledge and understanding of God's timing for their lives, families and assignments on earth.

My prayer is that through the pages of this book you will have revelation that will prepare you for a divine encounter for your own life and all that concerns you.

The Word of God

The Word of God or Scriptures can make one discern God's timing. Scripture reveals, "I Daniel understand by the books," through the prophecies of Jeremiah, the time for the turning of the captivity of God's people in Babylon (Dan.9: 2).

Through God's Word one can gain understanding into God's timing for one's life, family and nation. David said, "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." (Psalms 119:104) The Word of God is the manual for living, and it has exact and very accurate information on the times in which we live and on the future. The Scriptures point out significant events in the history of mankind. An example is the coming together of the European Union, which will set the stage to bring the One World Government in the future as predicted by Daniel (Dan 8:9-14).

The spiritual time for the church today is also clearly painted by the Scriptures:

'In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self

control, brutal, despisers of good things, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof'. (2 Tim 3:1-5)

Thank God that the Scriptures declare that Jesus is coming back for a glorious church and that the church shall be "raptured" in power and not in weakness and defeat (Eph. 5:2-7). The reason the devil wants to keep you from the Word of God is that it contains information it contains that can equip you with insight regarding God's timing for your life and all He has made available for you to enjoy.

Bible Prophecy

If you want to know about future events and know when they will occur, you must turn to the thousands of prophecies in the Bible. History has proven the extraordinary and unerring accuracy of Biblical prophecy. In the book of Daniel, chapter 12, the Bible speaks of the Great Tribulation in verse 1, the Resurrection in verse 2, and the rewards of the righteous in verse 3.

Then, in verse 4, the Bible reads, "But thou O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." The subject of the Great Tribulation, the Resurrection, and the rewards of the righteous are all events that will surely take place in the end-time. Also in verse 13, the Bible reads, "But go thou way till the end be, for thou shall rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the day." This was to tell Daniel that the prophecy was not for his time, and that he would pass away before its fulfillment.

Looking at the prophecy, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased…," we can see the clear fulfillment of these events in our days. The rate at which many people are running to and fro, by traveling from place to place for trade and for tourism is unprecedented. This is because of the awesome advances in our modes of transportation. We've gone from camels to locomotive trains and from wagons to planes. Now we have more modernized

trains, cars and airplanes that travel at amazing speeds - some even faster than the speed of sound. This has made traveling easier, faster and more convenient. We even have the technology to take man to the moon in a matter of days.

The second part of the prophecy, which talks about knowledge being increased by an amazing extent as it has in our age. Statistics show that almost five million books are published every year and that the total store of human knowledge doubles every eight years. This amazing increase in knowledge can be attributed to the sophisticated and high-powered computers, complex instruments and equipment that have been invented for conducting research and accessing and disseminating information.. Whatever the means of increased knowledge, it was predicted about 534 BC by the prophet Daniel in the Bible.

As He sat on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24:3, Jesus made certain predictions when he was asked by His disciples when the temple would be destroyed, and what the signs would be for His coming.. In verse 6 of Matthew 24, Jesus said, "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars see that ye be not troubled for all these must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

History reveals that there have been many wars over the centuries, but the greatest escalation took place in the 20th century. Until 1914, war had never become generalized. After World War I and World War II, we saw this prophecy fulfilled, and everyone thought it was over.

On the contrary, since then, there have been major wars that have claimed over 23 million lives. In 1993 alone, 29 major wars were fought. "Nations rising against nation" could be interpreted as ethnic group against ethnic group. This is evident in the wars between ethnic groups all over Africa, Yugoslavia and the Gulf region to name a few. Jesus predicted these in verse 7: "For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famine, pestilence, and earthquakes in diverse places." Throughout the 1990s, 100 million people died through starvation. The World Health Organization statistics indicate that one third of the world is well fed, one third is underfed, and one

third is starving. At present, over four million die starve to death each year. This is a clear indication of the famine Jesus talked about centuries ago. Pestilence in the form of AIDS that has plagued over 40 million people, along with other deadly diseases, has emerged in our day.

Biblical prophecy can give one an excellent picture of God's timing for the future.

Personal Prophecy

A prophecy, or a prophetic word from a servant of God, makes one understand divine timing. Through the prophet Isaiah, King Hezekiah was told to put his house in order because he was going to die and, through the same prophet, he was told that his life had been extended for 15 more years (2 Kings 20:1). If Hezekiah knew his time through a prophesy, so can you.

Nathan, the prophet of God, encouraged King David to build a temple for God when David asked him for counsel. This was a good and godly idea and many of us today would have encouraged such a venture. But on God's calendar, the timing was premature. King David's assignment, in line with God's will, did not include building God's temple, although he would have loved to do so. God, later, intervened and told Nathan, the prophet, that He had not ordained David to build the temple, but rather Solomon, his son.

This prophetic word enabled David to understand divine timing and also God's will concerning the temple. It saved him from frustration, unnecessary resistance and the needless pressure he would have faced if he had gone ahead with the project. He needed the prophetic word and an understanding of the time. Without it, he would have been trying to do something to please God, without God's approval.

If national leaders sought God concerning His expectation of them while in office, they would accomplish much and bring great prosperity, peace and blessing upon their people. *" The Lord will do nothing without first revealing it to His servant the Prophets." (Amos 3:7)*

Although God has used me to give direction concerning God's timing to nations, churches and individuals, I will caution that in spite of the above way of knowing divine timing, God expects every born-again Christian in the New Testament Church to hear his voice. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice…" I always encourage people to seek God for confirmation regarding what they are told. I do not encourage people to pursue prophets and coerce them for a word.

Every prophecy, apart from biblical predictions, is subject to change. Every prophecy should be judged in the light of Scripture and should not be like fortune-telling, mind-reading, palm-reading, etc., where the so-called "prophets" prophesy at will. That is demonic and is not of God. Prophesy should be inspired by the Holy Spirit, judged, and be in accordance with God's Word.

There are many false prophets in the world, and it would serve us well to be cautious in receiving and obtaining personal prophecies, bearing in mind that anything contrary to the word is steering us away from God.

Praying & Fasting

Seeking the Lord by waiting on Him through fasting and prayer is a wonderful and powerful tool in understanding God's timing for one's life. David sought God often through fasting and prayer, and never lost a battle because he understood divine timing and knew when and how to make a move. He always inquired of the Lord (2 Sam. 5:17-25).

Through prayer and fasting you can also understand divine timing for your life and live a victorious Christian life, because you know God's timing and can also avoid defeat by anticipating the enemy's next. "For they that seek the Lord understand all things." (Prov. 18:5) All things include understanding times and seasons. God says, "Call to me (prayer) and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things that you do not know." (Jer. 33:3) There are secrets about your life, future and the times that God is waiting to reveal to you, if you will only call upon Him.

The Bible recalls that John the Revelator was in the Spirit of the Lord's Day

on the isle of Patmos, "… and he heard a voice behind him saying…" (Rev. 1:10-11) Anytime you are determined to seek God's face and pray, with fasting, you will hear His voice, which will give you direction and insight into the times and seasons.

David said, "…my times are in his hand.." He also said, " I have come to do thine will O God as it is written on me in the volumes of the books" (Psalms 40:7). Through these Scriptures, we understand that everybody's time is in the Lord's hands, and He knows the end from the beginning. If you come before him, He will reveal to you portions of His blueprint for your life. There is a book written concerning you in eternity before you came into time. That's why He knew your end before you were born.

I strongly admonish you to understand divine timing concerning what He has in store for you by discovering God's purpose and His assignment for you. Following this, make sure that all your actions are governed by the Word of God, and be sensitive to the times that we are in, as indicated through biblical prophecy. Establish fellowship in the Bible-believing church where the Holy Spirit is moving, and seek God earnestly through prayer and fasting. This will strategically position you for a mind-blowing and destiny-changing encounter with God that will cause you to know the times and seasons of your life and place you in your destiny.

It would be a great mistake and sin to remain ignorant of what God expects of you after receiving this truth. Rise up now and don't let go of God until you are fully in the flow of His plans.

Chapter Three
PREMATURE EXPOSURE TO POLITICAL POWER

Dominion and power, glory and honor belong to the most-high God. He is the Lord of Lords and the epitome of all rule and authority. His Most Excellency, I AM, The King of kings, reigns forever and ever.

God created man in His own image and after His likeness, meaning that He wanted man not only to possess His image, but also to exhibit His nature. Now, if God is King, He expects His children to be kings and reign in every facet of this life. That is why those redeemed by the Lord have been made kings and priests and are referred to as a royal priesthood. If it is too hard for one to grasp what God has in mind pertaining to His children, just look at Adam's dominion before his fall and the reign of Jesus while He was on earth.

God is interested in all nations, "for the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations," (Ps. 22:28) God charts the course of nations. God has a political calendar at every level of authority and rule, and as the King of the nations, He has the blueprint for the politics of every nation, tribe, tongue, kindred and people.

To be able to move in line with God's political will, one must know the mind of God. God controls the rise and fall of leaders. He sets up kings and removes kings. Remember, it's not men or cabinets or elections, but it is God who sets up and removes kings. He uses men, circumstances and other available channels to establish His purpose. Jesus said to Pilate, "…you have no power over me (as king) [as the governor of Palestine?] except it is given to you from above." (John 19:11) That means that Pilate's authority, as as governor, was from heaven not earth.

Many people, including some believers, seek to separate God from politics. They believe that God has nothing to do with politics and politics have nothing to do with God. This mentality is a subtle deception, because God is king and He

is the source of all power including political power.

God reveals to his servants certain events concerning nations. About 200 years before the Persian king Cyrus was born, God had already "set him up" as king, and spoken through His prophet Isaiah, giving details regarding to his reign and assignment.

" Thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by name: I have surnamed thee, though thou has not known me". (Isaiah 45:1-4)

This same truth is illustrated in the life of the prophet Jeremiah. God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jer. 1:5) In the same way, Cyrus was ordained king before he was born. That is why God could speak it 200 years before he was born and it came to pass. The same was true of King Josiah of Israel, who reigned in 640 BC. Over 280 years before he was born, during the reign of King Jeroboam around 922 BC, his birth, rule and assignment were prophesied. The Scriptures also reveal that God made Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and Daniel testified of this in his presence saying,"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory… and hath made thee ruler over them all." (Daniel 2:37,38).

Not only did Daniel testify to this, but after being humbled by God for seven years, Nebuchadnezzar himself realized that man had not given him kingship but God himself had. Let's take a moment to examine the testimony of Nebuchadnezzar, one of history's most powerful political leaders.

"And at the end of my days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing:and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, in mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven,all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Daniel 4:34-37)

He acknowledged that God had done all these things for him. That is why he praised God for establishing him in his kingdom as the king. God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. God used Nebuchadnezzar to set an example for future kings and political leaders. The angel gives the reason for this:"…to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will and setteth up over it the basest of men." (Dan. 4:17)

Therefore, we can confidently say that God has a plan and, has set times for those plans as far as politics is concerned. This applies to all levels of political office from international to local levels. Daniel saw the various kingdoms and their strengths revealed in his visions. God foreordained David, king of Israel, Hazel, king of Aram (who prematurely took office, II Kings 8:7-14), Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and Joseph, Prime Minister in Egypt. And He is still in control and in the process of placing and removing people from office. *If you are foreordained to serve in a political arena, may the Lord show you, as you read this book, what your destiny is.*

Many have misconceptions of the type of authority that existed then as compared to that which exists today. Kings, in biblical times, exercised what would be referred to today as executive, legislative and judicial powers. They were also the commanders-in-chief of their armies. Some controlled vast territories from Ethiopia to India and their mode of operation was different from what is exercised today. It even appears that they had more wealth, power and sovereignty that our current political leaders.

God was so concerned about political office that He outlined specifications and also precautions to be taken into consideration when a king was being placed in office (Deut. 17:14-20). A careful study of this should guide Christians everywhere in their choice of a king or political authority. When we follow the above commands of God as a guiding principle in our choice of leaders, it allows God to have His way in politics for our benefit. We ought to follow the admonition of the Holy Spirit through Paul to "… pray first for kings and all in authority…"(I Tim. 2:1,2)

Sons and daughters with great potential, talents, leadership abilities, contacts and influence have been destroyed by premature political exposure. Some have ended up hurting themselves or the very people they intended to serve. These have been precious people with great political aspirations, pregnant with dreams and visions. Much pain could have been avoided if they had waited for God's perfect timing or had laid hold of the type of information you are reading right now, and heeded its advice.

Premature exposure frequently occurs in the realm of politics and has to be addressed since it affects many lives and the destinies of nations. Humanity has suffered unimaginable pain throughout history because of prematurity in politics. The continent of Africa has witnessed, and is still witnessing, some of the worst forms of anarchy, dictatorship and tyranny, because people were prematurely exposed to power. The result has been abuse or intoxication under the influence of power even to the point of insanity.

In their insatiable lust for power, some will do anything and will not desist

from using the most savage, crude, barbaric, unethical and inhumane ways of achieving their ends. It could be through the barrel of a gun, or by satanic manipulations and other forms of diabolic armament. The result has been indescribable suffering and seemingly incurable wounds inflicted on countless lives. No wonder many nations are now considering national healing and reconciliation, which can only come through forgiveness and the power of Jesus and His blood.

Premature exposure to political power has been a major root of the African leadership crisis and the archenemy of the peace and stability offered by democracy. A careful study of the political history of Africa, especially in my nation, Ghana, reveals this. Thankfully, the situation is being corrected through prayer, fasting and the skillful intercession of the saints. Our history is strewn with many examples of people coming into power overnight, without knowing how to handle the pressures and weighty issues that come with the position. These unwarranted promotions have always created imbalance, strife, agitation and chaos. They have also undermined justice, resulting in political unrest.

Rebels, revolutionaries and soldiers in various parts of Africa have seized power, or tried to seize power, through military coups. They have tried to do this without understanding the dynamics of government, international politics or public administration. They were not willing to go through the school of discipline and patience that would enable them to handle the challenges and pressures of leadership. Their ignorance, immaturity and inexperience resulted in untold hardships for their entire region and citizenry. Examples abound, and we continue to see or hear of them every day through the media.

Although the political process in developed countries is not without faults, it is mostly designed to help people and promote maturity in leadership. This enhances growth, stability, peace, productivity, prosperity and accountability. The process that leads to the helm of political authority is well defined and carefully structured to allow people to work their way up and grow through the ranks while learning, maturing and gaining experience along the way.

In the U.S., for example, Congress is , made up of men and women with great experience and the knowledge to help govern the nation. There is also clearly defined accountability for every power, a practice that reduces its abuse. In such systems, an amateur does not become a leader. Those who have worked their way to the top with such a rich store of knowledge still make mistakes, but the nation is at much less risk than in those countries where leaders have not been through a similar process.

God never intended for amateurs to rule His people or be in leadership. In exceptional cases, God has made provision for prematurely exposed leaders by providing them with guidance until they are mature enough to handle things themselves.

Oh, how I pray that you and I, together with God, will help establish such systems in our communities through prayer and action.

"*Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father"* (Gal. 4:1,2). Whenever people find themselves in such a position, they need to seek God, find His will and allow Him to guide them to godly and mature people who can help them make the right decisions *"…for in the multitude of godly counselors there is safety"* (Prov. 24:6)

Anyone who has not been prepared, tried or been groomed for a certain position should be considered dangerous when they expose themselves prematurely. Such people can harm themselves and others without realizing it. As judgment and punishment to Israel, God said, "I will make boys their officials and mere children will govern them (Isa. 3:4,5). Here, it's clearly revealed that it is not God's will for children or amateurs to be in political office, but those who are mature and experienced. If we examine situations where this has come to pass, we find that they all resulted in oppression, chaos, suffering, wickedness, anarchy and brought a curse upon the nation. For it is written, "Woe to you, O land, whose king is a child and whose princes feast in the morning…" (Eccl. 10:16) That child refers to rulers or leaders who are immature or

childish. Children, by nature, are selfish and are not able to exert control over their emotions and appetites. One basic characteristic of childish or immature leadership is its desire to satisfy its own appetites and cravings before taking care of the needs of the people.

According to the Scriptures, a nation with such political leaders is cursed and doomed. To the nations whose leaders are mature, God says, "And blessed are you O land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at the proper time for strength and not for drunkenness." (Eccl. 10:17) Here, the king of noble birth is one who, by virtue of his background, has been trained, well groomed, prepared and nurtured from infancy as heir to the position.

Let's look at some accounts that show the outcome of premature political exposure and inadequate preparation on nations. "And the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, for I have provided me a king amongst his sons." (1Sam. 16:1) Saul, the first king of Israel, was a "ready-made" king. From nowhere with very little or no preparation, he was anointed king of Israel. He never had the opportunity to grow into it. Saul's kingship was not planned because it was not the appointed time for Israel to have a king. The people introduced the institution of kingship prematurely but God wasn't in favor of it for reasons stated in the Book of 1 Samuel.

The major reason could be that according to God's original plan, kingship was to proceed from Judah, "…the scepter shall not depart from Judah…until Shiloh come." (Gen. 49:10) This indicates that Judah was supposed to provide kings for Israel. Some schools of thought believe that, had it not been for the mistake of Judah, the book of Judges would not have been included in Israel's political history.

Scripture tells us that Judah slept with Tamar (his daughter-in-law) who gave birth to Perez and Zerah. According to Jewish law, offspring from such a relationship was regarded as illegitimate,, and a bastard was not allowed to enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation (Deut. 23:2).

Thus, until the tenth generation, none of Judah's descendants could enter into the congregation of the Lord and as a result, they could not function as kings. It is interesting to note that genealogically, David was the tenth descendant (Matt. 1:3-6).

I believe the devil was insistent on interfering with God's plans so as to undermine God's purpose and perfect will. He incited the nation of Israel by employing their emotions and their carnal desires to prematurely press Samuel for a king.. Out of love and concern for Israel, God tried to dissuade them by giving them details of what their king would do, but they still didn't want God's choice and perfect will. You may ask yourself, "Didn't God choose Saul as king?" The answer is that Israel compelled God to give them a king. God gave the people what they wanted and not what He wanted.

There are times when God allows certain things, not because it is His perfect will, but because of the stubbornness of men. Thus, men sometimes insist on moving out of God's perfect will and His goodwill, and find themselves in His acceptable or permissive will. Apparently, the institution of the monarchy, with Saul being the head, was premature as Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin. The Scriptures show that God's perfect will was to produce a king from the tribe of Judah.

It is worth noting that it is possible to introduce an entire political process prematurely, creating disorder for a period of time.

Let's examine a practical situation in current times to illustrate that this gross error is not isolated to just biblical Israel. Historically in Africa, the powers that be have frequently imposed a political and economic process on the people, when there was really a need to to patiently introduce a political process that addresses the complexity of the political situation.

The root of the Rwanda-Burundi crisis can be attributed to the premature exposure to power of their leaders. This has created numerous problems for the people of Rwanda, resulting in the loss of over three million lives. And still the situation has not been completely addressed.

Let's get to the root so we can see how to deal with this issue. History recalls that the indigenous people were the Batwas who constitute 1% of the entire population. The Hutus (approx. 90% of population) were farmers who also settled there. The Tutsis were warriors who settled there later. The Tutsis were very rich, politically powerful, militarily wise and educated. The Hutus worked for them as farmers and served them without trouble to the benefit of both groups.

When the Germans and Belgians came and introduced education, challenges emerged, but the situation became even worse when Rwanda gained her independence and democracy was introduced. Though the introduction of democracy was good, I believe it was premature because with democracy, the majority carries the vote. The Tutsis were the minority. They had more power, wealth and military strength because of predominance in the army. They felt superior and were not willing to submit to the Hutus, who gained political power through the election. The military felt threatened and opposed the system that was set in motion along with its democratic tenets. There were Tutsis in neighboring countries who helped their brothers oppose the system, further complicating the issue and transforming it from a national to a regional ethnic conflict. The battle still rages on, becoming more complex and more atrocious as the days go by.

Unfortunately, Rwanda did not have the political structures and culture to maturely address the sensitive needs of the people. Rwanda, like Israel, introduced its democratic government prematurely. Saul was a "man-made" king when he was put on the throne. This, coupled with his own weakness, caused him to be rejected by God, and his end was tragic. Premature exposure and short cuts to power without the learning process can ultimately lead to tragedy.

To rectify Israel's situation, God rejected Saul and anointed David. David was anointed when he was only 15 years old. God allowed King Saul to occupy the throne for a while after his rejection and used him to prepare David for the throne. So, nearly 15 years went by from the time God said, "He had provided Himself a king amongst the sons of Jesse…" to the training of David for kingship.

Let's take a close look at God's school for maturing David and Joseph. David went through a rather long but necessary process to prepare him for kingship. David first served his father and brothers, cared for sheep, then played the harp for Saul. He later killed the lion and the bear and, finally, he killed the giant, Goliath. After that, he became a captain in Saul's army, fought with the Philistines and went on several military operations. He lived as a fugitive in Ziklag, then migrated to the cave of Adullam, and then became king and ruled the tribe of Judah for seven years in Hebron, eventually becoming king over Israel in Jerusalem.

What a trip and what process! Fifteen years of preparation made him ready to be the king God wanted him to be. He was the best king of Israel and his son, Solomon, succeeded him. Even with all that preparation, King David still made his share of mistakes.

Joseph was 15 years old when he had a dream that his siblings would bow to him, but God had to prepare him first. This was how God prepared him: Joseph served his father and his brothers,he was sold into slavery to the Ishmaelites who then sold him to Potiphar, in whose house he became a caretaker and manager. He was sent to prison as a result of a lustful woman's fairy tale, and while he was there he served his fellow prisoners. Afterwards, God raised him from prison to the palace, where he was made governor of Egypt and the Prime Minister of the world's most powerful nation of his time.

Fifteen tedious years passed before Joseph saw the fulfillment of his dream. He did not occupy the position of Prime Minister of Egypt until he completed God's process of maturation. For Joseph, the age of maturation was 30.

If you have a vision of political office and God has destined you for that office, don't be in haste because the place where you find yourself now may be your training ground. The training process was not limited to Joseph and David, it happened in the life of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela and many others. God has his ways.

David could have yielded to the temptations of premature political

exposure, not only because he knew he was God's choice, but also because he had the support of the people. It would have been easy for David to murder Saul in his palace and stage a coup. However, David, understanding divine timing, spared Saul. David never shed a drop of innocent blood to annex the throne. The Lord fought for him, took him there, and established him as king. God anointed him and appointed him in his season.

The spirits that fought your fathers and the administration before you will definitely fight you. You will find yourself facing the same problems, challenges, battles and giants they faced and could not conquer. Waiting for the right time and learning through preparation will give you the upper hand and place you in a position to overcome your challenges and adversaries. My admonition to all, especially, those who desire to take up positions of authority, is to take guidance from David's life. Learn the ways of God, become a man after God's own heart and take the time to develop into one of the greatest leaders the world has ever known.

For those who are usually tempted to move before their time by seizing power by force, let the case of Adonijah and Absalom be a warning of the possible consequences. Absalom was one of David's loved and trusted sons. He was an heir to the throne, wise and handsome. He later conspired with political activists, leaders in the existing government and even the King's most trusted confidants of the King, like Ahitophel.

With all Israel and some of the power brokers of the time behind him, Absalom moved in to actually usurp the throne. He openlyslept with his father's concubines and disgraced his father. He cunningly stole the hearts of the people by painting a negative picture of David's existing authority. He later conspired with some powerful men and drove the king into the wilderness. He then mustered more troops to totally destroy the king and his army. His end was "self execution" because he had prematurely exposed himself.

The Book of Kings reveals that execution is the end of most people who prematurely expose themselves. However, there are times when some succeed,

but it comes at a great price and sometimes inflicts injuries that last throughout their lives. Such leaders will admit that this road is not easy, and the lives of those who do not admit to it show that after all, the prize is not worth the sacrifice.

Premature exposure in politics places the individual, or sometimes a whole nation, on a volcanic mountain whose explosive power and fury threatens to unleash fire and destruction without warning. It also has the potential to undermine already laid foundations and rob today's leaders of the ability to give future generations a firm foundation by undermining strategic planning and proper programs that would have a positive effect on the political future. It also creates a breeding ground for narrow-minded decisions that may provide temporary success, but later become an obstacle to long lasting success. Decisions made by many who have prematurely exposed themselves in the arena of politics have destroyed great opportunities, wonderful privileges, strategic relationships and personalities. A prematurely exposed leadership overlooks cautions, which are crucial to long lasting and ever increasing success. Let us not sabotage our political future and that of others by setting novices in positions of trust when more mature and qualified people could be solicited to help.

Our lives today will be lessons for posterity tomorrow. Doing the right thing may not always be easy, but we should also never forget that our lives today will be the written epistles of the future. Generations to come will look critically without fear or favor and pass judgment, leading them either to bless or curse us, depending on whether we walk in truth or make sacrifices or in falsehood to gratify our passions and lust.

You may have a political aspiration or know someone who does. My sincere prayer is that you will pray for God's perfect timing for exposure and God's grace to go through the learning process. Also remember to lift up those who are in leadership or intend to be in leadership within your community or nation that the perfect will of God is done in their lives.

Chapter Four

PREMATURE EXPOSURE TO MONEY AND WEALTH

My heart is strongly impressed to address premature exposure in the area of finances because of the power of money and the way the enemy has employed it as a major weapon. The Bible says that, "…*money answereth all things*…" (Eccl. 10:19)

Money is powerful and has the ability to make or break you. It has been said that "money is a good servant, but a terrible master." It is for this reason that premature exposure to wealth can destroy any person, great or small, old or young, if they have not been adequately prepared to handle it.

One is prematurely exposed to wealth or economic power when one comes to possess these through legitimate or foul means at the wrong time. When one does not possess maturity, experience, emotional stability, financial expertise or simple wisdom, one will ultimately be controlled by wealth. This eventually leads to waste, loss and destruction. A blessing becomes a snare when it brings compromise, enmity with God, ungodly associations and damage to family relationships. Such conditions reflect premature exposure to wealth. An example is when someone is presented with a lucrative job opportunity or financial prospect that will be at the expense of one's spiritual life. The person is prematurely exposed if the blessing has the potential to damage the beneficiary.

Today it is not difficult to be prematurely exposed to wealth. Many dubious deals, fraudulent business transactions, as well as a host of get-rich-quick schemes abound, creating a lot of problems, destroying a lot of families and also affecting our nation. What is happening all over the world is alarming. People will do anything to get money. Many also defy all caution in a bid to enjoy or possess, within a moment, what someone has labored for years to acquire. Our overcrowded state prisons are evidence of this fact.

Statistics indicate that "economically-motivated" crimes account for over

60% of prison convictions, and the underlying motivation of those who commit them is the desire to get rich quickly. The quest to acquire money instantly or prematurely motivates people to employ all forms of degrading, unlawful and unethical means. This is destroying our society as able-bodied people are put behind bars and then later released in a worse state than when they entered prison.

Premature exposure to wealth is a powerful predator that affects entire nations, businesses, well-meaning adults and even children.

Gambling or lotteries of any form offers premature or instant success. This is seen as an easy way out of dissatisfaction and has been embraced and accepted to such an extent that the opportunity to "strike it rich" is offered in airports, restaurants and even restrooms. Sales executives have discovered raffles to be the most effective strategy to get people to patronize their products. Television bombards us with raffles, sweepstakes and draws which inject false hope into those willing to listen. Gambling in our society is presented in diverse forms and packages, and many addicted souls fall prey and can't escape because they desire so strongly to be millionaires overnight. Apart from the numerous negative effects on families, those whose fathers and husbands are addicted to gambling will tell you how terrible it is. Statistics reveal that very few people, other than those who run gambling operations, have been able to make and maintain the wealth gained from it..

Paradoxically, we see very caring and loving parents who ignorantly shower too much money on their children even at a tender age. This, in turn, makes spendthrifts out of them. The children grow up accustomed to huge spending and they do not appreciate the toil that goes into creating wealth. Instead of being shrewd, they become prodigal. It is no wonder that many rich children are labeled "spoiled brats" and are not able to live up to the expectations of their parents.

Many people in courtship try to buy love by prematurely exposing their partners to money. When crisis comes, these partners leave because the money

constituted the strength of their relationship. Men and women beware.

I believe in applying the keys of the kingdom to secure financial breakthroughs. I also believe that poverty does not glorify God, neither does it resemble piety. I know some people who live right and have done everything (giving, fasting, praying for finances) and still feel like they haven't been heard. If you find yourself in such a position, be encouraged, for you have been heard on high. The answer to your prayers is set for an appointed time since its immediate manifestation could destroy you. God does not just give and bless in any fashion, but gives according to the person's ability to responsibly manage what has been given to them.

In the parable of the talents, we realize that God gave the servants money (not gifts as is usually interpreted). And the Scripture says, "he gave [them talents] according to their several ability…" (Matt. 25:15). When this Scripture speaks of abilities, it means that not every one can successfully handle certain amounts of money at a particular time. If I gave my eight-year-old child, $50,000 and my Mercedes Benz, he would waste my money and abuse my car and ultimately destroy himself. It is not because he is evil, but because he is not mature enough to handle such responsibility.

God, by His nature, usually prepares people before he gives them gifts. He told the disciples not to cast their "pearls before swine." (Matt. 7:6) It is, therefore not surprising that everyone who is a candidate for mega-prosperity goes through God's "school of preparation." In this fashion, they can really appreciate God as their source. What is equally important is for people to know how to manage what has been entrusted into their care. God is able to create something out of nothing. He loves to begin with you from zero and bring you to supernatural abundance, so that all will acknowledge that it is indisputably the doing of the Lord, and no one can take His glory.

When one has never been hungry, one does not really know how it feels when people complain that they are hungry. But when you have been hungry and poor and have suffered, you are in a better position to empathize with those who

are in similar circumstances. *Blessed be God…who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)*

Therefore, God deems it an absolute necessity to prepare those he intends to use in the area of finance.. After all, financial blessings are not yours to enjoy with your family alone, but to help finance the purposes of God. Countless testimonies attest to the fact that many who have become wealthy and powerful today came from very humble beginnings and went through very hard times before God lifted and gave them prosperity.

As a Bishop, I have seen many who were very humble, on fire for God, serviceable, punctual and who loved the Lord, their spouses and families until they "got that job" or "broke through financially." All of a sudden, they started to serve mammon or their job and changed drastically. Their commitment toward God and their families waxed cold as they became more in love with the blessing than with the One who gave it.. Generally, these people may have deserved the blessing that came to them, but their inability to handle it reveals that it came prematurely.

Apart from God's genuine blessing being handled the wrong way, the devil also knows how to employ and use premature exposure to destroy many. If the devil knows that giving you a job, money or some sort of financial breakthrough before your time will get you off his back, he will make every effort to sway you into accepting his offer.

Have you noticed that right before the Lord is about to genuinely reward you or require a greater level of commitment (whether ministry or otherwise) the enemy approaches you with a very attractive offer? He realizes that you cannot serve God and mammon. That is why discernment is critical because not every breakthrough or promotion is from the Lord.

In the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus. If Satan could not have fulfilled it, it would not have been a temptation. The Bible declares that Jesus was, indeed, tempted by the devil. The enemy, in a bid to undermine God's purpose, tried to

get Jesus to come in at the wrong time. Satan wanted to prematurely expose Jesus to wealth at a time when Jesus was on a mission to redeem this world, not indulge himself and enjoy the material riches of this world. Jesus overcame this temptation, and when he rose from the dead, he reconciled all things to Himself, including all the wealth in creation. He waited for the appointed time and took back everything that the devil stole from man. The devil will always try to prematurely expose you to what is already yours, and when you fall for his bait, you will miss out on God's best for you.

Unfortunately, some believers settle for this "blessing" at the expense of their own soul. People become enjoined to all kings of soul ties, get involved in the occult, witchcraft and juju, all for money! The devil's trap of premature exposure to wealth is costly to the victim. What he's tempting you with is already yours in Christ Jesus. "…For all things are yours whether...things present or things to come; all things are yours; and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Don't yield to his "stone," wait for God's appointed time.

Houses and riches are inherited from parents… (Prov. 19:14)

Every nation, tribe or family has its own system of inheritance and property transfer from one generation or person to another. Many wealthy parents pass away and bequeath great estates to their children who end up squandering everything, and leaving nothing behind to pass on to the next generation. This is usually a result of children being prematurely exposed to wealth and not being well-trained or brought up to handle material possessions. I have heard many of these sad accounts where the property was sold and the money spent on drugs, alcohol, women and flamboyant, riotous living.

In Luke 15, we see a related parable told by Jesus:

There was a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Give me my share of the estate." So he divided his property. Not long after that, the younger son got together all that he had and set off for a distant country and there he squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was severe famine in that whole country and he began to be in need.

We see from the above parable, that the prodigal son was exposed to wealth at a time he did not have what it took to handle the inheritance wisely. He had no plan nor did he have a vision. His actions were dictated by money. He wasted everything that was given to him, as children still do in our day. The prodigal son was fortunate because his father was alive, which made his return home possible. Unfortunately, many inherit from the deceased, which make their return to favor virtually impossible. Parents need to discern the time to give children their share of an inheritance, so that they don't prematurely expose them to wealth, like the father of the prodigal son.

No matter how busy we claim to be or how much we strive to leave something of great value behind, we need to realize that investing time to train our children to handle money and material possessions is the most fundamental assurance that what we leave behind will be well managed. Let's take up this challenge as individuals, as families and as nations, and continuously analyze how we are raising our children. We should always ask ourselves whether we are bringing them up in a way that will enable them to responsibly handle what we are toiling for today. Our children should be able to enjoy a better quality of life than we did. Let's secure their future.

A lot of people get exposed to wealth, which leads to their destruction, specifically when it comes to them too early. Agur knew this, and that is why he asked God not to bless him to the point that he would forget Him. (Prov. 30:7-9). The Bible records that the children of Israel ate and drank, and after they were full, rose up to play, which resulted in their destruction (Ex. 32:6).

And take a close look at this parable Jesus told.

And he told them this parable, "…the ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do, I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones and there will I store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to myself, you have plenty of good things laid up for many years.' Take, live easy and drink and be merry. But God said, "You fool! This

very night your life will be demanded of you. (Luke 12:16-26)

This man was so blessed materially that there was no room to even store what he had. However, this blessing resulted in his destruction because he made careless utterances.

Every large financial breakthrough you are looking for will test you when it arrives. It will offer you a wider range of choices, new friends and companions, new temptations, new experiences and new troubles. Your ability to enjoy the breakthrough and make the best use of it will be determined by the wise decisions you make, based on your understanding of the purposes for which it was given to you.

It is worth mentioning the desire some people have to enter into business ventures that they have neither proven nor gained insight into, with the result that they fail or become indebted. Just because someone is "making it" in a particular business venture does not mean that everyone will be successful in that same venture. In all your ways, including business ventures, acknowledge God and He shall direct your path. One should gain some amount of experience or associate with someone who has been in that kind of business before entering in. This will ensure that you receive adequate counsel and direction as well as the information and assistance needed to flourish.

In every endeavor or field of life, one needs a mentor. This also applies to everyone in business. Who is your mentor? Who have you asked to keep you accountable? Who do you speak with to assuage concerns and questions about the manner in which you handle your financial affairs? In business, one needs a mentor who is experienced and has survived the testing and pressures of failure, disappointment and success. Such people have a lot to offer and just making time to talk with them will bless you and give you practical keys to also succeed.

Unfortunately, we live in an environment where economic pressures tend to compel one to yield to premature exposure. If one really has a vision to be great, to positively affect one's community, nation and world, then it is a prerequisite to conquer the temptation to become exposed prematurely..

In Ghana and in most developing countries, potential and talents abound. Unfortunately, these talents are not allowed to mature to the benefit of the people because often those who possess them desire to be famous. Through premature exposure a lot of talents are destroyed or left unexplored. We see it with those in the fields of fashion, music, art and sports to name a few. In the Ghanaian sports world, for example, young athletes are hurriedly enticed to play football in Europe. Most of these athletes are usually young, inexperienced and uninformed about how the "real world" operates. They don't even take into account the different climate in which they are going to be situated. As a result, many soon find themselves ill prepared, cheated, abused and destroyed. If they had been a little patient and allowed themselves to be well groomed at home, they would be prepared for the larger world. The National Football League in the United States also reflects this lapse. The fact that one plays so well in high school and college doesn't mean these young athletes should rush or be rushed to play professionally. They should be encouraged to enhance themselves (i.e. through education, by obtaining wise counsel, etc.), as well as improve the quality of their game. Let's not forget that every good and perfect gift comes from above not abroad.

A lot of musicians break out on the scene and release well-received albums, only to become history. This is usually a result of premature exposure. Some celebrities cannot handle their premature success, and as a result are disgraced or destroyed in the process.

Remember, success does not mean experience. I encourage every one in some form of profession, trade or business to explore the diversity that their field offers. For example, a lot of seamstresses are limited to shirts, trousers and suits, but I encourage those in such a field to adequately prepare themselves and consider the possibility of expanding ones expertise by moving into other areas such as upholstery or possibly interior decoration, so that you can become a master of your trade. Do not let premature exposure cause you to rush, or rob you of adequate preparation.

If you are working, I encourage you, every now and then, to take refresher courses for perhaps a few weeks (or evening classes). It will help your acquire more skills and also improve your level of productivity. Remember that one's level of preparation determines one's impact and accomplishments. Let excellence and being the best be everyone's goal.

We need to positively influence our families, our communities, our nations and, ultimately, our world. You can make a difference in your own way. You are not a good steward when you fail to add to or enhance what was originally given to you. Businesspersons must not neglect their social responsibilities. Wait for the appointed time and go through the process. It is the most excellent way because, as Proverbs puts it, "…*he who gathers money little by little makes it grow…*"

If all you do as a businessman is provide garbage cans and brooms for keeping you community clean you are making a difference. Do not despise humble beginnings – just watch God bring you from glory to glory.

The acquiring of credit and loans is another vehicle of premature exposure. Many people bask in the false glory of borrowed money and use them to show off instead of using the borrowed money for its intended purpose. Many also fall into the temptation of posing as if the money they borrowed is not a loan, but their own. It's always better for one to be modest and carefully consider one's expenditures until the loan is repaid in full.

In the United States, increasing numbers of credit card debtors end up bankrupt due to their inability to repay their loans. The exorbitant lifestyles of the 1980's and 1990's have caught up with many people and have resulted in families losing their homes, cars and reputations. These individuals are left messed up for the rest of their lives, working only to pay off their debts because of the premature pleasures the lenient credit system offered. In short, these loans entice people to live today on tomorrow's money.

The effects of premature exposure are not only limited to the individuals involved, but also undermine the economic emancipation and development of

nations. When a lot of people within a nation get prematurely exposed to huge sums of money, it usually results in inflation, a major problem with which many economies are struggling today. It also aggravates the balance of payments deficit, putting the entire economy in jeopardy.

Premature exposure, in the form of easily accessible loans from international organizations to developing nations, later results in economic oppression. The vicious cycle of poverty exacerbated by the insurmountable debt that several developing countries owe to many international creditors, attest to this fact. These creditors usually entice these nations to borrow huge sums, which later gives the lenders the power to hold these debtor nations in economic slavery through the exorbitant interest they exact. It seems then that the poor get poorer and the rich get richer.

Many nations are rushing to move into middle-income economic status, which is a noble idea. Nevertheless, in our quest for prosperity, we ought to be cautious so we do not destroy our values and sell out everything precious to us to the point of allowing foreigners to buy us out of our own nations. We ought to put structures in place that will help us fulfill our vision without prostituting our resources and selling our future into slavery, lest we live as slaves in our own land.

Much of the economic collapse and recession hitting Asia and other parts of the world can be linked to their recent economic booms because these nations don't have the structures and the countermeasures in place to stabilize the wealth that was accumulated during the boom period. When a nation experiences sudden economic prosperity, it more often than not experiences adverse effects, compared to nations that accumulate wealth little by little.

Chapter Five

PREMATURE EXPOSURE TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage is the union between a man and a woman bonded in a legal and covenant relationship, making them husband and wife. God first instituted marriage for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to fulfill His purpose. God provided a helpmate for Adam to complement him for the fulfillment of His purpose. Marriage was God's idea. Adam was not consulted when God was forming Eve. Eve was God's surprise for Adam, one that Adam appreciated, accepted and cherished.

If we agree with Scripture that God is the author of marriage, then He is the best specialist to consult concerning issues about marriage. His guidelines must be carefully followed to experience the joy and fulfillment it offers.

According to Dr. Myles Munroe, if you want to know the use of a product, you don't ask the product, but the manufacturer. It is time many stopped employing their own strength and wisdom and following solutions offered by the world. Because God is the author of marriage, we must consult Him for the solutions we are desperately seeking.

Contrary to all the erroneous perspectives people have about marriage, it is one of the best things God instituted. He actually saved the best for last!

Marriage is good. Marriage is powerful. Marriage is honorable. Marriage is a mystery. It is a solemn and sacred institution, a serious union that needs to be entered into with all caution, soberness and adequate preparation. In this day and age, there are many who take this institution lightly and enter into it prematurely. Many make comments like, "Marriage is no bid deal, it's just one of those things." These people need to know why marriage is sacred, a mystery, a ministry and a covenant union.

Many think of marriage as the wedding ceremony, the feast and the honeymoon. However, those who have been married for a while will tell a

different story. It is a serious union because it binds the husband and wife together in a relationship so close and intimate that their entire future and assignment will be influenced by it. Marriage involves the surrender of self-interest for the benefit of the relationship. One needs to enter into it with all caution because an unfulfilled marriage, a struggling relationship and, ultimately, divorce are among the worst things that can happen to anyone. Many people underestimate the impact of divorce because they fail to recognize the tremendous investment of self that goes into the making of a marriage.

Due consideration is also vital because the mortal man can only see what's on the outside, and only God can see what is in a person's heart and what lies ahead. Everyone needs inside information to enable him or her to judge rightly and take the best steps. It does not simply take a man or a woman to make a marriage successful. It takes a loving husband, a caring father, a responsible man to make a marriage work, and a virtuous woman, a responsible mother and a good wife to keep it stable.

The Bible says, "He that finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord." (Prov. 18:22) This means that before a woman is married, she needs to possess the qualities of a wife. One must recognize that one marries into a family. Family has a strong natural and spiritual influence on everyone. It is believed that if you marry the right person, you have 70% of your problems solved. But, if you marry the wrong person, you spend 70% of your time trying to keep the relationship together and have 30% for yourself and other things.

Adequate preparation is crucial because without it, one can become frustrated to the point of backing out. Maturity is an important ingredient that cannot be neglected. Maturity is not just age, but the ability to use the senses to discern right and wrong. Marriage is not for boys and girls, or males and females per se; it goes beyond that. Marriage is for mature men and women.

Marriage is a ministry because the husband and wife ought to minister to each other's material, physical and spiritual needs in a caring, loving, and gentle way. The Bible speaks of the fact that no man hates his own flesh, but he takes

care of it and nourishes it. Men must minister to their wives in the same way. In doing this, the man fulfills the Scripture, because when he loves his wife, he loves himself (Eph. 5:28,29). The same applies to physical intimacy. I Corinthians 7:3-5 speaks of not "defrauding" one another. Rather the husband and wife should render due benevolence to one another.

Why Satan Hates Marriage

A thriving, successful, honey-filled Christian marriage is one of the greatest threats to Satan and his cohorts. It captures his attention and provokes in him a desire to inject a wedge or some form of confusion or misunderstanding that eventually leads to separation. When Adam was alone in the garden and in control of all the earth, Satan was silent. We never saw Satan until Adam married Eve. There was something about the woman and marriage that caused Satan to come out of his hiding place.

Have you ever wondered why your own marriage or that of people around you is always coming under attack? Have you wondered why there is so much confusion, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, provocation and vexation in many marriages? Have you ever wondered why the divorce and separation rates keep soaring year after year, even in the church? Are you a victim of a broken family or a family on the verge of being broken?

Have you wondered why the problem keeps compounding? Have you wondered why your parents or your friends' parents are always quarrelling and why your neighbor is always abusing his wife? Have you wondered why pastors' marriages come under the greatest attacks and their wives or husbands seen to be complaining about their spouses? Have you wondered why a lot of movies now depict adultery as a normal occurrence? The bottom line answer is that Satan doesn't like the institution of marriage, and is attacking it from all angles by whatever means possible. Never in the history of mankind has the institution of marriage come under such attack, criticism, and pressure.

Scriptures about the mystery of marriage will tell you why the enemy is

against this noble institution: *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. (Heb. 13:4)*

Marriage brings honor, and even more when it is pure and untainted by adultery. The devil desires to bring disgrace by attacking marriage. *He who finds a wife, finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord. (Prov. 18:22)*

The devil doesn't want anybody to find good things and obtain favor in God's sight. The favor of God brings blessings, prosperity, protection, and all that undermines Satan's agenda. *Two are better than one. (Eccl. 4:9) One can put one thousand to flight, and two ten thousand. (Deut. 13:32)*

When a husband and wife are united in prayer or agreement, nothing is impossible to them. It is awesome and too powerful for the devil to handle. This is a serious threat to his kingdom and plans, and therefore he works to create situations so there can be no agreement in marriage to disturb his kingdom. *But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. (Mal. 2:15)*

The devil does not want any godly offspring to perpetrate the covenant and the things of God. He wants the earth to be filled with strange and illegitimate children.

I shall build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt.16:18)

The Scriptures say that where two or three are gathered in my Name, there I am in their midst. Whenever the husband, wife and family gather in the name of the Lord, God comes into their midst and the devil cannot stand it. The family is also the first church.

Marriage makes you whole. This doesn't mean that one is not whole before marriage. Jesus, Paul, Daniel, etc were not married, yet they were completely whole people. This means that it makes one complete by surrounding one with assistance. It is only through marriage that one can legitimately fulfill the command to be fruitful and multiply. A lot of people, including myself, will attest that marriage has made us better in many ways.

"Marriage is good" and is the climax of God's creation. Marriage can make you the happiest and most fulfilled human being on the earth. *Woe to him that walks alone, if he falls, for he has no one to help him up. (Eccl. 4:10*)

The devil wants you to walk alone, whether you are married or not. Marriage offers companionship. The devil wants you to walk alone so that when you fall there is no one to encourage you or lift you up and no one to fan the flames when you are cold.

The devil brings confusion into marriages, making men mistreat their wives and vice versa. When this happens, the prayers of the man are hindered. Satan is unleashing all kinds of terrible assaults to undermine and, if possible, destroy marriage. He is using a lot of weapons, the most powerful weapon being premature exposure.

The Strategy

The enemy is a long-term planner. He moves into action a long while before he seizes his opening. We see from Scripture that he incited King Herod to have all the male boys killed when Jesus was a baby. Pharoah was inspired by demonic forces to pass a law to kill all male children at Moses' birth. This was to prevent the child from growing to become the deliverer of Israel.

The devil has not changed. He does not fight marriage after the husband and wife come together. He employs more subtle and dangerous weapons or premature exposure to fight their marriage before it takes off. He starts the fight when they are children, or growing up as single people, long before they think about marriage. He does this so that if his plans should work, it becomes more difficult for them to have a fulfilled marriage when the right time comes. Marriage counselors hold that a lot of marital problems have their roots in deep-seated things that occurred before the marriage.

Sex

Moral authority, purity and fidelity are strong defenses in securing any marriage. Sex before marriage or sex outside marriage is one of Satan's most

powerful weapons in his premature exposure arsenal. Satan's targets include adults, youth, little children and generations yet unborn.

Why do you think most bestselling books, top draw movies, chart-topping music, and best selling magazines reek of sex? Why do you think that most video rental places in the U.S. have pornography on the top shelves? Why do the most patronized newspapers show nudity? It is a vital part of Satan's major strategy!

If people claim to be virgins, people look at them strangely and ask if there is anything wrong with them. They are teased and called names and picked on by their peers. Subtly and craftily, they are pressured, directly and indirectly, and made to feel that they are missing something. All these are Satan-orchestrated plots. There is a glory that virginity and moral purity evokes and becomes endowed on such a person. You are not missing anything if you are a virgin. It is also proof of one's fidelity, chastity and purity, and I believe that it is the greatest present that one could give one's spouse after marriage. If you are pressured, don't give up, because you are on course and doing the right thing.

Moral standards have fallen so drastically that society downplays the consequences of sexual intimacy before and outside of marriage. Society encourages, gives excuses and makes premarital sex appealing. A lot of young have lost their birthright, destroyed their destinies and complicated their lives through sex before marriage. Many more are on the verge and are at risk. Oh, how I pray that you will be delivered and empowered to escape the snare and trap the enemy has laid for you and your loved ones, in Jesus name.

The notion is that, "as long as you feel grown, you can do what you please, only be careful, and get 'protection." Never forget that the pleasure of sin lasts but a moment but sin has its wages. Inflation can change people's wages, but the wages of sin have not changed. They are still death. God has not lowered His standards and does not intend to.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.(Rom. 6:23)

The devil, through diverse ways, especially television and Hollywood, has deceived many people, both young and old, into believing that premature

pleasure or sex between two unmarried people is not a big deal. Sex is fine any time, any place and with anyone, as long as it gives pleasure, pleasure, and more pleasure.

One more serious thing that a lot of people forget or don't know is that any time there is sex between a man and a woman, they are making a statement to God that they are married. By this act, there is immediately a soul tie that binds them and a covenant is established. The mystery that takes place in marriage takes place during sex. Many say, "I don't love him or her, I am only sleeping with him/her and having a good time." Oh, how deceptive! There can be a marriage ceremony, blessing and the feast (reception), but everything is sealed and consummated when the bride and groom become intimate and know each other through sex. Look closely at what the Scriptures say, and you'll understand this mystery.

What? Know ye not that he which is joined with a harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall become one flesh. (1 Cor. 6;16)

Here, Paul was talking about fornication and immorality. He was saying that through immorality between two unmarried people or sex with a harlot, two people become one flesh. This is serious because many people think that it's over once the sexual encounter is completed, but in fact they have become connected to their own destruction. It is not over, not at all!

Now look at the mystery of marriage. It says at the beginning of creation, God made them, male and female. For this reason a man will leave mother and father and the two shall become one flesh. (Mark 10:6-8)

We realize that the mystery of two becoming one flesh takes place when two come together sexually and when they are joined together by God in marriage. Sex within marriage invokes a blessing, but sex outside of marriage invokes a curse and destruction. This is because one glorifies God and the other the devil. Satan hardly changes his strategies. He ties people up in sexual relationships outside of marriage in order to frustrate the real marriage at the right time with the right person. Premature exposure through sexual immorality, fornication,

adultery, etc. is the root cause of many marital problems.

It is purported that a twinge of guilt over sexual misconduct performed once or many times can later serve as a mental block to sexual enjoyment. Guilt is also a common cause of orgasmic malfunction in many marriages. This is a serious problem that many spouses face and cannot talk about it to anybody because of its sensitive nature. The root of this could be strongly attributed to premature exposure. Sometimes the guilt may be related to an attempted rape for which the unwilling victim feels guilty. It may be incest or abuse by relatives or friends. It may also be an ill-advised adulterous liaison experienced prior to marriage or promiscuity before or after marriage. Guilt is a cruel taskmaster. After such premature pleasure, it must be confronted before one can be free to experience the fulfillment that is God's best.

Another area that the enemy is using effectively is heavy petting (kissing, fondling, caressing) before marriage. This also carries the power to undermine fulfillment in marriage. Lesbianism is also very dangerous. It is setting many women on the path of being unfulfilled in their marriages and seriously affecting these relationships.

Premature ejaculation for men is also a serious problem in many marriages. It is usually an after effect of those who engage in serious masturbation, homosexuality, pornography, strip tease and other perverted sexual practices. This is especially prevalent with those who were seriously addicted to it before their marriages. As a result the strength and joy of lovemaking are undermined.

There are four levels of maturity qualifying one to marry. This is basic for adequate preparation. There must be physical maturity, psychological (or mental) maturity, social (which includes material) maturity and spiritual maturity. The Scripture recalls that "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52) The term wisdom refers to psychological maturity, stature refers to physical maturity, favor with God refers to spiritual maturity, and favor with man refers to social maturity.

Spiritual Preparation

The spirit realm rules the natural. If you want to prevail in the natural, it must first be secured in the spiritual. This is why adequate spiritual preparation and maturity before marriage is critical and should be basic to all other preparation.

The Christian's level of spiritual preparation is the basis for true success. Where there is inadequate spiritual preparation, one is prematurely exposing oneself to marriage.

*If fathers are consulted for counsel by their children in their choice of husband or wife, how much more should our Heavenly Father, who is Spirit, be consulted and His approval sought before the marriage proposal***.**

Why Spiritual Preparation

The wisdom in spiritual preparation is manifold. A lot of broken marriages could be avoided if there was much more spiritual preparation before the man and the woman enter into a relationship and marry. Don't write a letter and seal it in an envelope and expect the Lord to put his stamp on it! Involve him in the writing of the letter.

We also know, "that whatsoever the Lord doeth it shall be forever." (Ecc 3:14) Many desire that their marriages and relationships should last forever. The key to lasting relationships is spiritual preparation. For one's marital relationship to stand through all test and trials, one must actively involve God in the initial decision.

On the contrary, if God is left out of our marriages or relationships from the outset and his guidelines and principles not adhered to, we cannot guarantee that the relationship or marriage shall be forever. For when that petite female struts across your field of vision or a smooth-talking powerful man glances at you, how can you be sure that you will stand firm? Spiritual preparation is the best guarantee for a successful marriage and meaningful relationship.

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. (1 John 5:4) If God is the

author, your marriage has what it takes to overcome all things. That means that if you made the Lord the head, seeking Him rightly from the outset for leadership and guidance, following His word faithfully and receiving His blessings, the marriage or relationship will overcome any challenges you may encounter.

When God shuts, no one can open, and when He opens, no one can shut, (Rev 3:7). If God put together a husband and a wife, I assure you that no man, woman, devil, situation or circumstance can put them asunder. God is very concerned about your marriage and the marriages of all His children. God is a matchmaker and He wants to be part of the choice and decision you make. Nevertheless, He leaves the choice of inviting Him into that decision with us.

A prudent wife is from the Lord (Prov. 19:14b). If one wants a prudent wife, he has to receive her from the Lord. He should not make use of his sight because beauty is vain, neither should he use his flesh for the flesh is deceitful. God must provide!

Many people prepare for all other aspects of marriage, but do not take spiritual preparation seriously. This is a fatal mistake and a grave misplacement of priorities. Balance is needed in preparation, both naturally and spiritually. Understanding God's pattern for the family will also reveal the need for spiritual preparation and maturity. God's pattern for marriage and the nuclear family is for the husband to be the head of the woman and for Christ to be the head of the husband (1 Cor. 11:3). Anytime this order is breached, there will be problems. The man, according to God's original plan, is suppose to function as the king, the priest and prophet to his family. If the man is King, the wife should be Queen. The man ought to be prepared spiritually. He must be mature enough to function in his role and bring blessings to his family.

The woman must also be spiritually mature in order to submit to the authority God has placed over her. It is very difficult for a woman who is rebellious to the authority God has set over her to submit to her husband. Women who are critical of authority tend to have problems with submission in marriage.

Spiritual preparation is also vital because one marries from a family into a

family. When you marry, your spouse's family becomes your family in every way. There may be issues of familiar spirits and strongholds in a spouse's background that have to be dealt with before the marriage through prayer, fasting and the word of God before the marriage. Such a background, if not dealt with, can exert strong negative influence on the marriage and family, through emotions, attitudes or other external influences. Therefore, it is necessary that one is adequately prepared spiritually before marriage, so that one can be in a position to deal effectively with these issues.

The marriage may be God's will, yes; it may be flowing with milk and honey, yes; it may be your promised land, yes; but do not forget that there are giants that may have to be conquered. The Israelites had to fight for their promised land and so must you. With God on your side, you are more than a conqueror. There are certain cases where individuals or families are plagued by a curse. It may be a disease or a cycle of events within the family. It may be barrenness, immorality, divorce, separation or drunkenness.. Whatever the issue, one should carefully investigate and deal with it so that the relationship does not fall victim to its power.

Sons usually take after their fathers and daughters after their mothers. There is an old African adage that says, "If you want to have an idea how beautiful your wife will look in old age, look at your mother-in-law." You therefore have to open your eyes and spiritually deal with anything you may have observed. One has to ask God for the strategy and power to triumph over things that could undermine the marriage. When one is marrying a man or woman who is not a virgin, especially those who have had several sexual encounters, all the ties need to be broken and the contamination must be cleansed or purged, with its consequences reversed as part of the spiritual preparation.

Among some tribes in Ghana and in many nations around the world, young girls go through all kinds of rites as part of their traditions. Some of these traditions involve the establishment of a blood covenant with the demonic spirit. It has been observed that most of the women from these tribes have serious

challenges in their marriages and most marriages end in separation or divorce. Anyone who wants to marry a man or a woman with a similar background should prepare spiritually and deal with that covenant so that the marriage can be secured. It does not matter what you did right or wrong, without spiritual preparation you are in for a fight that could wreck your marriage.

When you have a very precious seed you don't just go and plant it in the bush or a crowded piece of ground. If you do that, you are going to have problems with bringing the seed to fruition no matter how high its yielding capability and fruitfulness may be. This seed may have a hard time growing because of the other plants. This is because other plants will be contending with it for nutrients, sunlight and water. The same is true of marriage. Before and after locating your partner there has to be a lot of clearing, uprooting and burning done in your own life and that of your prospective spouse before you begin planting and watering.

Time after time, there is the need for attention, so that your relationship can yield its best. Any time anything not of that relationship springs up, it must be carefully pruned or cleared to prevent all forms of encroachment. Every family has its god. If Jesus Christ is not the Lord of the family then even when the person is born again, one has to deal with the spirit that rules the background of the person or it will soon lift itself against the nuclear family and fight the marriage.

If you are marrying into a family in which every marriage ends in divorce or separation or a family in which yours is the first Christian wedding, it is very risky and dangerous for one to just go by "faith", without preparing spiritually. The enemy must be held at bay by the power of God's word. The curse of illegitimacy, which usually affects those born out of wedlock and people from polygamous backgrounds, must be dealt with.

I have noticed that the enemy takes advantage of these weaknesses to interfere with many marriages. There are some issues, which, if you do not dealt with before them marriage, may have to contend with for the rest of your life. Remember that the moment you marry it becomes much more difficult to deal

with these issues. It is therefore imperative that you deal with them prior to the wedding.

True spiritual preparation before marriage helps a person to die to self. A mark of true spiritual maturity is death to self and loving to death.

The mystery of marriage reveals the crucial need for spiritual maturity and death to self According to the Scriptures, it is only when we die, that we truly live; and death is the doorway to any miracle. This includes your miracle in marriage. The man is God's seed for humanity. Only the seed has the ability to produce after its kind. Adam was God's seed for the human race; the woman, Eve, came out of him. This is why biologically, the man produces seed and the woman takes and carries the seed from the man during procreation.

In the Book of Genesis, God said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." (Gen 3:15) The seed was a man, Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:16,44). It was a miracle because women, naturally, do not produce seed. To rectify humanity's problem, God introduced Christ as the second seed.

Jesus said, " Except a grain of seed fall to the ground and dies it abides alone." (John 12:24) This presupposes that falling to the ground and dying is the only process that a grain of seed goes through to prevent it from being alone. So we realize that when Adam was single and alone in the garden, God applied this same principle for the creation of the woman, thereby changing Adam's status from being single or alone to being joined to another.

And God said it was not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him, so the Lord caused the man (the seed) to fall into a deep sleep and open his side and took a rib to form Eve and closed up his side again (Gen 2:21). One can therefore say that falling into a deep sleep (symbolic of death) was what Adam had to undergo to have his wife, Eve. God gave him a wife, a skillfully crafted partner to assist and complement him. This is the one that made multiplication possible. If you are willing to follow the principle and allow it to work in you, God, too, will give you a perfect wife.

The second Adam (Jesus Christ) had to die on the cross and after he died,

his side was pierced and when he rose from the dead, God gave him a glorious bride – the church. To be able to have a glorious bride or a successful marriage, one has to die to self. If God used this for Adam and Jesus, His son whom He loved, to give each of them their brides, then we, too, must die to self to qualify for marriage. You have to come to a place where you have prepared yourself to die in order to live, not the same life you led before your "death", but a glorious one that follows your resurrection. This is why Scripture admonishes husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and laid down his life for the church.

If one wants to be a husband, one of the main qualities that qualifies him for the position is the ability and willingness to die for his wife. Therefore, if one wants to be a husband but is unwilling to die for his wife, he is prematurely exposing himself. In the sight of man, he may be qualified, but because he does not possess the spiritual maturity and love to be a husband, he does not qualify in the sight of God. If every woman married a husband who is willing to die to himself in order to obtain her, what a wonderful family and society the world would witness! Dare to make a difference by being that kind of husband. And dare to be the woman who would marry such a person.

Marriage will stretch you to the limit, and unless you are "dead," you will find reasons to back out. The books of advice you have read or the tapes you have listened to may not carry you, for there are some things only experience can teach. Sometimes you will feel like you married a person different from the one you thought you made vows to at the altar. There are many times in marriage when one has to die to one's opinions, personal comfort, pride and even be like a fool for the sake of love and peace.

The reason why a lot of handsome men and beautiful women cannot achieve a successful marriage is because they cannot die to self. Things sometimes happen in a marriage that could literally kill you. All the same, you need love to help you hang on and endure because it makes you a better person. I repeat, there are many times in marriage when one has to die to one's opinions, personal comfort, pride and even be like a fool for the sake of love and peace.

After the affliction you shall see the light. It sometimes takes people who are dead to stomach certain things and adjust to all the differences and still join together to fulfill God's purpose for marriage. You cannot kill an already dead person, which is why you need to die to self before marriage, so that nothing can kill you in your marriage. Prepare yourself spiritually.

It is through spiritual preparation and spiritual exercises that you mortify deeds of the flesh. Crucify it so that God will be glorified in your marriage.

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation or maturity is very necessary. In certain countries, the minimum age is set by the constitution. In Ghana the age of consent is 18. Sex between under aged boys and girls is prohibited in many cultures and religions around the world. As a matter of fact, in some cultures even those who are married young are not allowed to have sexual relations until they reach the age of consent. The importance of physical maturity is evident in many traditional cultures. Various rites and customs of physical maturity are performed in order to gauge the maturity of those who desire to move from childhood to adulthood.

This same principle is demonstrated in Scripture. Physical maturity is necessary in marriage. This is why God, in all His wisdom, said that marriage must be for men and women, not for boys and girls. The spiritual man goes beyond the dictionary definition of manhood. In the Scriptures, a man is an adult male who is physically, socially and spiritually mature or well developed; that is, one who can shoulder responsibility. The Scripture did not use "boy," but man. If God instituted marriage for man then physical maturity comes into play. Again we see from the Scriptures that in the beginning of creation, God made male and female. "For this reason a man will leave father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but one." [Scriptural reference?]

Leaving one's father and mother denotes detachment, a crossing over from a life of dependence to a life of independence. A life of independence involves the

ability to shoulder responsibility and make wise decisions independently. You cannot marry and still be dependent. This is why a man should be gainfully employed before marriage to enable him to care for his wife and family. Paul said that since there is so much immorality each man - not boy should have his own wife and each woman - not girl - her own husband.

A mature man takes a lot of things into consideration before making a marriage decision. Decision-making is directly influenced by one's level of cognitive development. Therefore, it is critical that one matures to the status of a man or a woman, with the ability to handle responsibility independently, before marrying. This will help the young avoid premature exposure in marriage.

Maturity is also necessary biologically for women to avoid childbirth complications. For women, physical stamina is vital to cope with the rigors of marriage, especially in Africa and in developing nations. Often, what is usually referred to as "love" by teenagers is merely infatuation.

Financial Preparation

Likening marriage to the human body, one can say that love is the heart, understanding is the head, and money is the backbone. Love undisputedly plays the most important role in marriage, but the very nature of love is expressed in giving. This makes it very important for a person to be financially prepared before marriage. It is not enough to say you love somebody and go ahead and marry him or her without adequate financial preparation. This is not only unacceptable and unwise, it is also very dangerous, unscriptural and out of order. One needs to be prepared financially because love is not just words, the I-love-you and the romantic talk is not sufficient to hold a marriage together. Love is an act!

In marriage, it is the responsibility of the man to provide for the family. It takes money to put food on the table, to provide clothes and shelter for the family and to pay the bills. There are three major factors that influence every marriage: communication, sex and money. This demands that one should be adequately

prepared. Love alone does not answer all things, but money does. (Eccl. 10:19)

Two of the questions I usually ask young people who come to see me about getting married are: Do you have a job? Do you earn enough to take care of a wife and a family? Some marry by faith without adequate preparation and careful planning. The Bible says to your faith, add wisdom (2 Peter 1:5-7).

For those who seem not to understand me on this point, I would like them to answer this question. Would you marry off your daughter, in whom you have invested so much over the years, to somebody who is not working and is financially unstable? To a man who wants to marry just by faith? Money is not everything, but it is undoubtedly important. If love is true, then it must wait, for love is patient. Many hold that love is blind, however, love should not lose sight of common sense! To enter into marriage, one must have a job and a reliable source of income. A source that allows one to budget, plan, pay bills and feed the family.

But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (1 Tim. 5:8).

According to the Scriptures, whoever calls himself a Christian and is not able to take care of his family is said to be worse than an infidel or an unbeliever. Again, one must not only have a source of income, but must also have the wisdom to manage money.

Money must also serve its purpose so that it does not take the place of God. Any man who does not pay his tithe faithfully is not financially prepared for marriage. This is because such a person comes under a financial curse, which blocks the blessings of his family and denies them financial freedom. This applies to women as well. Every good wife should be prepared financially, so she'll be able to manage what her husband provides for the house. Because life is filled with surprises, preparation is important.

House and riches (are) the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife (is) from the Lord. (Prov. 19:14).

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She

considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She perceiveth that her merchandise (is) good: her candle goeth not out by night. She maketh fine linen, and selleth (it); and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. (Prov. 31:13,16,18,24)

The virtuous woman described in Proverbs is a perfect model for every wife and offers insight into the need for financial preparation. She is portrayed as one who is financially stable. She knows how to manage money and invest properly with a sense of financial discipline. Such qualities do not spring up overnight. One must be trained to have them. Do not marry on borrowed money. It puts you under stress, which sometimes leads to quarrels and other unnecessary trouble. It also undermines the husband's manhood. As a man, you should not allow the woman to pay for everything, neither should the woman allow the man to pay for everything. Each partner should contribute his or her part.

It is very important to make a good start to a marriage, so it is not wise to borrow money to begin your married life. It is premature. Take your time, work hard, save enough and trust God for favor to give you the resources to marry. If you cannot afford a Saturday wedding, with all the cost, then get married on a Sunday. You can have a small reception for close relatives and loved ones. You can use the money to do something productive rather than wallow in debt. I am not saying that you cannot love without money; I am saying that entering marriage without money is treacherous!

Psychological Maturity

It is very important for a person to be psychologically mature before marriage. This helps sustain the marriage and empowers the couple to fulfill their vision as husband and wife. It is also an invaluable asset in building a successful home. Psychological maturity involves one's cognitive development as well as one's emotional development. This will ensure that a person's conduct in marriage is not based entirely on self interest. It is the level of maturity that

makes one knowledgeable and equips one with the wisdom that only experience brings. In I Cor. 13:11, the Apostle Paul talks about how the understanding of a child differs from that of a mature person. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Marriage is not for children so childish things must be put away. The Bible enjoins men to dwell with women according to knowledge (1 Pet. 3:7). This knowledge is not only intellectual, but also experiential.

Men and women need knowledge about each other. Men need to learn how to communicate with women. They need to learn how women feel, how they interpret events and so on. Women, too, need to learn what is important to men, to understand their needs and relate accordingly. A lack of this knowledge may be detrimental to the relationship. One's level of cognitive or mental development determines how one thinks, understands and speaks. Children tend to more egoistic, narrow-minded and week. They tend to look at things from their own perspective and not give much attention to that of others. The mature are more altruistic, strong-willed and usually forthright in their thinking.

Love, which is the heart of every marriage, is not egoistic but altruistic. demonstrating that marriage is for the mature. *Charity (love) suffereth long, is kind, charity doth not behave itself unseemingly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoices in truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

These qualities are clearly not for the shallow-minded, but for those with deep understanding and wisdom. One has to know through wisdom and by virtue of one's maturity when to express or suppress emotions.

In other words, self-control is a characteristic of the mature person. One must not allow his or her emotions to rule one's reasoning, but rather allow reasoning to rule emotions. Your ability to rationally express your thoughts and feelings depends on your level of maturity. What you say or do in marriage is very important as it can make or break the marriage. That is why you have to be

mature enough to communicate appropriately. The role knowledge and wisdom play in marriage in connection with one's psychological maturity cannot be overemphasized. Many marriages have broken up as a result of misunderstandings that a mature person could have averted or resolved.

Chapter Six

PREMATURE EXPOSRE TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Premature exposure in Christian leadership is not uncommon. Many of the conflicts, church splits, disunity, misunderstandings and carnality we see in Christian leadership circles can be mostly attributed to premature exposure.

This happens because the price of preparation required to offer quality and mature leadership was not fully paid. Many of these ill-prepared leaders fall easy prey to the enemy and his schemes because their faith is built on a weak foundation. Few can soundly teach congregations the true meaning of salvation, the cross, the blood of Jesus, justification, sanctification and other doctrines of the Christian faith. Many also do not know the ways of God. Poor preparation poses a threat to the Body of Christ, and even more so when people receive the teachings of such ministers without question.

God usually picks people from nowhere and takes them somewhere. He picks a "nobody" and makes him a "somebody." As a result, many of those chosen are tempted to think that they have arrived, especially when they are coming from "nowhere." This is not necessarily so.

The Apostle Paul said, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; And the base things of this world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." (1 Cor. 1:26-28) This scripture reveals who we were and of what stuff we were made before God called us. God uses the foolish things, base things, weak things and things that are despised. According to Scripture, this is our nature. If we acknowledge that God's word is true and applies to us, we never have to entertain the idea that we can make it on our own or ever take decisions independent of God and expect to succeed.

It is He who makes us. He said, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of man.” (Matt 4:19) If we are ever to have significant impact on behalf of God, we must allow Him to make us, promote us, instruct us and lead us. Without His leading, all our efforts and successes are with no real meaning or lasting significance.

Every building, ministry, church and good Christian stands on a foundation. It is the foundation that determines the height, size and strength of the building. The body of Christ stands on a foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone of the foundation.

It is unfortunate to see people rush to build ministries and expose themselves when they have not laid a solid or firm foundation. There are many people who profess to be Christians but who haven’t been through foundational classes and who do not know the basic foundational truths of the Christian faith. Some never went for the classes, while others started and never finished. Yet some of these people are in leadership positions by virtue of their spiritual gifts, talents, position in society, wealth and so on. These people may be elders, deacons, board members, musicians, pastors, Sunday school or children’s teachers, prophets, etc. This is premature exposure and can be detrimental to both the individual and the church. Preparation is the foundation for leadership. Service is also a way for one to build a solid foundation.

The foundation is the hidden part of the building or ministry. It includes those services for which there seems to be no apparent reward. However, these are experiences that sharpen your character, build you up, help your inner man and equip you with knowledge, experience and information. These are the experiences that prune, chastise and stabilize you.

Your preparation is the foundation for the fulfillment of your assignment. Take time to build and work on your foundation. Many who have fallen look back and wish they had taken more time to prepare. Jesus shared the parable of the wise and the foolish builder to help us to understand the importance of sound and solid foundations.

Therefore everyone who hears theses words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rains came down, the storms rose and the winds blew. And beat against the house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell with a great crash. (Matt. 7:24-27)

With the two builders in the parable, the problem was not the flood, nor the winds, nor the rains, nor even the "beating against"- it was the foundation. The foolish man did not take the time to go through the right building. The account in Luke 6:47-49 puts it even more vividly. It describes the man as one who "built his house and dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock." But the foolish man "built the house on the ground without a foundation."

I believe the foolish man was in a hurry to prove a point and make a statement. He could even have mocked or made others mock the wise builder for taking a long time to build the foundation. He forgot that life has many seasons and ways of testing. If there is a weak foundation, downfall is inevitable.

The floods and the streams generally represent attacks of the enemy. For when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him. In Revelation 12:15, the serpent spewed water like a flood against the woman and the child. Anything that glorifies God or blesses humanity is an affront to the enemy, and therefore subject to demonic attack. But the attack will not prevail if the foundations are strong and solid.

Winds usually represent change. There are always changes in life. No condition is permanent. God uses these changes to establish and give one depth. God wants us in a place where we can stand through the storms, a place where our feet shall be firmly planted. Without a solid foundation, changes will destroy both us and everything we have built. Many backslide as a result of a change in location. This happens due to a weakness in the foundation. Changes are not

meant to cause you to backslide. On the contrary, they are designed to help deepen your roots and mature you in the things of God.

The rains, which signify the blessings of God, will also come, but success or blessings can also destroy a man if he has not been prepared to handle them. Do not be in too much of a hurry to be successful and famous. Success and blessings will test your love and commitment to God in ways that will astound you. Success has destroyed many ministers. Such pastors find it hard to take advice or relate to their fellow ministers and workers. Some also find it difficult to walk in humility while staying focused on their God-given assignment. The season for rains will come, but if you have understanding of divine timing and your foundation is strong, you will be able to stand and make the best of all the rains, floods and winds.

Do not allow premature exposure to deny you the wonderful privilege of studying the Word and building a firm foundation. Remember, many are called, few are chosen and even fewer are faithful to the end. It is not enough to be only called; one must prove faithful and consistent between the calling and the election.

God is against premature exposure in Christian leadership. His word is explicitly clear that a novice should not be put in an office (1 Tim. 3:6). Christian ministry cannot and must not be taken lightly. Things cannot be done casually, because God is holy and the things that have to do with Him must be done with the Divine Standard in mind. He is also a God of specifics, who has set rules, standards and procedures through which a person can qualify for Christian leadership. The minister is the shepherd who stands as God's mouthpiece to the people. Many leaders do not understand the importance and significance of this position.

To gain deeper understanding, let us travel to the origin of the priesthood as this depicts the way God selects, prepares and equips human beings to stand before him to minister to him and his people.

The Priesthood

The office of the priesthood was originally intended for the house of Aaron and his descendants. Aaron was the first high priest of Israel and his tribe, Levi, produces the priests and Levites who ministered with him. In Exodus 27, God instructed Moses to set aside and consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister unto Him. He had special garments made for them. There were the inner garments, outer garments and the ephod. They could not just go before God in whatever way they chose. They had to dress in the way that God required. They had to look different. These garments had connotations and meanings, which are relevant for our understanding and application

There are different levels and realms in God's presence. In the tabernacle described in Exodus, there was the outer court, where the holy of holies was located. If you wanted to access this holiest place, you had to be well dressed and well prepared. It took a certain person dressed in a certain way, to get to a certain place. Those who tried to rush through were destroyed. But even before they were dressed to minister, God required that they washed their hands and feet (Ex. 29:4).

Many have died in ministry because they failed to follow God's prescribed pattern. In the Old Testament, death was immediate and many corpses were pulled out of the tabernacle. However, in the New Testament, grace is available, yet this grace is not to be misused.. The New Testament minister carries out his duties with his hands. The hands are laid on the sick and used to anoint. It is the hands that are used for impartation, commission and ordination. It is also the hands that are lifted in blessing and worship. Thus God requires that through the worship, and the watering of the word, one is thoroughly cleansed and placed in the position to minister. God wants hands that worship and serve Him to be holy.

All the numerous stages the Old Testament priest went through were preparatory. They needed to take time to build up discipline and knowledge. It really disturbs me to imagine how a person who preaches to God's people can

do so having not read through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, even once. How can you teach somebody from a textbook that you have not fully read?

There are three stages in ministry: the Calling, Consecration and Commissioning or Ordination. The Calling makes you aware of God's role in ministry. The Consecration draws attention to your own personality in ministry. The Commissioning declares you to the people over whom God has made you a shepherd. They are all stages that take time and every minister must go through them.

The man of God should not do things sloppily. He must be aware of his unique responsibilities and prepare for them. Even in prayer different levels exist, which further depict higher responsibility. Asking is the basic level for children. Seeking, which takes a lot of effort and energy, is the focus of another level. The next level, Knocking, takes much force, persistence and endurance.

Again, understand that what you feed on determines how far you are able to go. We know that milk is for babes. A baby cannot try to eat meat when he has not finished taking his milk. Sometimes people who are still on milk try to take the meat of leadership. One cannot run when he has not yet learned to crawl or walk. The seven sons of Sceva tried to eat meat while they were still on milk and ended up in trouble. The "evil spirits" chased them and they fled almost naked (Acts 19:14,15).

Many ministers preach all kinds of false doctrines from the altar of the Lord. They have also allowed untrained people to preach heresies from their pulpits. In the Old Testament, offering anything unclean on the altar attracted seven punishments from God. It could cost a person his life, blessing and other good things. It always incurred God's wrath and judgment.

Christian leadership is something that is unique in that it does not take one's own might or power, but total and absolute dependence on the Spirit of God. "It is not by might, not by power, but it's by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4:6) This makes it imperative for every Christian leader to walk in step with the Spirit and not at his own pace. Many leaders forget the admonition of Jesus that

“without me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) Many ministers are doing things that appear fruitful on the outside but yield nothing.

Jesus said He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:1). Remaining in Jesus is the key to bearing fruit. In all your ways, you are to acknowledge him. The reason why people are not bearing fruit that abides forever is that they have gone their own way. They are employing their own strategies to bear fruits other than what Jesus has purposed for them. Jesus taught, “Whatsoever has not been planted by my father shall be rooted out.” So, too, shall their fruit be.

Friend, if you have established something by your own might for your own pleasure, be ready to see it uprooted. Allow the Lord to lead you in the path in which He wants you to walk. Let us not forget that we have been called to serve and not to please ourselves. We only present that which the Master wants. If he does not want something, forget it and quit trying to force it.

God instructed Moses, “See to it that you build according to the pattern that I showed you on the mountain.” (Ex. 25:9) God would accept no less and no more. A lot of people are building ministries based on their own leading, what they think, what others are doing and so on. However, all such people are in for a shock, because God has to destroy the wrong things in order to begin the right things. For He declared, “ I will build my church.”

When we act according to our own leading, we should not be surprised when the onslaught of hell starts devastating everything we built. Religion is not what God is asking for. He is seeking an intimate relationship with you, as a bride and groom, born out of love, deep reverence and total submission and with full trust. Much religious activity in the church today is merely of the flesh, characterized by busyness, supposedly “for the Lord.” This includes evangelism, building projects, prayer meetings, teaching, school activity and the like, yet so little is achieved despite the effort.

Leaders and church folk who do not allow themselves to be led by God and guided by the Holy Spirit will surely reap decay and destruction. Many Christian leaders decide whom to marry, where to marry, how to run their churches, what

to teach their church members, who to help with counseling, and so on. Instead they should ask the Holy Spirit to show them what to do and allow Him to run the show. In this way, the leader and the congregation partake in the abundant life promised by our Lord. Many have been called and chosen by God yet premature exposure is luring them into wasting God's resources, destroying God's heritage and deviating from God's plan for their lives.

Are you using God's resources as he will have you do? How do you draw your budget? If you want success, be led by the spirit of God and do not depend on your own strength. Many people rush into ministry because they think they are ready. Well, it is not what you think, it is what He says; otherwise you sent yourself, He did not send you. God never sends people He didn't prepare and He will never ask you to do something that He hasn't equipped you to do.

Jesus emphatically commanded His disciples, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49) If they had gone before then, they would have prematurely exposed themselves. They would also have missed God's timing during the outpouring and wouldn't have experienced the success they did.

Let us not forget that these disciples had to wait before going to preach the gospel. Tarry denotes waiting, tarry means stay for a while. It develops patience, which is vital for every proper preparation. It involves long suffering and endurance. "Tarry ye," He said to them.

Now these disciples had walked with Jesus in so close a relationship for about three and a half years, they saw him, ate together, slept together, preached together, cast out devils and came back with testimonies. They did everything with Jesus. They had a lot to offer, but according to God's perfect will they were not ready. They saw Him crucified, buried and raised from the dead and yet He told them to wait a while.

What is it that makes some leaders so confident that they believe they know everything? What makes them so confident that they see no need to wait for His directives and mandate to go? What encounter have you had so far and what have

you done that makes you feel you can go on your own, without waiting, seeking his face, listening to His voice and knowing His perfect will?

What should make one feel ready to go? The only thing that qualifies you to go is if He says, "go" not when somebody says it's time or you think it's time or circumstances seem to indicate it's time. Jesus tells us, as He told the disciples, to tarry because there is always something beyond our imagination that God especially has in store for us. He is getting ready to unleash you like a mighty weapon (Jer. 51:20).

God has miracles for you, which you have not yet seen. As the disciples tarried, they were filled, baptized, gifted and endued with supernatural power, and they became mighty world-shaking witnesses. Not a shameful, frustrated, confused and confounded witness, but a powerful force.

The secret of being filled with the Holy Ghost and being endued with power from on high is tarrying. It is my prayer that you will wait for God's timing so that signs and wonders will follow you.

There are many people who claim they have been sent who have not been sent - they have simply commissioned themselves. Many do not even know the specific area of their call. Many also run with other people's messages. This is not supposed to be. You have to run with the message that God has given *you*. Everyone that God called, prepared and commissioned was given a particular message with a specific mission. In other words, those who are called have a job description and assignment.

There are many pastors who do not have fathers or big brothers to whom they are accountable. These are "lone rangers" doing their own thing. Many of these people spend time with peers and friends who cannot correct, advise or rebuke them. Any person who falls into the above category has prematurely exposed himself or herself. How can one be a good shepherd or leader if he has not been led? He will abuse all the people he leads because he himself has not been led. Only good shepherds can lead sheep to the right place and take good care of the flock. Let us therefore follow after Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and His

example of submissiveness and humility.

Leaders must realize that in God's eyes people are priceless. He became a man, lived among men and died a horrid death on Calvary, all for the love of people. Because God takes people seriously, those in Christian leadership must take their role just as seriously. Leaders must remember that God is in the people business and that if they accept the call, they need to prepare themselves adequately.

Much of today's Christian leadership resembles corporate America. It is characterized by competition, selfish ambition and greed. Leaders must be aware that all their service is designed to bring glory to God, not to themselves. Leaders must be aware that they do not know all things and must be willing to be corrected. It is when leaders become prideful that they fall. If you are a Christian leader, please remember that you are in this business for souls and matters of eternal significance. Take time to prepare yourself and allow the Lord to break and make you.

When asked what he would do differently in ministry, a well-know pastor with 50 years of experience simply said, "I would take less speaking engagements and study more." Ministry is not simply standing on a pulpit and telling the masses what they need to do; it is taking care of people, feeding them the right things, respecting them enough to say you're sorry when you have made a mistake, loving them when it hurts and so on.

Many people prematurely expose themselves to ministry because they have a mistaken view of what ministry is. Take time to prepare yourself for there is more at stake than your reputation and financial position; there are souls on the line! May the Lord bless you as you take care of His most prized possession.

Chapter Seven

INDICATORS OF PREMATURE EXPOSURE

It has been said that prevention is better than cure and the best defense is offense. People of the world are striving hard and taking measures to safeguard

themselves against things they dread. Immunization is one of the medical methods employed to prevent people from falling prey to disease and illness while also building their immune systems. This information is designed to equip you with divine immunity and provide you with clues to help you discern whether an exposure in life is premature or not. It will also help you to determine whether or not your current situation in life, is a result of premature exposure, and what approach to employ in dealing with this situation. Regardless of how we perceive opportunity, we must align ourselves with divine timing and God's designated process. There is a good and acceptable will, the permissive will, and the perfect will of God. What we are talking about is walking in the perfect will of God.

A classic example is the act of sex. Sex is a powerful creation of God. It is good and it is meant to be experienced between a man and a woman who are bonded legally and publicly in a covenant marriage, as husband and wife. It is a demonstration of their love, commitment and affection for each other. However, this same act, at the wrong time with the wrong person, can be fornication, rape, adultery or incest, and thus can incur the anger of its victims, their families, the general public, the law, but most seriously, it can incur the wrath and judgment of God.

Fornication, for instance, is wrong because the timing in not appropriate for the sexual act. This includes those who have just a few weeks before they tie the knot! The timing is right and mature only after the marriage ceremony. Any act of sexual intercourse that happens before marriage is a premature exposure to sex and has serious consequences.

Unorthodox Means

One indicator, which can be used to detect premature exposure, is when a person has to employ unorthodox means to get things done. Unorthodox refers to not using stipulated methods or abusing the legal process. People often resort to lying, slander, backbiting, fraud, manipulation, scheming, the shedding of innocent blood, cheating and a host of other unethical vices to attain their ends.

As a Bishop, I have come across people who have been trapped in this web, especially those in ministry. Some employed unorthodox means and strategies to start their ministries. For a period of time, they seemed to be gaining credible success, but then the tables were turned and they began to reap what they had sown. This is a principle that cannot be repeated enough times. Charisma and the anointing are very powerful and can bring one into prominence in ministry, business, politics and other fields of human endeavor. However, it takes character not only to get to the top, but also to remain at the top.

Employing unorthodox means like lying, cheating and using destructive criticism against others in the ministry to gain success or favor instead of praying, loving or correction in the spirit of love and humility makes one's success short-lived. The reason for this is simple. There is always a time of testing for every relationship, vision, dream, course and ministry. Unfortunately, because the ministry was prematurely exposed, it inevitably fell into serious jeopardy or was even destroyed.

Secondly, employing unorthodox means exposes the ministry prematurely to the assaults of principalities and satanic powers that the ministry has not developed the required spiritual capacity and endurance to handle. If you claim to be a heavyweight, the opponents assigned to you are heavyweights. Woe unto you if you don't belong in the heavyweight division, and God is not on your side because you have gone your own way instead of His!

Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan. It was a "god-level battle." It must be realized that it wasn't just any principality or demon or power that came against Jesus, but it was Satan himself, in his capacity as the god of this world to contest Jesus, the Son of God. Indeed, Satan's first words to Jesus were:, "If you are the Son of God …", which he repeated in the next temptation, signifying that he was questioning Jesus' Sonship and dealing with him at that level. In the final temptation, Satan came out as the god of this world when he showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world," and said, "All these things will I give thee. If thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4:4-8)

Many lack the understanding that there are levels and ranks. This is why some ministries have collapsed and many are struggling without making any progress. In frustration, many refer to their call and come out with justifiable evidence to attest to their calling. However, a careful look at the process employed reveals Satan's foothold. Whenever you employ unorthodox means or a medium contrary to God's stipulated process, you begin to use your own powers to make things happen resulting in terrible consequences.

When you employ unorthodox means, you are giving a blatant sign that you lack faith in God's ability to accomplish what you intend to perform. It is also a sign of impatience and a lack of spiritual stamina to wait and absolutely depend of God to fulfill His promise. Whatever God has purposed shall stand and what God has spoken, He will bring it to pass (Isa. 14:24). God will not use unorthodox means to bring His plans to pass. His way is perfect and He makes all things beautiful in His time (Ecc. 3:11).

If you have to employ dubious means to attain an end, beware - you may be prematurely exposing yourself by going ahead of God. In ministry, there is a lot of pressure to "make it," get famous, or put yourself into situations for which you are not ready. Jesus said, "If they did it to me, they will do it to you, for the servant is not greater than his master." (John 13:16) If the devil tempted Jesus by asking him to stand at the highest point of Jerusalem and throw himself down to gain popularity and show his might, then he will surely tempt every minister to employ unorthodox means to reach his or her end. When it comes to using unorthodox means, one can quote seemingly justifiable scriptures as the devil did. We must follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit in righteousness and not the letter only.

In the business world it is much more common for people to recommend the employment of unorthodox means. They maintain that it is the nature of the system, the normal way to achieve success. But, let's not forget that God has commanded that "thou shall not steal," " thou shalt not swear falsely" and " a false balance is an abomination unto Him." We are supposed to be the salt of the

earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-14).

Success that comes through dubious means brings premature exposure. Remember that it is only a trap to ensnare and destroy your business and all one's prospects for the future.

Do not yield to unorthodox means, for it is better to gain little by little and have God, who is your fulfillment and sufficiency than to have abundance without Him, only to lose it eventually (Prov. 15:16).

This is the same in marriage where many are employing all kinds of unorthodox means such as snatching people's husbands and wives from them. Many also employ juju, voodoo, consult spiritualists and messengers of Satan to help them seduce and entice people to marry them. Some have used lies, sex, threats and blackmail to trap a partner.

When people find themselves applying these unorthodox principles, they are prematurely exposing themselves and failing to wait for God's timing. If you have already entered into marriage through these means, you need to repent and rectify the situation, which will be discussed in detail in the final chapter.

In the arena of politics, using unorthodox means to gain political power is an indication of premature exposure. An example of this was Hazel, king of Aram. The servant of God, Elisha, told Hazel that he would be the next king. He had been sent by King Ben-Hadad to inquire from the prophet Elisha, whether he would recover from his sickness. Upon returning, having heard the prophecy of his kingship, he killed King Ben-Hadad in his bed the next day by putting a wet blanket to his face, and assuming the throne immediately (2 Kings 8:7-11). This was unlike David who did not shed Saul's blood, but waited patiently for his time.

Therefore, having to employ unorthodox means is a major indicator of premature exposure from God's perspective. And this is so when those involved are divinely destined for what they prematurely pursue.

The Peace of God

Life is full of choices. People make decisions everyday. They may be trivial or major, for example, considering a job offer, which may be of strategic importance or signify a change of career.

Man is a spirit with a mind, living in a body. With your body, you deal with the physical world. With your mind you deal with the social and intellectual world and with your spirit you deal with the spiritual realm. God is Spirit, and because of that he usually communes with our spirit. As He communes with us, we receive promptings in our spirit and gain impressions, which cannot be easily expressed because they are independent of what we see with our eyes.

For every person, especially those who have a relationship with God and maintain constant fellowship, their spirit becomes sensitive and receives promptings and signals. This is not limited exclusively to those who are saved, but it also happens in the lives of unbelievers. In the case of unbelievers such encounters tend to lead them to Christ. There are several instances in which people share testimonies and say " something told me," or "I felt very strongly." Even you may have had this experience. That "something" is usually the Holy Spirit prompting or sending signals to your spirit to alert you or lead you in a particular direction. Usually, obedience to that prompting may result in a deliverance, success, joy or peace on the inside even though there may be nothing on the outside.

Therefore, one way to check if an exposure or offer is of God, or if it is premature, is by being still and checking from within your heart to discern if you have the peace of God concerning the situation. When there is that peace within, there is a high probability that it is of God and the timing is right. On the contrary, when everything appears well on the outside while your spirit feels agitated, it may be an indication that something is not right and that the exposure is premature. The best thing to do is to take some time to ask God to show you why you are feeling that unrest. He will reveal the reason to you.

Many times, your spirit may be warring with your soul concerning an issue that takes away your inner peace. Whenever your emotions, mind, circumstances

and senses are all crying for a particular thing, while deep inside there is a nudging not to follow that path, I admonish you to obey your spirit.

A lot of people ask, “Bishop, is it possible to sense the peace of God in times of trouble, even when everything around you seems to be against you?” My answer, from personal experience, is, “Yes, you can.” Because He is your very present help in the time of trouble and He is the Prince of Peace, whenever He is around you there is peace. The experience of peace is a strong pointer that the timing for you is divine and the presence of God is with you to make things better.

Will it Endanger You and Others?

Pain to victims and those that surround them are a characteristic of premature exposure. A teenager, for example, who gets impregnated at 13 years of age, does not only hurt herself, she endangers her health, destroys her education, embarrasses her parents and family and disappoints loved ones since she is not adequately prepared to become a mother.

Any step to be taken should be weighed in this light to determine whether it is premature or not. The questions to ask yourself are: Can this exposure affect me negatively or hurt me in any way? Will it hurt the Body of Christ? Will it hurt my church or my relationship with God? Will it hurt my society, nation or the world? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then the exposure is premature and the timing at that particular moment is not God-initiated.

Another example would be a pastor breaking away or taking a step that causes a church split, leading to the backsliding of many members and creating irreparable damage and hurt. Where the result is this devastating, the timing ought to be seriously considered. The mode of leaving should be carefully examined to make sure that it is in accordance with the will of God because premature departure has resulted in terrible splits and breakaways that have grieved the Holy Spirit. It has quenched people’s anointing, destroyed many before their time and cruelly divided the Body of Christ.

Ministers, no matter how justifiable the reason might be, God always has perfect timing for your deliverance and relocation. It if is His will, He will perform it, since He is not the author of confusion.

Hagar left Abraham and Sarah because she was treated harshly for despising Sarah. She left prematurely, but the angel of the Lord asked her to go back and submit to Sarah because there still remained a blessing for her in the home of Abraham (Gen. 16:1-14). However, it is all right if a minister insists that God is asking him to leave a particular ministry. When, where, and how must be very clear, and wisdom must be applied so that it does not hurt innocent people, the ministry or yourself. You can always close the door behind you without slamming it in anger.

Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:30) Whenever the timing is right, the struggle is not so tedious. It becomes a natural process. This is not to say that the genuine execution of Christian or civil duties is always smooth sailing, characterized by perfect transition. This is not so! Notwithstanding, it is worth mentioning that whenever this should happen to God's people, the Lord gives grace and brings his assurance again and again. His presence and assurance makes the yoke easier and lightens the weight of the burden, for God does not willingly bring affliction on the sons of men.

Angels ministered to Jesus through hardship, weakness and persecution. The Lord assured Paul that His grace was sufficient for him and on several occasions encouraged him to move on with his work, in spite of the hardships and opposition. The same was true for Peter, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Many others received assurances from the Lord, which made the yoke easy and the burden light.

When the hardship seems undue and the assurances of God are not there and you are not sure whether it was God who asked you to take those steps, there is a strong probability that what you are going through is a result of premature exposure. Divine assistance must be sought to know how to rectify the situation.

Who Receives the Glory?

Another indicator that can be used is whether the exposure will bring glory to God as opposed to enhancing one's personal fame, image or popularity. If the result is the former, then the timing is right. If it relates more to the latter, then the exposure is premature. It could actually be a trap, no matter how legitimate and prospective it looks. This is clearly illustrated in the story about the building of the tower of Babel. They said one to another, "Let us make brick…let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.(Gen. 11:2-4)

Here is a clear example where people came together to accomplish something powerful and great. The problem was not the project, but rather the motive, and whom it was to glorify.

David, at the age of 17, took a giant step to risk his life to bring glory to the name of the Lord. David said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God… you come to me with a sword and spear, and a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of host." (1Sam. 17:36,45-47) From this Scripture we realize that although David was young and appeared inexperienced, he would achieve real success, which brought joy to all because it was solely to bring glory to God.

Whenever you are confronted by an exposure that will not glorify God and serve His purposes, but is self-centered, then premature exposure is enticing you. Consent not!

Checking the Roots

In order to apprehend the right timing, one has to check the very root of the exposure. Premature exposure has its roots in three main sources: other people, yourself or the devil. If the root of an exposure, open door, election, promotion, calling, ordination or opportunity is from these sources, then the exposure is premature because it has potential to destroy. This is a caution that every child of God, including you, my dear friend, should never forget.

Not every promotion, elevation, anointing, blessing or good gift comes from God. The devil can and does release things to meet people's needs as long as it hinders or stops people from giving him a hard time. The devil also gives people gifts. However, his gifts have the potential to distract the recipients from God's path for their life. He does not mind parting with anything as long as he knows it will slow you down or stop you. He said to Jesus, "… whomsoever I will give it…" which means he has the power to give, but the devil never gives anything for free. He will make sure that whoever receives anything from him pays dearly. God is the best Giver, and every good and perfect gift comes from Him, the Father of lights (James 1;17).

Preachers of the faith, kings and those in authority, politicians, businessmen, family leaders, fathers, mothers and tomorrow's leaders, hear me today! Many are the doors the enemy is opening to distract you and those who look up to you. Brace yourselves and remember that not every door or opportunity that comes before you is from God. Hold fast, wait and receive what is of God, "for His blessings maketh rich and addeth no sorrow." (Prov. 10:22) When He opens a door, no one can shut it forever.'

Let's look at a few cases from the Bible, mankind's manual, for the roots or sources of opportunities that came the way of people and how they handled them. This will help equip you with practical examples so you know how to deal with similar situations.

The Devil's Blessing

We have already read one classical example of blessing and exposure that came from the devil. This was in the wilderness when Satan tempted Jesus and tried to offer him the glories and riches of the earth. Jesus knew very well that the gift was from Satan and rejected it. In our time, many people receive gifts from the devil in various forms. It may be money, power, glory or other things.

Friend, the devil can never out-give God, and Jesus knew this. The fact that the devil was willing to make that offer meant that if Jesus waited and paid the

necessary price, God would offer Him a more powerful and greater glory than what the devil was offering. We see this later when Jesus, after His resurrection from the dead, declared, "… all power in heaven and earth has been give unto me." (Matt. 28:18)

Self – Origin

There are times when the exposure or move is from self. In his quest for a child, Abraham was convinced by his wife to go to Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and have a child by her. This resulted in serious physical and spiritual consequences. The physical consequences are the conflicts between the Arab nations and the Jews that still linger until today.

The spiritual consequence was the interference in the fulfillment of God's purposes through the birth order. A critical look at Abraham's descendants reveals some deviation of the birth order because firstborns were supposed to receive the double portion - kingship and priesthood. However, we see the order being reversed in several instances: Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Judah and Reuben, Ephraim and Manasseh, Moses and Aaron, and David and his brothers.

People's Exposure

Jesus impacted the people tremendously as he operated in the power of God. On one such occasion, after preaching to over 5,000 people, he miraculously fed all who were gathered, and had a surplus. After this miracle, the people wanted to make him king. This was premature exposure and its source was the people. Had He not withdrawn from them, they would have forced Him to be their earthly king. Later we also see Jesus' family pressuring Him to prematurely expose himself. Jesus, understanding divine timing, said, "My time is not yet…" (John 2:1-11)

If you are destined to be great, beware of people who will try to prematurely expose you by luring you into big deals, political appointments and

offices, relationships, marriage, ministry or spiritual office because of what they can get from you. Please be aware that there are many people who are capable of doing this. Always check the root or source of the exposure, whether it's man-centered, self-centered or the devil's package. Avoid it, because it's a counterfeit. Count on God's blessing and exposure because if the devil or men prematurely expose you, they can also prematurely demote you. You cannot entrust your life and destiny in the hands of men! It is always better to fall into the hands of God because He is merciful and his gifts and callings are without repentance.

Chapter Eight
SOLUTIONS TO PREMATURE EXPOSURE

To every question there is an answer and to every problem there is a solution. Let us attempt to propound some divine solutions to this whole subject of premature exposure. God's word, which is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path, is our main source. In the same way that He sent His Word, the Word of the Lord comes to you. It will heal you and deliver you from the destruction to which premature exposure has made you liable.

Let us see a typical case from the Scriptures:

And he said, "A certain man has two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me'. And he divided them his living. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all he had together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into the fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." (Luke 15:11-16)

This gives us a dramatic picture of premature exposure. It shows its consequences and, thankfully, the way out. It presents to us this young man obsessed with a strong desire, which leads eventually to his premature exposure. The son left the family with an inheritance, reluctantly released to him by his father

People who prematurely expose themselves are usually compelled by selfish motives. Like this young man, those who prematurely expose themselves think that what they are doing is right. It becomes very difficult to convince them otherwise, as any such attempt is interpreted as jealousy or a lack of understanding. Not long afterwards the son began to face the consequences of his actions. He squandered all his wealth and began to suffer.

When he came to his senses, he said, “I will set out and go back to my father and say to him, father, I have sinned against Heaven and against you.” He immediately came to his senses as a result of his distress. If, for any reason, you are suffering as a result of premature exposure, let this chapter come to you as help. Let us systematically follow the steps he took when he came to his senses: He reflected over the situation, and then made a decision. A wrong way will definitely lead you to the wrong place. If you want to go to the right place, you must quit the wrong way and start on the right way. This comes by stopping to reflect and to take a closer look. When you are on a highway and realize that you are driving in the wrong direction, what do you do? The natural thing is to stop, probably ascertain where you went wrong and seek out the right direction. You then turn around and start heading the right way.

Premature exposure can be likened to moving in a direction that takes one out of God’s pathway. Like the prodigal son, after acknowledging your mistake, stop, reflect and ask yourself some questions. Stop to analyze your pace, stop to ascertain whether you have really gone the way God wants you to. Every now and then we need to stop. When you are on the right path you do not need to stop. However, when you are on the wrong path, it is wise to stop.

*Please make it a habit to pause for reflection every now and then, to make sure that every thing is on course; it may be concerning your life, family, marriage, health, business, ministry, career , political pursuit, relationship with God or even your body. Some may not see the wisdom in this, but it is very crucial when it comes to premature exposure***.**

You must then discover where you went wrong, because otherwise you cannot intelligently rectify the situation. It is also critical to the next step in the process of establishing what you need to change. Take time to find out and write it down so that you can deal with the issue, leaving no ground uncovered. After that the prodigal son made a decision. The battle should be won in the mind before it can be won outside. Therefore, make a decision and be prepared to take responsibility for that decision. And do not change in the face of pressure or

adversity. Your decisions are very important especially those based on God's word and principles.

The prodigal son made a decision to confess his sin and repent. Confession and repentance are key decisions one has to make. True repentance signifies turning around completely and forsaking the old way. One has to acknowledge that premature exposure is sin because such exposure usually originates from the devil and the flesh, motivated by greed, covetousness, jealousy and the desire for instant pleasure. This is sin and its wages are death. Therefore, if you have acknowledged your sins and where you went wrong, humbly repent before God. The young man did exactly that when he said, "I will arise and go to my father, I will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."

I say to you, the Lord has no "pleasure in the death of the wicked (sinner); but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11) God has no pleasure in the death of your ministry, political career, marriage or anything that concerns you. Repent and life will follow.

True repentance leads to refreshment. For he said, "… and I will say unto him father I have sinned against heaven and before thee." I believe that his acknowledgment that he had not only sinned against his father but also against heaven made him repent to God first and later to his father. After making the decision, he humbled himself and said, "…[I] am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me one of thy hired servants." (Luke 15:19)

You need humility before you can repent before God and man. Humility is the key to being exalted by God, no matter how you might have fallen. Pride will keep you far away from God. Humility will release you into His grace and mercy, which everyone needs in order to "make it," for God gives grace to the humble, but resists the proud. God cannot humble you. Nobody can humble anybody. The best thing any one can do is to humiliate you or disgrace you. You have to humble yourself. Be ready to humble yourself before God and those you have offended through your actions. For he said, "I have sinned, make me as one

of your hired servants."

After deciding to repent, take action, because the decision alone is not enough. After you repent, deal with the consequences of your action in prayer or take physical steps. The Word of God talks about "the curse of the law" which moves into operation as a result of one's previous actions. This is the principle of sowing and reaping that can be turned for good through prayer and appropriating the blood of the Lamb.

One has to sometimes take physical and practical measures to deal with the consequences. Zaccheus, for example, had to pay back all the money he had stolen after encountering Jesus, and he was blessed. You also need to take physical steps to rectify the situation and to pacify the grieved. Through prayer and appropriating the blood of Jesus, one is justified.

Christ, through the shedding of His blood has redeemed us from the curse of the law. For He became a curse for us that we may inherit the blessings of Abraham for "cursed is anyone that hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). That was the price Jesus paid for you. By hanging on the cross, He released you from every curse. The prodigal son took a step to put his decisions to work, he journeyed back and acknowledged to God and his father that he had sinned. He humbled himself.

After that, one needs to inquire of the Lord for the right direction pertaining to what to do and which way to turn. This is because God has the original plan and blue print for your life. When you receive the answer do not shelve it, now matter how small it might seem to you. Revelation is progressive. God reveals a little to you to see what you will do with it. So obey what He is telling you and physically take steps to put it into practice. You will come to realize that things are getting better.

This is the general way employed in dealing with premature exposure. The results are outstanding and unbelievable. It is the principle that applied to the young man and that applies to everyone. Jesus recommended this as an example for all, including you.

The Scripture records that “when he was a great way off his father saw him and had compassion.” This, to me, says it is God’s will to see you out of your mess. It is His desire to see you changed and blessed. God’s mercy is for those who have gone far off. He knows your state and sees you coming back. This should encourage your heart.

The Scripture goes on to say that his father had compassion, which means that his bowels were already filled with mercy, grace and love, enabling him identify with and feel the pain that his son had gone through. God, our Heavenly Father, identifies with the pain you have been through and feels compassion towards you.

No matter what your fault and sin, He is full of compassion and he waits to express it to you. Compassion awaits you, not judgment and rejection. Don’t ever think that God will reject or accuse you when you apply the principles above. He will not reject those who come to Him.

Many may desire to see you punished, but God, in His mercy, will not do this. He would rather have compassion. I can hear someone saying, “Bishop, you do not understand that my case is so serious. I have not even told anybody about it. I don’t think God will forgive me.” My dear friend, God can and has already paid the price for that sin. His forgiveness and grace are greater than all of your sins.

The young man’s father ran “and fell on the shoulders of his son and kissed him.” God’s compassion is being exposed to you through this book; he is bringing you to himself right now. You may be coming, unsure and wondering, with a lot of questions on your mind. But listen friend. God is not only standing, waiting for you to come, He is running to meet you! You may be slow in your pace, but God is running to you because He loves you and wants to see you out of that difficult condition. God is willing to fall on your neck, and identify with you. His arms are stretched out ready to embrace you. And that is not all. The father gave charge to his servants to take care of the son. Angels have been given charge concerning you. The host of heaven is constantly around you to ensure that the

Father's will is done.

"Bring forth the best cloth and put it on him." That was one of the things the father asked the servants to do for the prodigal son. God will ask that they robe you. Robes represent your covering, your glory, you dignity, image and identity.

Premature marital, financial, spiritual and political exposure may have resulted in you losing your glory, image, honor and identity. Restoration awaits you. All you need to do is yield to God's principles. Stretch forth your hands to heaven and give him thanks for this second surprise, oh glory!

"Put a ring on his hand." You may have lost your authority as a spiritual leader, as a husband, wife or in any leadership position that you may have held, but get ready. God will restore your authority and placement, for He said, "behold I give you authority."

Shoes will be put on your feet, representing a change in your walk and your ways for the better, so you will walk like the son of the great king. Your walk will be restored, and you will walk in righteousness, holiness, obedience and purity upon your high places. You will walk in corridors of power and walk worthy of His name. God will establish your feet and direct your path.

"And he said bring hither the fatted calf," which is a representation of the restoration of daily provision of bread. Your hunger will be satisfied and every necessity of life will be restored to you. Divine provision will be your portion. The restoration process will not stop there, but will continue to flow because God is a more-than-enough God.

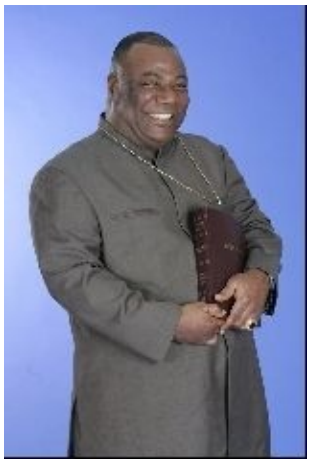
"And let us celebrate and feast." This represents the restoration of his joy and that of others. Those who were afflicted by your premature exposure will now have joy. Their laughter and yours shall be restored. You were lost but now you are found; you were dead, but now you are alive; your political career, your business, marital life, ministry and everything may have decayed and rotted away, but now it will live once more.. In Jesus name receive grace and be empowered supernaturally to follow the above principles and continue in them.

God bless you my friend. Please don't stop after reading this book. Use it

as a prayer manual and enforce your portion on your knees till you see a manifestation. Remember only the violent take it by force. This may be your portion but you are to not take it by force. May your life never be the same again.

About the Author

Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams the Presiding Bishop and General Overseer of Christian Action Faith Ministries Worldwide (Action Chapel International) with more than 100 affiliate and branch churches located in North America, Europe and Africa. Anointed in the ministry of prayer, healing and the prophetic, his teaching has touched countless lives in a dramatic and life-changing way for over two decades. What he is offering to the younger generation, as well as to established Pastors, is counsel, direction and opportunity, which can be categorized as mentorship. God has equipped him on countless occasions to run crisis-threatened churches and prophetically point them in the right direction.



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