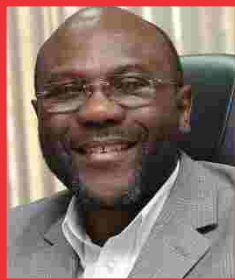


Switch

Marriage . Ministry . Market Place



Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0



+234-813-529-1769, +234-809-481-4575

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0.



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Published In Nigeria By

SOS Publications
+234-813-529-1769, +234-809-481-4575
sospublications@yahoo.com
www.SOSPublications.com.ng

Dedication

This book is dedicated to every young persons who sincerely desires to experience a Switch for the better in their ministry, marriage, and at the market place.

Acknowledgments

To everyone who has contributed in one way or the other to the success of any of the Switch editions, great is your reward.

To Rev. Dr. Sam. O. Salau who compiled the materials, transcribed the audios, edited and proof read this to make it a book, great is your reward.

To all the previous chairmen of Switch 1.0 to 5.0 who labored tirelessly for the success of the Switch programs, great is your reward

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Foreword

SWITCH is an interdenominational convergence, organized by the Foursquare Gospel Church, as a platform to contribute to the growth and expansion of the body of Christ, and the larger society in general, by offering mentorship opportunities for young ministers, the nextgen (i.e. youths and students in secondary and tertiary institutions), and indeed everyone desirous of benefiting from the wealth and depth of knowledge and experience of invited role models who have made and are still making positive impact in the areas of marriage, ministry and the marketplace.

The Foursquare Gospel Church, known globally as the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel is an Evangelical/Pentecostal denomination founded in 1923 by a renowned Canadian/American lady preacher and first female televangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson in Los Angeles, California, USA. Through the missionary efforts of an American couple, Rev. & Mrs. Harold Curtis, the Foursquare message was brought to Nigeria in 1955.

Our commitment to host this event annually is borne out of the determination of this administration to contribute our quota as a church to raising the next crop of leaders for our nation in different spheres of life. Over the years, the work of the church in Nigeria has prospered greatly, resulting in precious souls finding salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, satisfaction and fulfilment in life as we continue to propagate the Foursquare message of Jesus the only Saviour, Jesus the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, Jesus the Healer of all sicknesses and diseases, and Jesus the soon coming King of glory.

Within our system as a church, we are blessed with a large population of resourceful, vibrant and talented young men and

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0.

women, as can also be said of our nation; and it is the vision and focus of the leadership of the church to ensure that we continue to recreate an enabling environment for this energetic segment of our demography to harness their God-given talents, as we expose them to discipleship and mentorship programmes in preparation for taking on leadership responsibilities, both now and in the future.

Presently, the church is vigorously pursuing the Decade of Soaring vision through the help of the Holy Spirit with particular attention given to Inreach, Outreach and Nextgen.

SWITCH offers a platform for our organisation to give back to the body of Christ in terms of offering mentorship opportunities for Young Ministers, the Next Gen and indeed everyone desirous of benefiting from the wealth and depth of knowledge and experience of those who have made and are still making success in ministry, marriage and the marketplace. It is my belief and earnest expectation that the time we would be spending together reading this book will launch us into a higher realm of operation and positive impact in these areas.

So far, we have had five editions of the program. What you are holding in your hand is a transcript of all the messages ever preached in all the five previous editions. Three messages were preached in each edition, making it 15 different messages in this book; five messages on marriage, five on the marketplace, and 5 on ministry from leading professional in each field. There is no way you can read this and your life will still remain the same.

Get set for a Switch, because this book will definitely Switch on the light into every dark area of your life!

Rev. Dr. Sam. Aboyeji

General Overseer

Foursquare Gospel Church In Nigeria

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0

The Foursquare Gospel Church In Nigeria
...MARRIAGE, MINISTRY AND MARKET PLACE

SWITCH

INTERDENOMINATIONAL



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May 21, 2022

Ministry

Ministering with Competence, Grace, and Character.

Rev. Dr. Sam Aboyeji

I have been asked to speak on the topic which I term "Ministering with Competence, Grace, and Character. I saw a video clip, a WhatsApp video clip, I am sure many of you saw it, of a minister who was trying to hang himself. His main reason for wanting to hang himself was that he had been in ministry for about 18 years, and he had seen other ministers make progress, even those who came after him. He was asking questions, like why had he not been able to gather 20 people. So, he just felt the best thing to do was to kill himself. Thank God that people ran to him and rescued him. But that is what happens when some things are missing in one's ministry.

Today, we are going to be talking about ministering with competence, grace, and character. Competence is so important that even the disciples of Jesus suffered frustration without it. In my first text, Matthew 17:15-16, somebody came to Jesus and he said, *"Oh Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and so vexed, for at times he falleth into the fire and at times into the water."* Verse 16 is very instructive – *"I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him."* What a disappointment, the disciples could not cure him.

That is what happens in ministry when there is no competence. You have frustration here and there, you have non-performance. When there is no competence, there cannot be performance. The truth is that, the world we live in is a world of results. You know, sometimes we console ourselves and we say, "it is God that knows who is really serving Him.." You see, this world, in fact Jesus said, unless they see signs and wonders, they will not

believe. So, they must see something that stands you out.

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and what did he say? He said, *"You are a teacher that came from God. Because no man can do the things that you do unless God is with him."* He said that because he saw Him do something. Ministry is about doing something. If you are not doing anything, then maybe you are in the wrong trade. You must be doing something.

Be A Competent Minister

Competence is the sum total of your spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical abilities. Competence talks about ability. What can you do? When companies advertise, they are looking for people, what are they looking for? I am sure Deacon Obaro will know better. They are looking for somebody who can do something. You do not just give people titles. Ministry is not about titles. I think that is where some people got it wrong. It is not about titles. One of my fathers of faith once said, "What is the essence of title without entitlement?" it is not about title.

When God called Abram, in Genesis chapter 12, he did not tell him "I will make your title great." He said, *"I will make your name great."* Today if you call Evangelist Mike Bamiloje, everybody knows what the name stands for. We know what God has called him to do. So you may be a bishop, an evangelist, or a senior evangelist; you know, you can put all those titles together and yet have nothing to deliver. When a need arises, people will not respect the title, they will respect what you can deliver. It is about what you can do.

When Saul was in trouble, in 1 Samuel 16:17, and they needed somebody to bail him out of the evil spirit attack, hear what Saul said; *"And Saul said unto his servants, 'Provide me now a man who can play well and bring him to me.'"* it is all about ability. It is all about capacity. What can you do? Even Jesus recognized it. Later when the disciples went to him, they said, "Why cannot we cast him out?" so it is not today that the world has always respected results. One of my leaders also told me long ago, he said, "It is only results that can cancel insults." And unless you have results, people will not respect you for your title. It is so

important.

In Acts 10:38, even of Jesus, the Son of God, it says *"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him."* He was known more, not just for the anointing; he was known more for what the anointing enabled him to do. So, no matter how much you tell us you are highly anointed, we are waiting. We want to see what the anointing can deliver through you. That is the bottom line.

So, how do you acquire this competence? You know, anything that has to do with competence has to do with skill. And one sure way of acquiring competence and skill is through training and diligent service. I have seen so many apprentices all over the place. It is very common, particularly among carpenters and mechanics. The moment they are able to tie knots, and the moment they are able to nail one wood to another piece of wood, they consider themselves a graduate in that profession. May God help you if you give your vehicle to such a mechanic to repair. If it is a brand-new vehicle, they will make sure it is grounded, because they do not know anything about it. The same thing with such carpenters also.

In fact, one day, I was complaining about a carpenter and somebody told me, he said, "Don't you know carpenters are jinxed?" I said, "Why?" He said, "Because they nailed Jesus to the cross." But I do not think that is the issue. I think the real issue is that the job looks so simple, it looks like just as soon as you are able to nail two pieces of wood together, you are a carpenter. But it goes much deeper than that. Same for ministry.

It looks like once you can pick your Bible and you can read it, you are a minister. I have said it jokingly, and I am saying it again that it is only in ministry that I have seen people enter without necessary credentials. Even when you want to be a driver in Nigeria, Road Safety Corp will not allow you, unless you are licensed. But for ministry, anybody can just carry a Bible today, and only one revelation is enough. And then you are a General Overseer, you are a senior apostle, and you are all the titles that

follow. You can meet somebody, today he is a pastor, next year he is a reverend, the year following he is a most senior reverend, the year following, an apostle, and the year following he is already an archbishop. There is no regulation. That is why we have a lot of charlatans who have entered ministry and they have given ministry a bad name. And that is not the purpose of God; that is not God's intention.

When he called the disciples, in fact, when they were trying to confirm the call, in Acts 1:8, He came out clear: *"You shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses."* With the power you receive, you are going to be able to do something that will make people know you. When the disciples got somewhere, and after they had done all they did, it was the people that named them Christians. Acts chapter 4 verse 16, the Bible says *"when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and they knew that they were ignorant men, yet they perceived that they had been with Jesus."* Your being with Jesus, what impact has it had on you? Skill is key, and I told you it is acquired through training and diligent service.

Genesis 14:14. Abram had servants in his house, 318 of them. The Bible says *"when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his 318 trained servants who were born in his house and went in pursuit as far as Dan."* Two things you will see there: one, they were servants; two, they were trained. So, the fact that they were armed did not make any difference. They were ready to serve, and they were also trained, because when you arm a man who is not trained, he is more dangerous. A man who is armed and is not trained can shoot the man who gave him the arms.

So, not only did Abram ensure that they were armed, he ensured that they were trained and they were servants in his house. They were not military men, and if you read that story to the end you will see that they conquered. They recovered Lot and everything that was lost. There were results. I pray for you that after today, may your ministry attract results. The truth is that ministry skills are basic; they are foundational.

If you read your Bible, we are told, *"apt to teach"* is one of the

things that are very important for you in ministry. But it looks like ministers forget that the age and the times are not the same. They do not bother about any other thing. Once somebody is able to pick up a Bible and is able to teach, that is all. But that is not the only thing.

Make Disciples

Under ministry skills, which is the foundation of every other thing, if the Lord has called you, you must acquire ministry skills. Preaching the gospel one-on-one, preaching the gospel on the pulpit, that is basic. Also, things like baptizing people in water, baptizing them in the Holy Spirit, these things are key, including making disciples. One of the greatest problems we have today is lack of disciple-making.

I was in a meeting of leaders of churches one day and I was asked to take them on Administration. I was going to do an explanation on Acts chapter 6. How Administration helped the early apostles not to quench the fire of the first revival. I told them how you can have an organogram, how you can put different people in different places. And at the end of that session, somebody just raised his hand and said, "Sir, where do you want me to get the people who will occupy all these boxes? I asked, "What is the size of your church?" When he mentioned the size of his church, I became a lot more amazed. So, you have this number in your church and you cannot get people who can occupy these positions that I have highlighted. He said the truth is that even the ones that are engaged today, a lot of them, when you give money to them, you have to police them otherwise that money is gone, and he had a lot to complain about.

I asked him, "Do you know your problem?" I asked him that "Apart from their Sunday service, what other leadership program do they have? What discipleship program do they have?" He said, "None." I said that is where your problem comes from. So, when they come, they give their lives to Christ, that is the end. No program to bring them up, no program to disciple them. That is where the church has the greatest problem today, there is no discipleship.

When we gave our lives to Christ, they so policed us that on a daily basis they would ask us, "What did you read in your morning devotion today? Where is your prayer book that you used to write your prayer points for today," because it is by that you are able to monitor it when God answers those prayers. All those follow-ups are missing today.

There is so much decision-making for Christ. There are so many churches everywhere, yet our influence is reducing. This is the reason; it is because the church has forgotten the age-long practice of discipling people. In John chapter 12, Jesus said it. *"If any man follow me, let him be my disciple."* You must follow him. You must be his disciple.

I love the way they train people, these mechanics, these people that have been doing the work before we even had the engineering discipline and the rest of them. When they are training their apprentice, they say, "Go and bring 16," if the man brings 14, the way they will knock his head, he will never make that kind of mistake again. Even when they do not write anything down, over time, they know it so well. Why? it is a form of discipleship.

So, if you are a minister and you do not have competence in this area, there is a problem. There is a problem. You cannot raise genuine disciples. You cannot. You will only have worshippers. And when you have only worshippers and you give them responsibility, God help you. That is why you have people that they made co-signatory with the pastor and when the pastor makes a mistake and signs a cheque in advance, the next thing they will do is to co-sign the cheque and clear the whole money in the church account. They are not disciples.

When Jesus called us, he did not ask us to go and make converts. What did he say? "Go and make disciples." We have forgotten it. What we are interested in now is how many of you decided for Christ? After the decision, what is next? You must have competence in this area. Basic competence in how to disciple people, how to get them filled with the Holy Ghost, how to do basic things like, counseling skills, pastoral skills and all that. You also have other skills like theological skills.

You know, I was also a culprit years ago. After I joined the Foursquare Gospel Church, returning from school, I had one of our founding fathers who insisted, you know, I was very good on the pulpit, and the Baba insisted I must go to Bible school. I said, "Daddy, Bible school is not for people like us." Baba was looking at me, until the day the old man went and bought the form for me, that was when I knew it was a serious matter. When he bought the form for me, I still did not take it seriously, but I filled it, and I responded. Thanks to the NUPENG Strike at that time. Then there was a NUPENG Strike and fuel shortage everywhere, and I did not have anything to do. I then said, maybe it was time to consider this admission now. So, I headed to LIFE Theological Seminar and spent that period of my life in the Bible School and I became qualified.

It was when the church gave me an appointment in Warri as a zonal superintendent that I valued what Baba did for me. When they submitted my CV, everybody said, "No, this man cannot be." They asked, "Why?" They said "Because he never went to Bible school." They did not know the time I went quietly and I came back. I pray for you; may you not be shortchanged, in the name of Jesus. That place that God has destined for you, you will get there, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Be People-Minded

There are so many other skills that we need in ministry, particularly today, because today is not like yesterday. We are told that the changes that will happen in the world in the next five years will be more than what has happened in the last 100 years. It just occurred to me that about 20–25 years ago, there was no GSM. Right? None. So, if I was going to talk to anybody, I had to physically go and see the person. If I must follow up any contact, I must physically visit the person. There was no other way. In fact, if you wanted to make a call to someone outside the country, you would have to get to that tall building that got burnt, the NITEL Building, you could spend three days there in order to make one call to the U.S. But today, inside my house, I can make a call to those destinations.

Things are changing. So, as pastors, you cannot afford to say only the Bible is enough. You are far away from reality. There are so many skills that you need as a pastor. You need team-building skills, you need interpersonal and relational skills. I tell you, the job of a pastor is 85% about relationship. 85%. Jesus came to serve people. He came to save people. All this ministry is about people. Ministry is all about people. You need people to work with you. You need people to minister with everywhere. The moment you remove people from ministry, there is no ministry again.

You are ministering to people. You need people to work with you. It is all about people. That is why we say ministry is 85% people management and only 15% technical. So, when you say you have known the Bible, that is the technical side. It is only 15%. 85% of what you need as a pastor to be effective is people management. I have had members say that, "Look, I know this man is anointed. I know he has the anointing; he has the power of God working through him. But if he is the only one that remains that carries anointing, I am ready to die with this my sickness." Why will someone say this? Because they have been offended. Something has happened that has spoiled their relationship. So, they no longer respect the anointing because of a mistake that was made in relating with people.

First Kings chapter 12 verse 7, my favourite verse, it says: *"And he said unto them, if thou shalt be a servant to these people today, and you will serve them, and you will speak good words to them, and you will answer them, then they will be your servants forever.* Today, you must be their servant. Today, you must speak good words to them. Today, you must actually serve them. Jesus taught us that. Jesus said, *"Look, anybody that wants to engage in this business I am engaging in must be ready to be a servant. Because I myself, I came not to be served, but to serve and that is why I gave my life as a ransom to many."* so anyone who does not know how to relate with people has found the wrong job as a minister.

You must be able to relate with people. You know one thing about people? People like to be recognized, people like to be encouraged. People like to be empathized with. It is all about

people. You must be able to encourage people, empathize with people, and appreciate people.

I have had people say this before, they said, "After all, we are all working for God, so who is appreciating me?" Ah, you pastor? You pastor, you are the one saying that! Appreciate people. And please, do not belittle people, because those who belittle people will eventually become little people. You must not belittle people. Ministry is all about people. If you cannot relate well with people, then you need to do something about it. Jesus was always available for people. He was always available for people.

So, for us to build competence and have the necessary competence to minister with competence, grace, and character, we also need, and this is very important, I will just mention these two things that are important for us to acquire competence.

Seek To Know Your Area Of Giftedness

Number one, we must seek to know our area of giftedness. Where is grace abounding for you? You cannot be master of all trades. Not in ministry. There must be an area where God has deposited grace for you. Thank God for the Bamiloyes that are here. You all know the area in which the grace of God is abounding for them. That is why Paul the apostle did not keep us in the dark. 1 Corinthians 15:9–10. He said, *"For I am the least of the apostles, that I am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace that was with me."*

Listen to me. Listen to me, ministers. When you step into your area of giftedness by grace, you are at ease. Not only will you not stress, the results will be glaring. When you step into your area of giftedness by grace, things will not be difficult at all. You will flow. But a lot of ministers, either because they are comparing themselves with their colleagues or comparing themselves with somebody else, they get into all kinds of stress.

A man of God was called to the ministry of prayer to support

another man of God. The two of them were going into ministry and they agreed to partner together, they started the ministry, which was booming. But this man was always behind the scene, praying and interceding. Then people went to him and told him that, "Ah, don't you think you are a second fiddle? If you see what your guy is doing all over the place, they are hailing him everywhere now. Nobody knows that you are here." That was how he went to meet the man and he said, "Sir, I think we will be rotating this preaching around." And that one said, "Is that what God called you to come and do? If that is what God has called you to do, I think you will go and start your own and let me continue with this one." The man said, "Fine." He said, "That is exactly what I want." I tell you, nobody heard of that man again. That was the end. Why? Because he stepped out of grace.

Paul made it very clear to us, *"By the grace of God, I am what I am."* He said, and his grace that was given to me was not in vain. You cannot carry grace and not have results. Listen, a man of God once said, "We may be age mates, but we are not grace mates." Grace singles out people. Grace singles out ministers. Grace singles out brethren anywhere they carry grace. You operate effortlessly anywhere the grace of God is abounding for you. You cannot be everywhere.

There was this issue of a young man in our church some time ago whose parents brought to me. Do you know the reason? He was a children's minister. He is still a children's minister till today. We just inducted him. And the parents felt "How can he be a children's minister for these years?" Then they brought him to me, the father and mother, it was a serious matter. The father said, "Daddy, do you know our son." I said, "I know him. He is one of our strong children's ministers." They said, "Yes. We know you know him because he is doing a lot. Anywhere he goes, children always follow him. He evangelizes, he does a lot, including Bible clubs here and there."

Then they asked me a question. They said, "Sir, in your church, don't you promote people? I think after some time, he should be promoted to Adult church, to be the pastor of Adult church. After he has pastored Children, then he should be promoted to Adult

church.” so the young man now told me that, that has been the argument at home, that they have asked him for how long he is going to be Children's pastor? They thought it was time for him to move, because these children, they do not have money. If he was promoted to Adult church, something would drop. So, I said, "Brother, thank God for your life." Today, he is still a Children's pastor and the Lord has blessed him.

You know, some people, because they see their colleagues do something, they want to do exactly the same. Whereas they do not have the same level of grace. Because for you to do anything and succeed, you need grace. That is what Paul said, *"I labor more abundantly than them all. Yet, not I, but the grace of God that was with me."*

It is good to acquire all these competencies, you know, team-building skills, all these, but if the grace of God is not there, you will be a lecturer. When you preach, you will be lecturing. Some people will confuse a lecturer with a preacher. It is because there is no grace. There will be dryness everywhere. But I pray for you under the sound of my voice, may you carry grace from this place. May your ministry manifest grace, in the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ. May you carry grace from here.

Knowing your grace is a function of your purpose. There is nobody He has called that He will not give a purpose. When he called Moses, he gave him a purpose. He said to Moses, *"You are going to deliver Israel from Egypt."* When he called Joshua, he gave him his purpose. That is why you see that their strategy and the grace they carried were different. The moment Moses wanted to apply *fighting*, he failed, and ran away. But Joshua fought all through, because that was the grace released to him and it matched his purpose.

Until you discover your purpose and find the grace of God in that particular area, you will just be struggling. Maybe you copied what you are doing from somewhere. Maybe you saw somebody do it. You did not receive it from God. It is time for you to find out, "What is my purpose? What is my purpose?" If God has called you to be an evangelist, do not struggle to be a teacher. If he has

called you to be an intercessor, do not say I must preach. If God has called you to be an administrator, please for God's sake, go and help us to administer. If God has called you to sing, please do not force yourself and say I must preach. Because when you do that, you are stepping out of grace into disgrace. That is what you are doing.

It is so important that you seek to know your area of giftedness that comes from God. Where is grace abounding for you? And what do you do with it? Discover it. Find it out. Be aware of it.

Be A Good Follower

Number two, deploy it. Serve. Serve. Every man who became somebody in the Bible was a servant. Joseph served his wicked brothers, David served Saul, Samuel served Eli. One of my mentors told me, he said, "It is only a committed and faithful servant that can become a commander. Until you become a good follower, you can never be a good leader. "

You must serve. You must be ready to serve. That is why you will see apprentices that did not learn well; they do not want to serve. So, the moment they are able to nail two pieces of wood together, they are already carpenters to themselves. May God help you, when you give him your furniture to do for you, he will keep telling you to come back for it the next day.

One of my daughters whom we sent to learn fashion designing, came back one day and said "Daddy I have learned it." Then later she said she wanted to sew a trouser for me to which I agreed. She measured me and when she brought the trouser, one side was up, one side was down, I said "Indeed, you know it." That is how a lot of people are even in ministry.

One day I went for a wedding, I went with my wife. We were amazed. Do you know that as soon as the bride danced into the venue, they said it was time for taking oaths and joining. The first thing that was done was to give rings. I tapped my wife and said, "We have not seen this before, this one is *express*. Nobody has taken the covenant. Nobody has read the purpose of marriage. It is to the ring they went straight, and after they had put the ring on the

fingers, they danced for the next 15 minutes and were displaying the ring. No covenant taken. That is what we refer to as bastardizing ministry and a lot of times it is out of ignorance. But I pray for you, you will not remain ignorant, in Jesus' name.

Serve, because it is in the process of serving that you can acquire skills. Some do not want to serve under anybody. They were just members in their churches, and before you know it, they have become General Overseers. They were not even holding any position in their former church, and now they have become G.O. They do not want to serve anybody. They want to serve only themselves; it is not scriptural.

The twelve disciples were with Jesus for three and a half years. They served. Even Paul that was supernaturally called still had to learn. He was in Arabia for three and a half years. Every product is a function of process. No process, no product. You must go through the process before you can have the product. Today we do not want to go through the process.

I will ask a question, God who made heaven and earth created the world in six days. He went through a process. Do you think God could not create the whole world in one day? What was He doing throughout the six days? He was only saying "Let there be this" and He would wait till the next day, then He would say "Let there be this" and then He would wait till the next day. Why could He not sit in one place and just keep saying "Let there be this" and there is, "Let there be this" and there is, "Let there be this" and there is?

If you saw a woman who was pregnant, whose stomach was just beginning to bulge out and you were able to know that she was just two months pregnant and they told you that she had delivered already and that the child had teeth, would you go there to greet them? The Yorubas do say, "abomination." But today, people want to enter ministry today. They want to do everything today, they want to be Apostles, Bishops, and everything just today, now, now. It is not the way of God. That is magic. There is a difference between the supernatural and magic. That is magic and it is not the way of the cross.

Develop it. Grow in it

Discover it. Deploy it. Develop it. Grow in it. That grace that you have discovered, grow in it. There is always improvement. Do not say, "The Lord has shown me my area of giftedness. It is okay like this". No. Before you know it, you will be overtaken, because if you are not updated, you will be outdated and for you to be in the flow, you have to be in the know. Things are changing every day. I am sure if you ask the Bamiloyes they will tell you that the way they started their drama in those days when they used to tie flags is not the way they do it today. They have moved on. That is why they are still in that ministry. If they had remained at that level and said, "This one was received from God, it was heavenly delivered and that is where we will stay, all other things coming now are from the devil, but this one that God gave to us we will use". If that is it, they won't be where they are today. You must grow in that grace. You cannot remain on the same spot. You must grow in it, and you will grow, in Jesus' name.

How do you grow in your grace? Meditate on God's word. Have a time for personal retreat. God gave it to you, so the only way to grow is by contacting Him. The only person who has the latest is God. Before they ever came with the latest, God already had it and if you are close to God, He will reveal it to you. He said the secret things belong to God but the things revealed belong to us and our children. There are so many wrong decisions that I would have taken but for having time with God, it is very important.

You must meditate on God's word. You must have personal retreats. You must fast and pray in order to increase your faith. That is why, when people are confronted with certain things, they fall like a pack of cards, because they are not engaged in spiritual exercise. You must engage in spiritual exercise because this is a spiritual work. So, you must back it up with spiritual strength.

Let me recommend this for you; pray for at least one hour a day, possibly in tongues. Every day, you should pray for at least one hour in tongues. By the grace of God when I am confused about any issue and I switch into praying in tongues, I carry my biro and my book because at such times, things are revealed. Building

yourself on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. I pray for you, you will not miss it, in Jesus' name. Develop yourself continually, self-development is critical for self-preservation.

Ministering With Conviction And Character

Competence without character is a disaster waiting to happen. We must minister with character. We must strive not just to be part of the manifestation of His power; we must strive to be part of the manifestation of His nature. God has nature and He has power, but a lot of times, we are content with His power, we forget that He has a nature. The nature of God is the fruit of the Spirit, and that is what we mean when we talk about character.

Character is so key and important. Billy Graham said, “When money is lost, nothing is lost. When health is lost, something is lost. But when character is lost, everything is lost”. Because character is the foundation of ministry, any ministry that the foundation is not built on sound and good character, cannot last. It is a matter of time.

I was sharing with some people, I said, “in this nation, we have seen a ministry that when they were coming for a program, you would be counting the number of their flashy cars. But where are they today? they are no where to be found because the foundation was not on character.”

Hear what Myles Munroe said about character. He said, “character is the foundation of every leadership, no character, no leadership.” It is so key and important. Even when we are talking generally about leadership in the world, the main criterion is character, not to talk of the church. The Bible says we are going to judge the world. So, if inside us, integrity and character are nowhere to be found, then we have a long way to go.

What made Joseph to progress into his destiny was sustained character. When it comes to the issue of character, the devil has a role to play and God has a role to play. The role of the devil is to tempt you and make you fall. The devil is not doing his job if you are not tempted so that you can fall. The role of God is to test you

to promote you. If you have not passed the class where you are, why are you looking for promotion. You will repeat the class. You must pass it. That thing that brings you down all the time, until you conquer it, you are not proceeding. If you are going to go far in ministry, you need a consistently good character because God's will is that you last and that you not only finish but you finish strong and well, and you will finish strong and well, in Jesus' name.

Some of the statistics are very scary. They said only one out of ten ministers who set out at the age of 25 and above, is still standing at the age of 65. We were given the example of Billy Graham and his two colleagues, Templeton and Clifford, who set out in 1945. They were making waves. They were shaking campuses; the three of them. But 75 years after, in fact, ten years after the other two were gone. One went into alcohol and died as an alcoholic. The other one went into the entertainment industry of the world and got lost. Only Billy Graham had seventy-five years of scandal-free ministry. I pray that someone here will have that testimony, in Jesus' name. Seventy-five years of ministry without one scandal. That is a record.

Another statistic I saw that is scary states that 246 men of God had cases of moral failure within two years. Today, it is so common. In fact, some will tell you that why are you talking about sin when grace has covered everything. It is a lie. That is a lie from the pit of hell to bring you down, but you will not be brought down, in Jesus' name.

Beloved, this matter of character is very important. Character, integrity, humility, generosity, please it is so important. It does not matter how far you have gone, any sin you refuse to stop will ultimately stop you; it does not matter how high you have gone.

I give an example, I am not sure how many of you have read about Bill Hybels, the brain behind Global Leadership Summit. That man started his church as a young person. He started it around 1975 and within 2 years the church had 2000 people. By year 2000 they were 15,000 and by 2018 when the scandal eventually blew open by the Chicago Tribune in the U.S., they were already

25,000. Then the day the enemy came. This is what the enemy does. He will disgrace when the person has reached the height. But thank God for the church of God. Even though they did not nip it in the bud, eventually they were able to gather the church together and GLS is changed to GLN today, Global Leadership Network. They had to make those changes because of one man.

I remember while we were on campus, there was one of our leaders, if I mention his name you all will know him. He made waves all over the country, God used him mightily in Nigeria and all over the world. We were just young people on campus and he was having an illicit affair with one of our sisters. We were all young. We did not know how to approach the situation, but we knew that this man had a great future, we needed to rescue him so that his future would not be destroyed; this is a Delilah. Like Delilah who destroyed Samson; Samson was raised to deliver Israel but he could not deliver on his mandate because Delilah checkmated him. All of us were just watching and praying. We did not know how to approach it.

One day, after fellowship, all the leaders waited to pray as our usual custom was, and as our leader was about to share the grace, one sister just burst out saying "We are not sharing grace today!" You know that can only happen when the Holy Ghost comes on someone and he is on an assignment. The sister said, "We are not sharing grace today. This relationship between you and that sister must be dismantled otherwise we are not sharing grace today. "

That outburst sparked something. The man of God started cursing her. Of course, all of us started taking cover. We said that was what we were trying to avoid. But to the glory of God, by the following day, because the man was actually a man of God, God had touched his heart overnight. He went to the female hostel by himself to collect all the things he bought for the sister and when he was going, he carried all the things she had bought for him and he told her, "From today, I have nothing to do with you again, do not destroy my testimony. "

Why was it necessary to take that step as at that time? That sister had to take that step because we knew he was engaged to another

sister who was not on our campus. Anytime I remember that case, anytime I see this man of God making waves, flying in a jet all over the place, I say if not for this sister, he would have gone the way of Samson. I pray for you, may the enemy not truncate your destiny. May the enemy not bring you down, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Three Things To Do To Finish Well

Three things you need to do, three things you must do if you must finish well.

1. Discipline Your Desires

Number one: discipline your desires. Paul said in First Corinthians 9:27, *"But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection lest by any means after I have preached to others I be a castaway."* Discipline your desire. God is more interested in our character than our convenience. God is more interested in our character than our comfort. Discipline your desire, live and be guided by principles and not by pleasure.

Every battle against your soul begins inside you. Every battle that the devil wants to use to bring you down begins inside you. Discipline your desires. Our values of integrity, humility and generosity must be kept intact. Live by conviction. The reason a lot of ministers of God fall is because they do not have convictions. They do not have standards. You must have standards. Have standards even before the temptation comes. As a man of God, you should have standards like "I will not counsel a lady alone."

I remember one church we pastored, there was one of the ministers under us, my wife would always see him with only one sister. One day she called him and said, "Man of God, this problem is a protracted problem," the man responded and said "Yes, the demon is very strong we have to keep at it." Thank God my wife is also into deliverance ministry, she just told him, "Send her to me, I will handle it better."

You must be cautious because your adversary the devil is roaring about looking for whom to devour. If you carry grace and you carry anointing, you are a target of the devil, just in case you do

not know. So, discipline your desires.

One day, someone brought a gift for me. It was cash, and the cash was looking at me in the face. So, I told my wife, "This gift the Holy Spirit told me not to collect it," and I did not tell the person who brought it. So, I took the gift, I was led to take it to church, I took it to church and dropped it there. After then, something happened to the person.

I want to warn you ministers, discipline your desires. It is not everything you collect. Greed and covetousness are what have brought so many people down. These were the things that brought Samson down, he could not discipline his desires. He said "I want her, get her for me." It is not everything you should get.

2. Keep Your Commitments

Number two. Keep your commitments: Do you have commitments to God? Keep them. In keeping your commitments, have accountability partners. Please, nobody is too high to have someone you report to. The moment the enemy gets you so high-minded that you feel you know everything, you are on your way down.

Those of you that are under a covering like this ministry, you are covered, but the moment you become a General Overseer, please look for a senior General Overseer to report to, because if you don't, it is when you are lost that you will realize that you are already lost.

Please keep your commitments. I pray God will help you to keep your commitments. Carelessness can be very expensive. Samson was careless and he paid dearly for it. Carelessness in the realm of the spirit is expensive. Please keep your commitments. Psalm 15:4b says, *"He that swears to his own hurt and changes not,"* that is the kind of people God is looking for.

3. Restrain Your Reactions

Number three. Restrain your reactions: We are told that Moses was the meekest man on earth, yet anger prevented him from entering the promised land. I tell you please do not react, always act. I tell people I do not like negative emotions around me

because it will not allow you to think well, neither will it allow you to hear from the Spirit of God. So, anything that brings grudges inside you, brings negative emotions, you see someone and you begin to hate the person, you are in trouble already because the Holy Spirit is not likely to communicate with you. At that point the enemy has taken you over and all you are thinking of is revenge, how to hit the person back, how to say something bad to the person that he will go and commit suicide. The enemy is already with you, but you will not fall, you will not fail, you will make it, in the name of Jesus Christ.

SWITCH 1.0

May 21, 2022

Marketplace

THRIVING IN THE MARKET PLACE

John Obaro

Today we will be talking about thriving in the marketplace, and I will be moving relatively fast. We want to look at who a believer is. What is the marketplace and what does it mean to thrive?

Who Is A Believer?

In the context of today, we want to say a believer is somebody who is a child of God. But in this context, he is somebody who has submitted his business to be driven by biblical values. He understands that the Bible contains all the secrets to business success. Many of these Bible quotes have been adapted by the unbelieving world to win in their businesses.

What Is The Marketplace?

And what is the marketplace? The marketplace is our vocation, wherever you find yourself, your business, your office, or ministry. What does it mean to thrive? You will be like a tree planted by the riverside. You will not know the time of drought because all the while, you will be bearing fruit. You will multiply. You will replenish. You will subdue and you will dominate.

30 Levers To Thrive In The Marketplace

System Specs, by God's grace, this year will make it 30 years old and I just thought of sharing with us what I call the 30 Levers to thrive in the marketplace. For each of these items, we can spend one day on each of the 30, but today, we will be spending only one hour on each of them. So, that means I should release you in the next 30 hours.

Lever One: Prayer

Lever number one, Prayer: Jesus started with prayer. I used to have a boss who used to say, "Look, I am very lazy, so I look for the easiest way to do everything." I personally have no power of my own, so I need to run to the one who has all the power because I know that if the foundation is faulty, we cannot go far. Every decision you take is critical; there is no minor decision because every decision can lead to disaster. Therefore, we need to be in tune with God to hear from Him before we take any decision in our business. I have come to learn to depend on God for our success. We have the Bible; we can search the Bible. It is an open book. Anytime we are confused, let us talk to God, read His word, He will grant us wisdom and insights.

Lever 2: Vision

Having said that, having laid the foundation of prayer, yes, we must pray, but more importantly, we now need to go beyond prayer. We now need to get our hands dirty. And lever number two, Vision.

Where are we going in the business or in wherever you find yourself? Where are we going? You need to be clear. Why are you in that business? What problem are you out to solve? What market strategy or culture do you want to develop? If your vision does not provide the solution to a problem and an answer to a question, then it is merely an ambition.

Lever Three: Leadership

Lever number three, Leadership: You must provide exemplary leadership. Leadership is the ability to influence and guide your followers. It starts with you.

Remember the six Cs of leadership:

1. Critical thinking,
2. Creativity,
3. Confidence,
4. Communication,
5. Collaboration, and
6. Character. Our general overseer has summarized this a lot in his earlier speech.

Lever 4: Prepare For War

Lever number four, prepare for war: If you are going to succeed in business, many arrows will rise up against you. Starting from competitors, regulators, envious people, the press, foreign powers, spiritual forces, and I dare even say some of your brethren and people close to you.

You will receive a lot of arrows. Therefore, you must think ahead and position yourself to navigate wisely. Prepare for failure, for downtimes will come; but you must rise up every time. Think ahead on how you will rise when the evil day comes. It is often said that if you want peace, prepare for war. One of the popular quotes I like is from Nicholas Kling. Many people say it is from Mahatma Gandhi, but it was actually Nicholas Kling. He said, "First, they ignore you. Then, they ridicule you. Then, they fight you. And then, you win. "

Lever 5: Legal Framework

Lever number five, legal framework: For your business, make sure that you are covered legally. Your lawyer must be your best friend. In the setup. Your shareholders' agreements and documentation, risk management, compliance monitoring, think ahead of all of these. Register your intellectual property. Establish a proper governance structure.

Make sure you have a board of advisers, a board or whatever it is to guide you. Pass major decisions through your lawyers. Be compliant with all relevant regulatory frameworks and requirements. That will put you in a position that you don't have to beg or be pushed into a position of compromise.

Lever 6: Business Strategy

Lever number six, business strategy: What problems are you out to solve? What uniqueness are you bringing to the party? Remember that if all you do is just what others are doing, then the best you will be is just like others. That means you will just be average.

Remember the five Ps: your product, your people, your place of operation, promotion of the business, and your pricing. You must get all these right.

Lever 7: Organizational Structure

Lever number seven, organizational structure: You must put a structure in place for your business to operate properly, an organizational structure that delivers on your promise. There should be clarity of roles and interrelationships between the departments. There should be clear reporting lines. Do not just mix everything together. Individuals should know what is expected of them; it helps them to also understand and plan their own career. There is no organizational structure more advantageous than the other. You just need to be able to situate what is relevant to you.

Lever 8: Location

Lever number eight, I call it Location. The location of your business is very important. Choose your location wisely. Think also of the global markets. The same business in different locations leads to different results. Somebody operating the business in Vitoria Island, another person providing the same service in Agege, get different prices, and different outcomes.

If you are into manufacturing, for instance, you may also want to consider being close to the source of your raw materials. Distribution plans, how do you get to your market? How do you do your logistics in moving things around? What are the costs involved? How do you store whatever you are producing? How do you transport? Where do your staff live? How close, how far? And in this day and age, we now have a hybrid working culture where people want to work from home or better still, sleep from home. You need to begin to think creatively of how to get the best out of people who claim to be working from home.

Lever 9: Creativity and Innovation

Lever number nine, creativity and innovation: Think differently. While people are seeing problems, you should choose to see opportunities. Everything that people describe as a problem is actually a business opportunity for somebody else. Nigeria is not safe, Nigeria is not safe, people are rushing outside of the country. Some people have positioned themselves to extort people who want to rush out of the country and they are making money in the process.

Every little thing that you see about security, some people are beginning to sell more security items, CCTV cameras, personal guard items. People are beginning to make money in those directions. Whatever you think is a problem, there must be a solution around the corner. Research and creative thinking are the way out.

A popular saying is, "Think outside the box." But in reality, just imagine that there is no box. Think very freely, widely and creatively. Break the norm. One thing I do not like to hear is, "Oh, this is how it is done, this is how we do it." If you do what everybody else is doing, like I said, you will not be different. Think differently, break the norm. Dare to be different, challenge the process and be global in your thinking.

David used a sling and stones, not the conventional sword and shield, which would not have been appropriate for him. Think of what is best for you.

Lever 10: Ethics and Integrity

Lever number 10, Ethics and Integrity: Integrity in words and deeds. Your integrity must be known and well understood in the marketplace. Many times you think you are at a disadvantage by trying to be ethical in your business, but ironically, you are actually stronger. You may be at a disadvantage in the short term, but in the long term, it pays off. I can say that with 30 years in this business, after a while, they will know you for who you are and then they won't even bother to bring some things to you.

Prepare, however, to stand firm. In my early years, I was not prepared for some situations. There was a transaction we went for and at the end of the day, there was a proposal on the table. A gentleman said, "We are going to buy your product, but you need to do this and this, you add this for us and everything." One year in the business, you are very anxious to grab any straw. And I said, "Okay, yes, we will do as you have said. "

But by the time I came back, it was from Kaduna to Lagos, the Holy Spirit convicted me that this was not the agreement that we had. Well, you see, I was not personally prepared for that

transaction, for that question to come. When you negotiate with people, for instance, and they will say, "Oh, how much discount will you give?" And you say, "Oh, I will give you 20% discount." The next thing is, "Okay, go and bring your full invoice, we will pay you and then we will tell you where to pay the remaining 20%." It was my first time of hearing of such a thing.

By the time I got back to Lagos, I realized that was not what I wanted to do. And I had to write a letter. I just stumbled on that letter a couple of days ago. This was around 1993. I just stumbled on the letter and I laughed. I apologized to the man and said, "Sorry, I know the last time we met, I gave you the impression that I was going to fly with you on what you proposed. But coming back, I am not comfortable. I cannot go ahead with this." And therefore, we had to stop that transaction. But I was happy because it now prepared me for bigger things ahead. Many years down the line, I saw God at work. Some of the biggest opportunities that God gave us, it was only God thereafter.

I mean, one major one I remember, we had been recommended to get a job and there was one very difficult person there, and he insisted that this job must be given to somebody else. He was a white man, a consultant from the UK, everything was at a deadlock. The next thing was that he went on leave. He went on leave to the UK. This was, like I said, around 1993 or thereabout. And he had problems renewing his visa to come back to Nigeria. At some point, the top level of the organization said they needed to take a decision. They needed to take a decision to know the status of this thing? System Specs won that job. Now, not just that we won that job, it was such a big job. The annual maintenance on that project alone was enough to pay my staff every year for the next 17 years that we had that job.

God has helped us to show Himself in those kinds of situations in many cases like that which came up, I just used that as an example, He has equipped us and prepared us, that we are to depend on Him, not on cutting corners. It is not the corner that we cut that will help us, I have seen so many people land in trouble because they decided to win in the short term.

Do not follow the world, the way of the world. Prepare for temptations before they come, like our General Overseer said earlier.

Lever 11: Education and Training

Lever number 11, Education and Training: *"My people perish for lack of knowledge."* You have to keep learning, keep learning. If you think education is expensive, try ignorance. You have to keep training. There is a concern; when I train my staff, they go. They go to Canada. Now, they keep leaving, they keep leaving. What do you do? Just keep training because if you do not, then you will end up with untrained people anyway and that means you too, you are not going anywhere. Therefore, keep training. You must keep evolving and increasing in knowledge daily. No end to learning. Education is a passport to the future. Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.

Lever 12: Diligence And Discipline

Lever number 12, diligence and discipline: Do not be a laggard. Come to the party early and adapt to changes. Be disciplined but flexible. Allow the flow of processes, establish cultures, systems, and policies. Create nimble processes and procedures. Create and measure specific and industry metrics. Financial and non-financial metrics periodically. You must remain focused. Don't be a sluggard.

Lever 13: Persistence And Resilience

Lever number 13, persistence and resilience: You must be unstoppable. You must be convinced about your vision and goals. The resilience, tenacity, and conviction about your vision and goals must propel you daily. Resilience is the driver that conveys you from the place of an idea to the place of action. People will criticize your vision and try to kill it, not because they hate you, but because they do not understand your vision. There is a popular saying that adversity causes some to break and others to break records. You need to persist. When the going gets tough, the tough must get going.

Lever 14: Delegation And Refueling

Lever number 14, Delegation and refueling: You cannot do all the work yourself. Give your subordinates authority, responsibility,

and let them account for the results. Do not micromanage them. Allow them to make mistakes. Many of us say we are delegating but we run down our subordinates when they make mistakes. No, allow them to make their mistakes and grow.

Delegate your weaknesses. Any area you know you are weak, get somebody else to cover it for you. Again, you need to learn to refuel. Learn to rest and refuel. You keep going one year, no break, no rest. Second year, on and on. If you do not choose the time to rest, the time to rest will choose you and that time may not be convenient for you.

Lever 15: Automation And Technology

Lever number 15, automation and technology: They say to a carpenter, every problem is a nail and the solution is the hammer. So, for me too, as an IT person, I believe in automation and I encourage you to adopt technology. It is an enabler. In any case, if a machine can do the job, why stress yourself?

Computerize as much as possible. Back office and front office. Robots are coming, robots are taking over. Engage chatbots, engage them as much as you can. Automation frees up time for your employees to focus on innovation and more creative things.

Lever 16: Production And Operational Processes

Lever number 16, Production and operational processes: What is your customer journey? Imagine yourself as a customer. How does your service flow? Perform a process analysis to track progress, problems, and identify opportunities. Be deliberate about continuous improvement and process improvement. Standardize all your processes and document your standard operating procedures.

Lever 17: Manage Quality

Lever number 17, manage quality. Aim for zero defects. Be known for high standards. Poor quality leads to brand damage and the cost of rework is usually very significant. And also have the mindset that everything can be improved upon. Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution.

Lever 18: Manage Your Pricing

Lever number 18, Pricing: Manage your pricing. What factors determine the prices of your products? What is the estimated total demand for your product? Do you understand cost estimates, elements, production, marketing, and all of that? Do you have insights on your competitors' costs before you just copy their price? And do you just have a guideline to lead you through that process?

Lever 19: Manage Your Time

Lever 19, manage your time. It is a popular saying that time heals all things. It is a lie; time just passes away. Opportunity once lost can never be regained. A lot to do, but time is always limited. How do you go around it? Plan, plan, plan. Diaries, calendar, review completed and uncompleted tasks on a regular basis. Learn to recognize important things. Learn to recognize urgent things.

Not every urgent thing is important and not every important thing is urgent. Learn to know what is important and how to focus on it. Learn to stay away from distractions.

More importantly, also learn to say no. Many of us get a lot of assignments or invitations, but because we are not able to say no, we become inefficient in all of them. Today, for instance, I know I have about six invitations, this is just number one. There is no way I can cover everything.

Lever 20: Budget and Monitoring - Manage Money

Lever number 20, manage money: Money is very important and I can tell you, I think I like money too, but money must not be your sole driver. If you are driven solely by money, you are an accident waiting to happen because money will drive you to where you do not want to be. For your business, how do you want to make money? What is the money retention strategy for the business? You need to understand accounting.

You need to understand the power of cash. Even when the business is not profitable, you need cash in the business. What is your savings and investment strategy? Are you saving or are you blowing everything at once? And how are you investing whatever you have saved? You must learn to invest for the rainy day

because it will come.

Budget and monitoring. You must have budgets to guide you and monitor your budgets through the year. Reconciliations. Many of us do not even bother to reconcile our bank statements. Bankers make mistakes too, apart from some other things that can happen. You need to learn to reconcile.

Lever 21: Manage Loans

Lever number 21, I said manage loans. Some of us are a bit too scared to touch loans. So, I would say avoid loans if you cannot manage them. Loans should be for production, not consumption. Take only what you can repay, repay it and if you have any challenges, keep in touch with your lender as soon as possible. It is increasingly becoming difficult to obtain loans and disappear. The reason is that technology is coming in very actively in this area. There is a lot of identity verification processes in place in the industry today and therefore it becomes more difficult for you to take a loan and disappear. You will be traced.

Lever 22: Focus On Your Staff

Lever number 22, focus on your staff: Your staff are your first customers. Satisfied and happy staff are your best salesmen. You need to learn to appreciate your staff, show gratitude, show empathy, socialize with your staff. Listen, listen, listen. You must be approachable to your staff. That is where you will get a lot of ideas from.

Lever 23: Focus On Your Customer

Lever number 23, focus on your customer: The customer is king. It is not just a cliché; it is the reality. He pays your bill. Difficult customers, complaining customers can actually be very good because they may become your free salesmen after you have resolved their issues. Complaining customers are an asset. They help you to improve. And after you have improved, they tell others.

Some customers may deliberately seek to provoke you. If you pass the test, they can be the most loyal. Do not push ideas. Do not force your ideas on your customers. Listen to what they need. Innovate to meet their needs and make some progress in the

market. This does not mean you are not going to be creative. Yes, you will be creative and be able to discuss your creative ideas with the customers.

Lever 24: Monitor Competition

Lever number 24, monitor competition: Do not repeat your competitors' mistakes. Do not infringe on copyright. Understand possible threats to your own business. Always be in competition with yourself. You are competing against the needs of tomorrow. Be proactive in the marketplace and the competitive landscape by creating internal disruptions to your own business before external disruptions sweep you away.

Lever 25: Monitor Regulators

Lever number 25, monitor regulators: Understand CARMA, understand SEC, CBN, the different regulatory bodies. If you do not know any of them, you should know FIRS. Monitor your regulators. Make sure you comply with the regulations.

In the early days of our business, I had an accountant friend, and then at the end of the year, they would just write something and say, "Oh, this is the account, blah, blah, blah." We were just focused on doing the business. Eventually the taxman would come and do his own computations and you get a lot of embarrassments because the accounts have not been properly done or could have been done better.

One day about twenty-two or twenty-three years ago, I woke up and felt I had had enough, I did not know anyone at KPMG, I just drove there and I told them I wanted them to take over the managing of our account and for the past 23 years it has been very expensive but very much worth it because they have a brand to protect. People could say, "You are a small business why not just use someone else or another organization," but using this kind of brand has paid off multiple times moving into the future.

One circular or regulation can torpedo your business. Be friendly with your regulators. Regulation may stifle innovation but it is by communicating and being in touch that you can get them to understand what you are doing. When we came up with Remita for instance, CBN was not ready to issue payment licences

because it was a new thing, but we were able to keep talking with them and today we have all sorts of licenses in the industry.

Lever 26: Monitor Global Markets

Lever number 26: Monitor global markets: The world is now a global village. Take the war between Ukraine and Russia, it has led to a number of shortages worldwide, especially processed oil which will affect quite a number of things, from detergents to medications.

Different industries will be affected and a number of countries are beginning to look inward. You can no longer export some of their own goods. What will be the impact for your own business? In the oil market, prices are rising up. It would affect people around you, and ultimately it would affect you too. While you may not be able to do much about some of these things, you need to be aware and plan to defend your position or capitalize on the opportunity.

Globalization has rendered the world increasingly interdependent. The impact of regional alliances, Africa is opening up to trade and a number of things are happening. You will see a situation where it will be a lot easier for you to export what you produce but at the same time it will be easier for your customers to import from other countries. What will be the impact of this on your own business?

Lever 27: Network

Lever 27: Network, collaborate. Relationships and collaboration are very important. If you want to run fast, run alone; if you want to run far, run with others. The marketplace is too broad to run alone; create valuable relationships and partnerships. Create the right structures that foster collaboration and teamwork, you win together. Create an environment of trust around yourself.

Competition is already being replaced by a popular word called co-opetition (collaboration and competition).

Lever 28: Make Some Noise

Lever number 28, Make Some Noise. What are your plans for your brand and marketing? I used to have a lecturer in school who used to say "if you have a trumpet, blow it; if you do not blow it,

people would assume that you do not have a trumpet, even if they see you carrying a trumpet, they will assume that the trumpet is rusty.” You have to learn to blow your own trumpet.

One of the cheap ways of doing this is social media. You can have print media, but be careful of the footprints you leave. Social media never forgives and certainly never forgets.

A brand is a voice; a product is a souvenir. Be creative with your marketing, learn to communicate internally and externally.

Lever 29: Be Mentored

Lever number 29: Be mentored. A mentor sees more ability within you than you see in yourself and helps you bring it out. Why should I repeat the mistake of people I respect? Listen and learn from those who have gone before you.

About 16 years ago, I had someone like Emmanuel Ocholi. Many of you may know him. He was running a bank. He had his challenges. He was one of those who encouraged me to set up System Specs. Despite that his business failed, I had a lot to learn from him about how not to do things.

About 16 years ago, we invited Dr Christopher Kolade who many of you know to be the guru of leadership and ethics in the country. We brought him in to be the chairman of our board, and he was the chairman for about 15 years. One of the interesting things is that, anytime we went for meetings, we knew that we were going to learn something new. We would learn some history either from the public service or private sector. Therefore, surround yourself with people who can guide you, who can be a shield to you.

Incidentally, at the peak of our TLA crisis, we were called to different meetings in Abuja. In one of the meetings, they were to charter a plane to come and meet me for which I was to pay. Anyways, to cut the long story short, one of the meetings that I opted to go for, they came up with some proposals. I just said one thing: "The chairman of my board is Dr Kolade" At that time he was 83 years old. At age 83, he told God that if there was anything he would do that will embarrass God, God should carry him home immediately before he would make that mistake. "

So, I told them that was the mandate I had from my chairman, I could not therefore come there to do the things they were asking me to do. And at the end of the day, they looked at themselves and knew that indeed, this man had built a brand, and thank God we were also able to leverage on that brand. Walk with people who can mentor you, who can guide you and be a shield to you.

Lever 30: Give Back

Lever number 30, give ;ll the glory must be to God. Learn as God prospers you to support different ministries. Be socially responsible; the seed you plant will return to you in multiple folds. Creating a good business, a strong business and building a better world are not conflicting goals, they are both essential ingredients for long-term success.

Conclusion; Innovation And Diligence In Pursuit Of Excellence

I have one or two slides as summary of what we have done. In 1991, I moved from VI to Agbara. I was living in VI, five minutes drive to the office. I moved to Agbara because I wanted to save money to set up Systems Specs.

In 1992 after about ten years in the banking sector, I resigned from one of the highest paying organizations in Nigeria. I counted on God's favor, with limited funds and founded Systems Specs, a wholly indigenous software house.

From the beginning we had our core values that we would depend on God for success. Our values were dependence on God for success. We were to be exemplars of ethics and integrity in the marketplace. We would foster friendship with our customers. We would have open family-based relationship at work and we would have partnership with our neighbors wherever we found ourselves. Incidentally, at that time, we were actually in the middle of Obalende, amongst area boys and they were the ones that encouraged us to have that as part of our value system. Finally, innovation and diligence in pursuit of excellence.

The last one which we use to encourage ourselves is: *"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings and not*

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0.

mere men. ” This picture which was taken with two former Heads of State was at an award ceremony in Abuja way after the TLA storm. It reminds me again of that popular saying that first, they ignore you, then they fight you, then you win.

SWITCH 1.0

May 21, 2022

Marriage

MARRIAGE THE BEDROCK

Evang Mike & Gloria Bamiloye

We have been blessed concerning thriving, blossoming and succeeding in ministry. We have been blessed by the Lord's servant, King Obaro, when he was speaking to us about wisdom; the necessary wisdom we should have at this time to excel in the marketplace.

This is the end time. As we come to the end time, we come to the season of intense attack, intense opposition against the kingdom of God, both in marriage, in ministry, and in the marketplace. So, we thank the Lord for the wisdom that we have received, that has been shared with us concerning succeeding in our areas of assignment in the marketplace.

Now concerning marriage, just like what my wife just said, no ministry can be successful without a successful home. No business can impact people spiritually without a successful home. Therefore, I want to speak on marriage, the bedrock for thriving, the bedrock for breakthrough, the bedrock for success; marriage, the bedrock, the foundation for excelling.

Right from the beginning, when marriage was instituted in the Garden of Eden, the Lord had pronounced His blessing and declared His mind concerning marriage and concerning the marriage institution. God had declared His mind right from the beginning. I want to read a passage of Scripture for us.

"So, God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the

earth, subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over everything that moves on the earth."
Genesis 1:27-28

A Five-Fold Blessing

Once again, I am talking by the help of the Holy Spirit on marriage, the bedrock, the foundation for a successful life, the foundation for a successful ministry, the foundation for successful living. So, we look at that Genesis chapter 1, verses 27 and 28, and we see that there is a pronouncement of five blessings in that Genesis chapter 1, verses 27–28.

The Lord God created man, and then God blessed them. At the creation of man, God created man in His image. *In the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them.* When He brought them together, He pronounced blessings upon them, saying, *"God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful. "*

So, we see the blessing of fruitfulness pronounced upon the marriage institution. The blessing of multiplication, right from the Garden of Eden when it was instituted. When the Lord created marriage, when the Lord instituted marriage, He pronounced a blessing upon it right from the start. It is as if marriage, from God's point of view, is programmed for fruitfulness, programmed for multiplication, programmed for subduing and taking over, programmed for replenishing the earth, that is, filling the earth with good things, filling the earth with God's mind, with good fruits.

And then the Lord commanded marriage, commanded the home, and the union was commanded to have dominion. So, you look at this statement, you look at that verse, you see, you say God blessed them, and God said, *"Be fruitful. "* It is like a command. It is an order. Be fruitful.

It is just that every couple has the ordained blessing from God. Marriage is programmed and ordained by God to work in these five-fold blessings. When God was creating marriage, when He was creating the marriage institution, He had pronounced upon it blessings of fruitfulness, blessings of multiplication, blessings of

taking over, blessings of replenishing the earth, that is, filling the earth with good things, filling the earth with fruits of marriage.

I am not talking about biological fruit alone. I am talking about the blessings of marriage. There are some marriages that do not even have the fruit of the womb yet, but they are blessings to the world. They are multiplying. They are blessings. They fill the earth with joy. All their environment, their surroundings, people could feel the presence of God in such a marriage, even though they do not have the fruit of the womb yet. So, some marriages fill the heart with joy. Some marriages fill the heart with blessings. Some marriages fill the heart with great innovations

It is just like the command that the Lord gives to the sun, "*Let there be sun*" and there was sun. "*Let there be moon,*" there was moon. Let there be two great lights, one ruling the day, one ruling the night. Let there be animals and the animals came forth. The same thing the Lord gave as the order concerning marriage when the Lord was creating marriage: "*Be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth.*", I pray today that every one of us in our marriage shall experience the original plan of God concerning our home and our marriage in the name of Jesus.

There is something in the heart of God; there is a blessing. There is a programming in the heart of God concerning marriage. It is the first institution God created and you will discover that at this time, it is what the devil is battling against. The devil is fighting against it. The war started from outside the church and then later it entered into the church. In those days, we hardly heard of divorce in the church. It is an abomination. In those days when we heard that two couples fighting, it was abomination. You would see pastors rising up, church members, workers standing up and talking to each party. But today, it has become common. It is becoming normal that you see some pastors, men of God, or ministers of God, taking divorce lightly and then talking about "when I was with my third ex." Ex has become common and normal. Some people take glory in it. And some people, when the group of exes are talking, they will be asking them, "What is your rank?" She replies, "Ma, I am one ex rank." Then she says, "You were still a baby when I divorced my first husband, so go and sit

down. This is my sixth ex. This is a six-star general talking. So, let the one-star general sit down. They take glory in it and it is a battle.

That which the Lord created in the Garden of Eden and pronounced a five-fold blessing upon is what the devil is fighting against. It is unfortunate that the devil brought the battle into the church. What we pray for is that every one of us here, our marriage shall survive in the mighty name of Jesus. Our marriage shall experience exactly what the Lord wants it to be in the mighty name of Jesus.

When the Lord commanded the sun to be and the sun was, commanded the moon, the moon came, commanded the animal, and the animal came. Why is it that the Lord commanded "marriage, be fruitful" and the devil attacks it, "multiply" and the devil attacks it, "replenish the earth" and there is a war concerning that and "have dominion"?

Jesus Christ said, *"Wherever two of you shall agree together concerning anything, it shall be done."* As one shall put a thousand to flight, two shall put ten thousand to flight. That is the power of dominion. I pray all these shall manifest in our lives, in our homes and marriages, in the name of Jesus.

We discover that the precondition for receiving the five-fold blessing therefore must be to obey God before these blessings can manifest. It is true the Lord commanded the sun, commanded the trees, commanded animals and they came. But when it comes to man and the marriage institution, it is not automatic.

Leviticus 26:3 says, *"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season and the land shall yield its produce and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."*

You see what the Lord said, "If you will walk in My statutes, then My blessing shall manifest." We now see the reason why the command the Lord gave to marriage is different from the command He gave to the sun, trees and animals. Instead of it to automatically be so, there must be a pre-condition. That pre-

condition is obeying God. There is a law we must obey. There is obedience we must render concerning God. If you walk in the statutes of God and keep His commandments, then He said He will bring rain in its season. That is, blessing will come at the time it should come, and then multiplication will come at the time it should come, and the fruitfulness will come at the time it should come.

The dominion that the Lord wants our marriage to have will manifest. So, your marriage is programmed, therefore spiritually speaking. When the Lord was joining man and woman together, there is a command that the Lord has placed upon that couple. That is why it is important to marry in God's presence. There is a command God has placed upon that marriage. When you see a new couple walking down the aisle to the altar, there is a command. If they will walk in God's counsel, if they will obey the mind of God, if they will follow God's instruction, there is an automatic command that is going to come upon their lives.

The command that cannot change if they walk according to God's counsel and those commands are what the devil is fighting against so that they will not obey it. What I pray for every one of us here is that the devil shall fall short, he shall lose the battles over our marriages in the name of Jesus.

When God blesses a couple, He has pronounced upon them to be fruitful, to multiply, to subdue the earth, to replenish it, and to have dominion. All these five blessings shall be upon our marriages. Your marriages shall be fruitful. Your marriages shall multiply. Your marriages shall replenish the earth. Your marriages shall have dominion, in the mighty name of Jesus.

Laws That Govern Godly Marriage

So, what are these laws? The laws we must obey. What are the laws we must obey?

If darkness fills this place in the night and there are bulbs everywhere, this place has automatically been programmed to have light. If you know where the switch is, you will have light; if you do not know where the switch is, you will remain in the dark.

It is as if you are cursed, because if you are coming to the altar and you have not been to this place, you will be hitting your feet against the chairs.

Marriage is like that. It is a journey, but there is a program of light in every marriage. The Lord knows that the devil will bring darkness, but there is a program of light. He knows that darkness shall fill the earth and gross darkness shall fill the people. In the book of Isaiah chapter 60:2, He said, *"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."* In the midst of the gross darkness filling the earth, there is a provision of light that Gentiles must rush towards. So, it is the same thing. If this place is full of darkness in the middle of the night, the lights are already here. All these lights are working, but you must know where the switch is.

It is the same thing that when the Lord commands blessing upon every couple, there must be laws that the Lord wants us to obey. There are four laws and the four laws are summarized together in Colossians 3:18 to 21. That is where we find the laws that govern godly marriage, laws that bring light into every home, the laws that the devil has been fighting against.

Col 3:18-21 - Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

If you look at those four verses, they speak to four groups of people. The first verse speaks to wives. We have four rules therefore, four commands, they are all commands. This is not a pleading, it is not a persuasion, it is a command, it is an order.

1. Wives, submit
2. Husbands, love
3. Children, obey
4. Fathers, do not provoke

There are four commands. I am going to start one by one. I am going to pick them, starting from the husband. When the Bible

says, "*Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter towards them,*" it is a command. You will look at each of these commands, it is a war. Each of the commands is a war.

1. Husbands, Love Your Wife

When the Bible says, "*Husbands, love your wives,*" if you say it simply, you would think it is so simple. How many men are here? Are men listening to me? Are married men listening to me? "*Husbands, love your wives.*" Do you have to be persuaded when you are in courtship to love your wife? Answer me please. Who was persuaded to love during courtship? Did somebody have to persuade you, "Love this sister, love this sister, love her very well"? Who was persuaded there? Nobody needed to tell you. It is as if all the dictionary of love is in your head. Is it not in your head? How many of us have experienced that before? Me, I have experienced it before.

During courtship, you want to go and greet your 'sister' and then you talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, and then the sister wants to escort you. She escorts you. Oh, long journey, long journey. You keep on talking, talking, talking, talking, talking until the sister realizes, "Oh, I have gone far," and then, "Oh, I cannot leave you like this. Let me escort you back too," and then you escort her back again on another long journey. It is then you will realize what is wrong with you. It is love.

It is as if you carry the dictionary of love on your head during courtship. Nobody needed to tell you that. Why is it that after marriage, even after one year in marriage, some people, after six months in marriage, then you begin to complain that the sister is talking too much. The sister like to talk. How many of us understand what I am saying? The same type of talk you were having during courtship; you go to the botanical garden, you sit down, you talk for four hours. Every thing she is saying, you liked it, now after marriage, the sister wants to keep talking, and then you now say, "Ah, sister, are you not tired of talking? I am very busy."

So, you discover that love is a war. How many understand what I am saying? And sisters, how many understand what I am saying?

so the sister is now wondering. This is the talk I always talk before. What has happened? Before this time, she liked talking and you enjoyed hearing, but now, when she is talking, she keeps asking, "Are you not listening?" and you keep responding, "I am listening. I am listening." but then, you are working on the laptop. It is a battle. It is a war.

Whatever the devil is trying to wage war against in marriage is what you should rise up against when you discover this is war. The Lord said, "*Husbands, love your wives*" is a command. Every command is a battle. "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" is a battle. To resist the devil is a battle. "*Run away from all appearance of sin*". Wherever you see the appearance of sin, you want to run away, it is a battle. The same thing, the command "*love your wife*" is a battle, but I pray here that we will grow.

I am talking about our men. We grow to the point that it no longer becomes a battle again, in the mighty name of Jesus, but the love shall flow naturally, in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, what is the number one foundation of successful marriage? What is the number one foundation of successful life? Love. God has given that command. "Love your wife."

If you would desire these five blessings of God for your home and marriage, and you also want success in ministry and in a godly home, you must obey this word, "*Love your wife.*" Ephesians chapter 5 verse 25 says, "*Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*" This is where we come across the definition of love that Jesus is talking about, the command that we are to carry. We now see the level of the love, the standard of the love that God is demanding from us. We see the standard of love that Jesus is asking for.

In the marriage at Cana of Galilee, we see an example of how the wine of love can finish. As early as possible in my marriage, I considered this like a parable directly to me when I read John chapter 2. On the wedding day, the wine finished. The wine of love finished during the reception, even right on the wedding day. But thank God that Jesus Christ was invited. How come that became the first miracle of Jesus? The first miracle of Jesus Christ

was at a wedding. The first institution of God was at the Garden of Eden, and it is about marriage.

It is as if when the devil has attacked marriage, in the New Testament, Jesus came to start His miracle by using marriage as His first miracle. He was there, He was invited, and He was standing by. No other action, just standing by, because He knew the devil has attacked marriage to the extent that even right on the marriage day itself, wine finished. The wine of love has begun to finish. Today, now we are beginning to see 24-hour marriage. We are beginning to see 36-hour marriage.

We are beginning to see that the devil has crumbled marriage to the extent that people begin to marry trees, mango trees. They begin to put ribbon on the neck of goats. They begin to take sheep, goats, animals to the altar, and one stupid, empty-headed servant will stand before a man and a goat, and be saying the vows. We should know that that man himself is just an animal in human skin. That is how bad the devil has bastardized marriage. But in many Christian homes, marriage is not yet as bad as that, but the devil still hates marriage.

There are many, many women that are very sad. Many ministers' wives are very sad, but they dress well and they come to church services. Many women have enjoyed their marriage only in the first or second year of their marriage. They have not enjoyed the man again. The man has become something else. I pray for all our marriages here. The Lord shall heal them, in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

He said, *"Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church."* That is the standard. So, every man here understands it is not just a matter of "Honey, I love you, honey, I love you," and then sending gifts. There are women who likes that. Am I correct? Yes, we love that, "Honey, I love you," but it is more than that. *"As Christ loved the church,"* that is, as Christ overlooked all the problems of the church. Does Christ love the church? Is church okay? Is church perfect? Church is not okay because church is a spiritual hospital. Spiritual headaches, spiritual stomach trouble, some madmen in suits sitting in the church, and yet the pastor is

preaching, and you see a man, a correct man in suit. The pastor is preaching. He is disturbing the pastor. "Ride on, Pastor. Ride on, Pastor." They did not even allow the people to hear what is being said in church. I have seen people watching and listening to the pastor preach before, and as the pastor was preaching, they were watching soccer, and during the service, Liverpool scored a goal, and they erupted with a shout "it is a goal" before realizing where they were and they started apologising "Sorry, sir. Sorry, sir. "

They were men and not boys. Is that normal? We have different types of people in the church, and yet Christ is patiently waiting for us, patiently enduring until the perfection of the church. He said the five-fold ministry gift is to work for the edification of the body and for the perfection of the saint. Christ is interceding for us. Christ is still waiting for us. As Christ loved the church, so you love your wife. You are not going to marry your wife, and then start complaining that she is talking too much. She likes to talk too much. Why are you doing like that to your wife? You have married her as a talkative. The love of Christ will make you overlook whatever faults there are in her life.

We came from different homes. Some came from Lekki. Some came from Ipetu. Some came from Mushin. Some from Ekiti, the country side. The moment the Lord brings you together, you are one, and therefore the blessing of God must begin to manifest, the five-fold blessing. Irrespective of where you came from, the command of God is that your marriage should be blessed. The command of God is that your marriage should multiply. The command of God is that your marriage should replenish the earth, that it should give the earth what the earth is lacking. Your marriage should supply to the world what the world is lacking.

Your marriage should be an ocean of joy. The world is lacking joy. The world is lacking peace. Right from your marriage, you should replenish the earth with joy, replenish the earth with peace, with favour, with enlightenment. Gifts should come out of your marriage. Instead of the devil quenching the fire of your marriage, the fire should ignite.

Therefore, *as Christ loved the church*, that is the standard, *and*

gave Himself for her, that is the level, that is the level. Brothers and sisters, fathers, those of you that have wives at home, I pray for us, we will meet the standard, in the mighty name of Jesus. He said, *"As Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her."*

Christ loved the church and He died for us on the cross. I am not asking you to die for your wife. But if it comes to dying, if it comes to that can you? There are some men that cannot even feel the pain of their wife. So, if the command says, *"Love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her,"* and the question comes, can you give yourself for your wife? Some men will say, "Which one? Which one? Is it this one? This one? Can I die for this one?"

Some men do not see value again in the wife they have married. Many wives are frustrated. The wife they have begged and prostrated for before marriage. The wife they solicited for her hand before they married. How come after marriage the love has disappeared? When the Bible says, "Love your wife as Christ loved the church, that He gave Himself for her," that is, you can give yourself for your wife. You can feel her pain.

I am speaking to us about success, because if the marriage is wrong, ministry will not be right. There are a lot of men of God, a lot of ministers of God whose marriage has crumbled completely, and their ministry is going down fast. May our life not be like Eli. Eli was practically sleeping in the temple, in the tabernacle. He loved the work of God to the extent that he was living there. When the ark was taken to the battleground, Eli was sitting at the doorpost waiting for the ark. They came to announce to him, "Your two sons have died." Eli did not fall down at that time. Do you remember? He was still sitting. But the Bible said when he heard of the ark, then he fell backward. He loved the ministry more than the family.

But that is not God's order. There are some people that they love the work of God more than their wife, more than their children, and more than their home. The moment you miss the priority, the devil will come back to attack you later. I pray for every one of us, we shall do the right thing in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

What is the picture of the love that the Lord wants us to show our wives?

Proverbs 18:22 says *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."* He who finds a wife? How many of us, I am asking men now, because this is men's talk, I will come to the women later. How many of us found our wives? Or is it your wife that found you? Is it your wife that found you? How many of us found our wives? How many of us searched for our wives? Or is it your wife that searched for you? Is it your wife that proposed to you, kneeling down with a flower because that is the madness of today. Instead of men to search for wives, it is wives searching for husbands now, they are reversing the order.

There are some of us men here who knows what it meant to search and find our wives. We knew what it took. If about three sisters have dribbled you and knocked you down, when you find the right person, you will appreciate her. I am in that association; sisters have dribbled me. Going to a sister and saying "The Holy Spirit led me to you" even if I did not hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, but I told her the Holy Spirit led me to you. "You are the best choice for my life" and I asked her "Will you marry me?" She said she wanted to go pray about it. She was praying about it, first year went, second year went. Meanwhile, I grew up in a church with good Sunday school and they have taught us that you cannot propose to one person and propose to about 4 or 5 other people at the same time, like the madness of today. At that time, you had to wait for a response before you propose to another.

I had to wait first year, second year, third year, ah, God have mercy. It was like I was in a cage I could not go out. If it is not God's will tell me, if it is not God's will let me know, but she said wait, just wait. She said am I impatient, I responded that I am not impatient, I am just asking for time's sake. She kept saying just wait.

At last, she said no. She did not even say no; I discovered by myself that she was eyeing a brother and her plan was that, if the brother says no, then she will come to me. Someone advised me

strongly to move on. That revelation was actually a prayer answered.

By the time I discovered the person I was to marry, I did not even know if she was the will of God. At that time, I had fasted three days in a marathon and I told God that if it was His will He should make this happen. So, I went to the sister with confidence and I said "I feel that you are the will of God for my life." The sister said "Brother Mike, the Holy Spirit ought to have told you that I am engaged." I said "Ah!" Meanwhile, I was respected on the campus. I was the leader, well respected on the campus, and the sister challenged me that the Holy Spirit should have told you. I said it is true.

All through the night, I do not know if I even slept at all. I kept asking "Why Lord, why is this happening to Your son?" I was ashamed of myself. So, I have gone through all those experiences. When I then heard that I should talk to one sister Shola Gloria. I said, "Ah I do not know how to do this. This one is the most beautiful amongst all the ones I had been talking to. "

I was the one coordinating the entire drama unit and the sister was part of the unit. I was wondering how I would go and talk to this one. This time around I could not even recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit. I just went to her and I said "Sister, the Holy Spirit did not send me oh, will you marry me or not?" The Bible says he who finds a wife finds a good thing.

If you go and you find your wife, the Bible said it is a good thing. It is a good thing you have found in your life. That sister you proposed to, it is a good thing and you have obtained favour from the Lord. So, from here, I understand that the blessing of the Garden of Eden continues. Whoever it is, you are the one that went to look for her and you prayed.

Many times, God intervenes so that we will not pick the wrong person, like He intervened on my own part and He eventually made me to land in the hands of the right person. But once you pick, the Lord says you have chosen good, you have chosen favour.

How many of us have goodness and favour in our houses here, I am not talking about by faith, I am referring to reality. How many of us have goodness and favour? What is her name? Henceforth that is how God wants us to look at our wives because that is who your wife is. I know that wives here are happy that their second name is goodness and favour. Whatever your name is, the Bible calls your original name goodness and favour. You can make your wife happy when you get back home if she is not here, if she is here turn to her and say "Sister Favor how are you, Sister Goodness how are you?" That is what the Lord calls your wife, you obtained favour and she shall be goodness and favour unto you.

That is to say there is a goodness in her, unless you discover it, you may not see it. There is a goodness in her by virtue of the covenant of the original institution. Unless you are patient, unless you look well, unless you align yourself with the counsel of God, you may not see the goodness, but I pray for every one of us that we shall discover it, in the mighty name of Jesus.

Therefore, there are things in her that will do you good, that will give you favour, you must find it out, you must extract it. The Bible says that Adam slept when the Lord wanted to give him a wife, and God took one rib and with the rib He created the woman and that has been the template, that has been what the Lord did. That is why every lady is a missing rib of the man. And that is why we call them "Miss," because they are missing. They are just moving about until the owner finds them. When the owner finds them, they are no longer "Miss," they become "Mrs." that is "found by a man. "

Now what I want to bring out of this is that the woman that the Lord said you should love was your missing rib that you found by the help of God and it was placed back into your life. The missing rib was placed back into your life, that is why it is madness to be bitter against her. Is there anyone here that is bitter against any part of his body? Your wife is a part of your body. It is a war; you must keep on resisting. When the devil is attacking it, you must stand firm. When the devil is fighting the love, you must fight

back.

Let us look at this passage in 1 Peter 3:7, "*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.*" This is one of my favourite verses.

When I discovered this one, I realized that inside your house, even if you are a fire-brand brother, there is someone inside your house that can hinder your prayer. You have married somebody, if you misbehave, if you treat her badly, if you do not give her honour, your prayers will be hindered. It is what the Bible says: *give honour to her that your prayers may not be hindered.* When I discovered this, I understood.

It says give honour to the woman. How many of us have "Honourables" in our houses, I do not mean the House of Assembly honourable, those ones are honourables on paper. But the original honourables, the Bible says give honour to your wife. That means she is an honourable.

So, how many names does she have now: Goodness, Favour, Honourable.

Look at the way God carries our wives; I pray for you women that the Lord will establish you and you will do the right thing at home, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I am rounding off this aspect and going to the second aspect. It says dwell with her with understanding. I cannot go over everything; I will just pick some things. Some people are the architects of their own unanswered prayers by the way they treat their wives, the way they are bitter against their wives, the way they mistreat their wives. From God's point of view, you are not just preparing yourself for beautiful homes, you are not just preparing yourself for beautiful marriages, you are not just preparing yourself for peaceful homes, but for fine, good and beautiful ministries. Something will be missing when you do not treat your wife well. Something will be missing spiritually speaking, concerning your ministry. You cannot have the best of it; you cannot have the fullness of it. Concerning your marriage

and concerning your home, you cannot have the fullness of it. And you can now see that many of these things are happening in our homes and marriages even in the church. There are some husbands that the way they treat their wives is bad.

Always understand that anything that will make you bitter against your wife is not from God, no matter the reason. It is from the devil who hates the institution right from the start. When God created Adam, everything was normal in the Garden of Eden. But when Eve came, Satan showed up, because he knew that the arrival of Eve was an arrival of multiplication, arrival of fruitfulness, arrival of replenishing the earth, and arrival of dominion. Because it was when the two of them were both present that God blessed them. The devil was angry at the coming of Eve and till now the devil is still fighting marriages, but he will fail over your home, in the mighty name of Jesus.

So, dwell with them with understanding. You must learn to listen to her. Learn to listen to her. Learn to understand when she is communicating. Give honour to your wife, the Bible says, as a weaker vessel. They are not weak; the Bible says as a weaker vessel.

Do we know what a weaker vessel is? It is like ceramic plates, glass, eggs, those are weaker vessels. Stronger vessels are like plastic. For example, a bottle of water can be thrown on the ground and picked up immediately; that is a stronger vessel. But you cannot just drop a ceramic plate like that. Meanwhile, ceramic plates are used to serve guests, they are placed in the places of honour. So, the Bible says, treat them as precious vessels that must not be shattered, that must not be broken, that must not be mishandled, that your prayers may not be hindered. I pray for every one of us that wherever we have missed it, we shall find solution, in the mighty name of the Lord Jesus.

2. WIVES, SUBMIT TO YOU HUSBANDS

Ephesians 5:22–25. *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord."* Your submission is as unto the Lord. After marriage, some women, when they are asked to submit to their husbands, they will say the man is not responsible. Note that

your submission is not foolishness; it is an order from God. The devil is fighting this today. They have brought the battle to social media. If you post anything on Facebook as regards this Ephesians chapter 5 verse 22, "*Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands*", You will see people running after you like bees. That is when they will say they are not slaves. They are created equal. They too have brains and on and on.

But the Lord said the husband is the head. This is the church of God, and we are saying the truth. The Bible says the husband is the head, but when you say it on social media they will come after you with comments like "Does it mean the wife does not have a head? Does it mean they cannot think? Does it mean they are dunces? Does it mean they are fools?" Let me say this to every daughter of Zion, women that are children of God here, know that your life must not be dictated by the pattern of this world; your heaven is more precious. There are people who the devil has destabilized their home and destroyed their family, and they are looking for other families to destroy. Stand by the word of God if you want to enjoy your life. If you want to enjoy your home, marriage and ministry, stand by the word of God, and, at the end of the day if you want to get to heaven, stand upon the word of God.

So, the Bible is saying wives should submit themselves to their own husbands, but today, we see the opposite in many places. Some wives are so arrogant. Some wives are so stubborn. Some men would have had successful ministries if not for their wives. There was a particular sister in our drama ministry that during a particular meeting, she stood up suddenly and said, "See, see, see, there is nobody that does not have madness. It is just the fear of God that is suppressing it." How can such a woman submit?

Many times, with an indication from the inner man, the man would want to move, but the woman would just say no. What is the reason for the no? She will say she does not know, but her answer is no. Even if the man asks for a reason, she will say she is not giving a reason but her response is a no. Many men would have moved far in ministry but there is an obstruction for no reason. Today we have a lot of forces of evil working in the lives

of many women and they are discipling other young ladies, telling ladies not to come to the level that the Bible says they should be.

If you look at great women in the Bible like Sarah, the Lord would speak to Abraham to move, to go from his country to another country He would show him. Abraham would move. The Bible says, ... *and Abraham went with Sarah*, Sarah would follow. There is a weapon women have, if you can use that weapon, you can subdue every man. You do not need to fight. You do not need to be arrogant. You do not need to fight him.

Women are the last born of creation. God created them last. They are the baby of the house. That is why they cry so easily. How many of us have the baby of the house? Am I not correct that women cry easily? If you praise them too much, they cry, if you do not praise them, they will cry. For some, if you miss their birthdays, you will pay for it.

Now if they are the baby of the house, naturally speaking, who does the Father love more? If you look at the Garden of Eden, when the Lord created the woman, the Bible says and God brought her, walking through or walking on the aisle, God brought her. Adam was standing by the altar and God brought her, and God was walking and when Adam saw her, like some movies we have watched, when the man sees the woman being brought, the man would smile. That was the same way Adam smiled and said "*This is the bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.*"

I always imagine God bringing Eve and handing her over to Adam and saying "*This is My last born, take care of her.*" The woman has great power. The power the woman has includes that she can report a stubborn man to her Father, and God will respond. Just report the man; since it was your Father that brought you to him, report the man. When the man is seeing visions that you do not understand, the man might actually be seeing correctly, but you do not understand, instead of fighting him, go to the Father to report the case. "Father, Your son has come again, the man You gave me to, he is saying things I do not understand, help me stop him, make him restless, let him stop." If the step he is

taking is the will of God, the Father will tell you, "My daughter, it is My will, follow him." If it is not God's will, it is very simple.

There are many times that I have wanted to do something, I do not know what my wife did. She would say, "Do not do it like this" and I would insist on doing it. You know that when some men carry visions, they are not seeing anything else again. They will keep insisting that this is the will of God and this is what I will do. My wife would just be quiet. Then, over the night, the Holy Spirit would just come and speak to me, asking if I was alright, if I was okay, if what I was planning to do was the right thing to do. I believe we understand what I am saying. I am not the only one that that is guilty of this. By the next morning, I would have come to understand. Then, I would go to my wife and say, "That thing you said we should do, how did you say we should even do it?" You know men have ego. They will not say, "Honey, the Holy Spirit came to me yesterday night and corrected me." No, instead, they will come to you and say "Present your idea, let us see what it looks like."

You have a Father, your Father in Heaven. When God had created everything, animals, trees, and all others, He gathered all the remaining materials and built the woman so precious and wonderful. After God had created man, God said "it is not good that this man should be alone, I will make a helpmeet for him" and He created you. So, you are wonderful. You are a great daughter of Zion. Learn to report your husband to your Father, God will respond in the mighty name of Jesus. That is part of the submission.

Verse 24 says therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject to their own husbands. This is Scripture. That is raw Scripture; it is the word of God. We should abide by it if you want to have a successful and peaceful home. If you want to have a joyful life, stand by the word. Do not copy the world. Do not live your life by the template of what is happening presently.

We have a lot of women in Christ who are stubborn today. Some women have shut the mouths of their husbands at home and they are moving about in ministry. The man cannot move. The man

cannot do anything. The woman is a tiger at home, but on the pulpit you will hear her say things like: "I bring you greetings from my husband, the sugar in my tea, the honey on my bread, my everything, in fact without him I cannot be here." It is a lie.

They go wherever they like and then they will be asking everyone to wave their hands to their husband from where they are. They will say "We are online now, honey you are seeing them, they are waving at you, they love you, I love you" and they will be blowing kisses. Meanwhile they had a fight before she left the house. They will leave the man alone, traveling all around, leaving the man in the cold without anyone to take care of him. They find it difficult to abide by the Scriptures and they go about raising other daughters of Zion after them.

Therefore I am saying to all sisters that are single, including married women, these women I am talking about say things like: "If your husband cannot drop this kind of money he is not a husband. If your husband cannot do this, he is not a husband." When many women hear things like these, they get back home and begin to look at their husbands, wondering if this is a husband or a "horse-band. They will begin to question so many things.

Therefore, I am rounding off in this area by saying, these are dangerous moments. We should be careful of the messages we hear. Some messages are destroying homes. Some messages are making gentle sisters to become stubborn. Some messages are making some sisters who have been formerly faithful, humble and submissive to begin to question their faith. They begin to wonder if they are fools.

Some sisters were very strong; the Lord brought you from the rock, very strong. When you were getting married, you were prepared to wage the war against the devil with your husband, you were prepared to get to the Canaan land with your husband, no matter what happens. But suddenly by what you begin to hear from different places, by books, by tapes, by messages, by things from some 'men and women of God' that are destroying homes by their words. They will not tell us the battles they fought when they were growing. Instead, they will be telling of the victory they

got at the top. They do not prepare the youths to fight the battles coming. They do not prepare them well to wage the battle of faith. They put their eyes on the achieved success. They will say things like, "Do you not see me now? See the things I am achieving." But was that the way you began? Did you not fight battles? And so, young ladies who are supposed to fight battles at the beginning begin to rise up and say they too have to make it. At what age? May the Lord help us, in the mighty name of Jesus.

The devil is waging war against marriages today but the plan of God for our marriages is that it shall succeed. It shall be fruitful. It shall multiply. It shall replenish the earth. It shall subdue unrighteousness. Your marriage should produce fruits that will subdue unrighteousness. Things should come out of your marriage that will impact the world. Your marriage should be so fruitful.

I am not talking only about biological children. I am talking about spiritual impact of your marriage. There are some marriages that when youths look at them, they will love to marry. They want to marry. They begin to pray that the Lord give them good marriages. There are some marriages that when youths see them, they do not want to marry. They want to run away from marriage. Recently, different things are happening that make youths begin to doubt marriage. They run away from it and they are afraid of getting married. But that is not the will of God. They are all battles of the devil. I pray for us that the Lord will sustain us and keep us, in the mighty name of Jesus.

I am about to round off. Let me quickly read this verse, Proverbs 22:6: "*Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*" There is a command in that verse and there is a promise. The command is "*train up the child in the way he should go* "!. Train up a child, not a man, in the way he should go. The way you want him to go; the way the Lord had opened up your eyes that your child should go. It was Hannah who brought Samuel to the temple and dropped him there. The husband said, "Do what is in your heart ". So, the parents submitted Samuel at the altar and he became a prophet. Yes, the Lord wanted Samuel to become a prophet. But the parents had to agree. Today, we leave

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0.

our children alone to decide for themselves.

If you are married with kids here, can you whole heartedly say that you are raising your children the way God wants you to? That is a question that is begging for answers in some families here today as I round off.

God bless you.

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0



Rev. Leke Hassan
Chairman: Switch 2.0

SWITCH 2.0
MAY 13, 2023

WELCOME REMARKS BY
THE GENERAL OVERSEER

In the most precious and exalted name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Baptiser with the Holy Spirit, Healer and coming King of glory, and on behalf of my amiable wife and the National leadership of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to this special and auspicious occasion - the second edition of SWITCH, otherwise called SWITCH 2.0.

SWITCH offers a platform for our organisation to give back to the body of Christ in terms of offering mentorship opportunities for Young Ministers, the Next Gen and indeed everyone desirous of benefiting from the wealth and depth of knowledge and experience of those who have made and are still making success in ministry, marriage and the marketplace. It is my belief and earnest expectation that the time we would be spending together will be to renew, revive and recalibrate us into a higher realm of operation and positive impact in these areas.

The Foursquare Gospel Church, known globally as the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel is an Evangelical/Pentecostal denomination founded in 1923 by a renowned Canadian/American lady preacher and first female televangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson in Los Angeles, California, USA. Through the missionary efforts of an American couple, Rev. & Mrs. Harold Curtis, the Foursquare message was brought to Nigeria in 1955.

By the grace of God, the work of the church in Nigeria has progressed and prospered greatly, resulting in hundreds of thousands of souls finding salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, satisfaction and fulfilment in life as we continue to propagate the Foursquare message of Jesus the only Saviour,

Jesus the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, Jesus the Healer of all sickness and diseases, and Jesus the soon coming King of glory.

Presently, the church is vigorously pursuing the Decade of Soaring vision through the help of the Holy Spirit with particular attention given to Inreach, Outreach and Nextgen. Within our system as a church, we are blessed with a large population of resourceful, vibrant and talented youthful population; and it is the vision and focus of the leadership of the church to ensure that we create the enabling environment for this energetic segment of our demography to express their God-given talents as well as expose them to discipleship and mentorship programmes in preparation for taking on leadership responsibilities, both now and in the future.

In our missions and evangelism efforts, reaching the next generation has to be intentional. We must not be like Eli who assumed that his children would get it and, unfortunately, they became sons of Belial. 1 Samuel 2:12, *"Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord."* Neither must we assume like Samuel who was told by the nation of Israel to his face that his children were not following after him and therefore couldn't be priests (1 Samuel 8:4-5).

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our resolve to host this event annually is borne out of the commitment and determination to contribute our quota as a church to raising the next crop of leaders for our nation in different spheres of life. At the maiden edition held last year, we welcomed into our midst Pastor John Obaro, CEO of SystemSpecs and Pastor Mike & Gloria Bamiloye of Mount Zion Drama Ministries who joined me in demystifying how to make a success out of ministry, marketplace and marriage without compromising our Christian values.

We have chosen as our topic this year: **REVIVE, RENEW, RECALIBRATE**. King David declared his intention to pass on his relationship with God to the next generation when he said in Psalm 71:17-18; *"O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare*

Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come. "

Our administration will continue to create avenues for mentoring the Nextgen - helping them to develop their gifts, allowing them to become partners in ministry and recognizing that they are among the church's most important assets. Former US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, *"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."*

On this note, I warmly welcome our guest speakers, Rev. Dr. Tunde Lemo, OFR, chairman of Titan Trust Bank and Rev. Mrs. Funke Felix-Adejumo, a seasoned marriage and relationship coach and wife of the Bishop of Agape Christian Ministries, Inc. Akure, Nigeria. They will be joining me in declaring God's counsel as we bring to bear the divine pathway to success in Ministry, Marketplace and Marriage respectively.

In closing this remark, let me appreciate the Planning Committee of this event chaired by our dearly beloved Rev. Leke Hassan for putting together a wonderful programme. May God reward your service in His vineyard in Jesus' name.

Once again, you are welcome. God bless you all.

Reverend Sam Aboyeji
General Overseer

SWITCH 2.0
MAY 13, 2023

MINISTRY
REVIVE, RENEW,
RECALIBRATE
Rev. Sam Aboyeji

Have you not known, have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the heavens, of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of his understanding. He gives power to the faint and to them that have no might, He increase strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:28

You will not faint, in Jesus' name. You are not going to faint, in the name of Jesus. In the time that I have, I am going to be talking about Ministry lifters. Or if you like, principles behind outstanding ministry. I love the word lifters because if you are going to my office on the fourth floor, and you are privileged to enter the lift, and somebody else has to climb the staircase, you will know the difference when you get to the fourth floor. The man who entered the lift is likely to arrive there fresh looking, beautiful looking, handsome looking and unruffled. Whereas the person who climbed the staircase, no matter how strong he is, will know that something is going on in his body. So, that is the difference. When I talk about ministry lifters, I am talking about things that will make ministry easy for you.

There are age-long principles that have been there over time. A man by the name Warren Westby, who lived between 1929 and 2019, came up with ten principles of ministry and those ten principles, I was privileged to author a book on it, those ten principles, are age-long principles that you cannot fault. Anybody

that operates by those principles cannot be weary in ministry; you cannot faint in ministry. Because it is not the will of God that anybody should be in ministry and pack it up, and you will not pack it up, in Jesus' name.

In Judges 8:4, we are told about the 300 men that ran with Gideon. The Bible says that these men crossed Jordan, and they kept running, even though they fainted. Look at it. When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the 300 men who were with him crossed over, exhausted, but still were in pursuit. Have you ever heard that before? That somebody is fainting, one translation says, fainting but pursuing. Can somebody who is fainting pursue? There must be extraordinary strength that they are drawing from. And that is what we read from the book of Isaiah chapter 40.

There is always extraordinary strength to draw when you know where to draw it from. I love the way God put it to Moses. You know, he was talking to the children of Israel generally in the book of Psalm 103 verse 7. *"The Bible says, he made known his ways to Moses, but his acts to the children of Israel."* They were waiting for the manifestation. They were waiting for the manifestation. But he made known his ways to Moses.

It is better to know the way than to settle with the acts. When you know the way, the acts will be automatic. If you do not know the way, you cannot have the acts. Most of the times, we get carried away by the acts. We just want the acts. I have met a lot of young people who have entered ministry, and they will say, oh, if God can just make my ministry like the ministry of the other young lady, or like the ministry of Mummy Adejumo, that would be fantastic. You need to go and ask her, how did she get there? That is the way. You must find the way.

Let me start, even with the little time I have, to define what ministry is. What is ministry? Because that is where a lot of people miss it. Ministry is anything you do or any person that achieves something. In fact, that is the dictionary definition. Whatever it is that you do or anybody that achieves something. And I have it confirmed in the scriptures. Paul the apostle in Acts 21, verse 18 to 20, hear what he said; *"on the following day, Paul*

went in with us to James. And all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told them in detail, those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry ". Listen to a man who has ministry. So, from this scripture, ministry is about achievement. Did you hear what I said? Ministry is about achievement.

You cannot tell me you are in ministry and we cannot see anything. Paul had to go to the church in Jerusalem. When he got there, he gave an account in detail of what God had done through his ministry. I ask you this morning, you say you are in ministry, what has God done through your ministry? You must show us. Show us what God has done through your ministry. Paul went and showed his own. I pray you will be able to show your own, in Jesus' name.

Ministry is work. Ministry is not all these titles with entitlement. Ministry is not title. Ministry is work. Ministry is the work that is divinely assigned to a person to fulfill. Everyone he called, he gave a task, because God is a purposeful God, he gave each a task. Ministry is simply harnessing divine resources to achieve divine assignments. That is what ministry is all about.

In 1st Timothy chapter 3 verse 1, this one is very interesting because it is talking about title. Look at it. This is a faithful saying, If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a title? Is that what your Bible says? What does it say? A good work. So, ministry is work. Ministry is hard work.

You know, when we were just rearing our children, my second son, a very smart guy. If anybody came to see us at home, he would quickly go and sit with the person. He would start downloading everything about the family to the person, expecting the person to also download to him. So, one day he came to me, I said, boy, what would you like to be in the future? He said, daddy, I would like to be a pastor. I was very interested. I said, here is one boy who wants to be a pastor. I said, so why do you want to be a pastor? He said, daddy, because pastors rest 6 days and work 1 day. Everybody works 6 days and rests 1 day. I said, is that why you want to be a pastor? He said yes. Of course,

maybe the pastors he saw around did not work Monday to Saturday. They only put on coats and appeared on Sunday.

After he had matured and we had been a while in ministry, one day I called him and I asked him. I said, would you still like to be a pastor? He said, no, you people are never available at home. Always in church. So, he has learned now that pastoral work is real hard work.

In fact, statistics have it that a lot of pastors are suffering from burnout, because some work 55 to 75 hours per week. 50 to 90% of pastors work between 55 and 75 hours per week. Some even work more. And a lot of people who have gone to Bible school, within 5 years of finishing Bible school and taking on the pastoral ministry, many have dropped off. Why is that happening? That is happening also because they do not understand what ministry is all about.

By the grace of God, my own provost, we did call him Polly, Reverend Dr. Matthew Oshibanjo, during the orientation in Life Theological Seminary, I picked it immediately he said this, he said, "Here, we do not give ministry here, we give certification." So, many people go to Bible college, Bible school, without having a ministry. And they go through 3-4 years without getting a ministry. All they came out of that place with is a certificate. That is not ministry.

Ministry is your God-given assignment, and when you are doing it, you feel at ease. God calls everyone to carry out a task. Ephesians 4, 11; and he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. For the equipping of the saints. These titles were given for a purpose, these gifts were given for a purpose, for a task. For the work of the ministry. And for the edifying of the body of Christ. Not just for fun. It is for a task. Everyone he called, he gave a task.

He called Moses, and he gave him a task. Go and deliver the children of Israel. Exodus 3:12, and he said, certainly I will be with you. And this shall be a token unto you that I have sent you; when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall

serve God on this mountain.

I love that. There is a mark to signify the end of the ministry, even at the beginning - How you will know that you have completed this assignment is that you will bring the people and worship me on this mountain. Every person he calls, he gives such a sign. If he did not give you specific tasks to do, you need to do more. You need to find out from him, what is my specific task. When it was the turn of Joshua, we are told that he called Joshua. Look at Joshua in chapter 1. His own job was to ensure that they entered the land and to divide the land. He was to ensure everybody crossed Jordan.

You see, when God gives assignment, it is not usually an easy one. I was wondering, there were people among the Israelites who did not like Joshua. There were people there who did not just like the idea of crossing Jordan. But God said, "You must ensure that everybody crosses over." That is the burden of leadership. So, his assignment was to cross them over and divide the land. But you know Joshua achieved it also. In Joshua 24, 28 to 29. So, Joshua led the people through the path, everyone unto their inheritance. Then verse 29a. *And it came to pass, after these things, that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died.*

One thing that interested me about Joshua was that, you know, in Joshua chapter 1, if you look at verses 1 and 2, when he was being introduced, Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister. He was introduced as the servant of Moses. But in this closing remark, shortly before he died, the appellation changed. Joshua, the servant of the Lord. So, ministry is all about progress. If you started as somebody's servant, you shouldn't end as somebody's servant. You should make progress. So, if you are not progressing, you do not have ministry. Ministry is all about making progress. Ministry is about stewardship and achievement.

I am going to go on very quickly to discuss just briefly the principles or what I call the ministry lifters. The important thing about principles is that principles are not sentimental. Principles are laws. Two plus two will only be four, right? Principles are

sacrosanct. If you like to put it that way. If you do not know them, you will suffer for it. But if you know the principles behind something working, then it will work for you when you apply the principle. If you do not know the principle, it can never work because you do not know it. That is why I say he made known his ways, his principles to Moses and his acts to the children of Israel.

Even Nicodemus identified it. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and he said, "Look, I can see somethings happening, but I do not know how." The Bible says he came to Jesus by night and he said, "You are a teacher that came from God. Because the things that you are doing, nobody can do it unless God is with him." What Nicodemus was simply asking for as a man of wisdom was that there must be something that was responsible for this. But a lot of people get carried away. They just see results, they do not bother to find out what gave rise to these results, because for every cause, there must be an effect, and for every effect, there must be a cause. You need to find out the cause. These causes are what we call the principles behind a successful and lasting ministry.

You will see the difference. When Elishah was going to take over from Elijah, he was not the only son of the prophets anyway. There were several of them. But the issue is that there was somebody who had the understanding of the times. He was not just following Elijah for fun, he could read him. He could sense what was going to happen, the others didn't. They were just interested in Elijah doing miracles and they were amazed by the miracles that Elijah did. They did not find out, how does this thing work? What do we need to do to be a partaker of this thing? They did not bother to find out.

Until one day, when Elijah announced, "I am going," and he told Elisha. He was one of the closest to him, for him to have told him alone. Elijah said, "Anywhere you are going, I am going with you." I am sure long ago, the others had left. In fact, that was why they came to this college here. "Do you know that the Lord will take your master away from you today?" He said, "keep quiet. I know it." He had an understanding of the times.

Did you read about the sons of Isaachar? The Bible says that they

had understanding. First Chronicle, chapter twelve verse thirty-two, they had understanding of the times. They knew what Israel ought to do. Now, when you have understanding, when you know the principles, what happened to the sons of Isaac will happen to you. Their kinsmen were thrown on them, and all of them were subject to them.

In other words, what you know puts you in dominion. What you know puts you ahead. Every man's mountain is his ignorance. What a man does not know, he does not know it. And you pay the price for it. The price is usually higher. The sons of Isaachar were clear. They knew what Israel ought to do. So, all their mates were subject to them. I pray for you today. May you have such an understanding that makes your ministry to be far ahead. I say your ministry will be far ahead by what you know. This is so important.

The sons of the prophets, who were making jest of Elisha, for following his master who was going. In 2 Kings chapter 2 verse 15, the Bible says by the time he was coming back, now he had the double portion of the anointing, the same sons of the prophets, the Bible says, they came and they bowed down to him. It is always like that. The man who knows will always be ahead of those who do not know. The information you have is what puts you ahead.

I was reading a commentary, and it said, they put two things before some businessmen. The bank put two things before them. They said, we are ready to increase your credit line by 50%, or we are ready to increase the volume of information we give you by 30%. Which one will you take? And the business people chose information. Because with information, I can always get whatever I need. But if you increase my credit line, that is more debt. So, the more you know, the better for you. And you are living in the age of information. So, you cannot afford to be ignorant. More principles are available that you can really hold on to.

Let me just run over the ten principles I have, given by Warren Westby.

Purpose Of Ministry

Number one, he said the purpose of ministry is the glory of God. The purpose of ministry is what? It is the glory of God. The purpose of ministry is nothing but the glory of God. The purpose of ministry is the glory of God. And God will not share his glory with anyone. Your main reason for being in ministry must be the glory of God. Your main reason for doing whatever you are doing in the kingdom must be the glory of God, not for self-aggrandizement. When purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable.

A lot of people are in ministry today for so many reasons outside the glory of God. Somebody was telling me there are four categories of people who are called. He said there are people who call themselves, there are those who are called by their stomach. There are those that people called. And then there are those that God called. May you be among those that God calls.

There is no way God will call you and you will not recognize that the purpose of your calling is the glory of God. it must be his glory and nothing more. Why do you think David conquered Goliath? Is David so strong? The main reason why David conquered Goliath was because he was all about the glory of God.

Even when he was going to describe how great the challenge was, in one singular verse, he mentioned God like five times. And he mentioned Goliath only once. That is to show his emphasis. He looked over and above the challenge and was seeing the bigger God behind. In everything you do, if you want to go far in ministry, it must all be to the glory of God. The moment you trade anything for God's glory, that ministry is going down.

I am sure you are aware of the 24 elders in heaven. Till today, they still hold on to their crowns. Those crowns are not on their heads though, but they are the crowned elders. That crown cannot be given to anybody else; it belongs to them. But you know what they did? They put that crown at the feet of him who crowns everybody. So long as you are giving him the crown, you will always get the victory.

Each time I have to go somewhere, I pray, Father, I am going to

battle. I can assure you, when I come back victorious, I will give you the trophy. If you learn to give him the trophy, your victory will be continuous. But many people who haven't gotten anywhere are struggling with him for his glory. Help me touch your neighbor and say, cool down, cool down, cool down. Cool down. Your road is still far. Cool down. Cool down. You never reach. Just cool down. You never reach. Some haven't gotten anywhere yet. Yet, when you see the way they show up, you will think that they are bigger than they are.

It must be for the glory of God. Anything outside that will not be accepted. The singular purpose for ministry must be the glory of God.

If you read the book God's Generals, there is a man they call John Alexander Dowie, one of the highly anointed men. He was so anointed. But a time came when he became bigger than God, by his own estimation. And he said, he was now the John Baptist of today, that he was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. The moment he entered into that realm, things began to turn for him. He eventually died, and the state took over the city of Zion, which he was boasting of. Because the Bible says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

I used to tell people this, "God has not yet resisted us, we are still looking for a way out of the several challenges of life. If God now resists you, how are you going to get out?" How will you get out? so it must be for who? For his glory. Each time Jesus did something extraordinary, something spectacular, he would say, "This is for the glory of God. That is even Jesus, not to talk of us.

Let me move very fast. So, the first principle I want you to take to heart is that the purpose of ministry is what? It is the glory of God. I am going to move fast. So, the purpose of ministry is the glory of God.

Motive of Ministry

Another challenge I know we face in our age is the motive. What is your motive? And the motive for ministry should be nothing but love and sacrifice. You know, I told you earlier, I used to meet

some young people, they would tell me, “Sir, by the grace of God, by the time our ministry is like five years, we should also be flying in private jets.” Is that where to start? Even when you do not have need for it? Is that where to start?

The motive must be love. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.* It must be love. It was love that brought Jesus all the way from heaven. The only reason why your ministry will succeed is because its motive is love. Love for people, love for your fellow man, love for God's people, love for humanity.

I do tell people, “Ministry is all about people.” Ministry is all about who? Without people, there is no ministry. If you are the type who knows you do not have good relation with people, I beg you, go and learn. Go and do whatever you need to do. When you are snobbish, you cannot attend to people, you cannot serve people, and you are saying you are in ministry. After some time, you'll be ministering to yourself, because ministry is all about people. It is all about people.

Ministry to people means service. it means service. Ministry to people means service. Because Jesus said it openly, He said, whosoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant. Let him be your servant. It is about showing love. And my prayer for you is that the love of God will be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us. You see, love and sacrifice are like the manure or the fertilizer for ministry.

January 8, 1956, five Americans, took their own plane, and they went to preach to the Indians. The Indians decided to attack them and they killed them. They went in their own plane, so they are not poor people and ironically, these same Indians that killed them, some other batch went to still minister to them, and, the wife of one of those who were killed, Jim Elliott, also led that group that went to preach to them and eventually they gave their life to Christ. That is what ministry is all about, it is about sacrifice, it is about love. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.*

I tell pastors, you can never minister to people you do not love. You can never. You cannot get across to them if you do not love them. I have been in the mission field, it was a tribe, and I was pastor in the palace of the king. One of the things I got when I got to the mission field where I ministered was their dresses. Till today, I have them more than Yoruba dresses. Every time they are doing a special occasion, they would sew the dress, the most expensive. They would sew it and bring it to me, and then I would tell my wife, we have to wear this dress. She would say, “How will it look like?” And when we wore it, come and see how they would be celebrating us, they would say, you have become one of us. Until you love people, whatever you are saying, they cannot hear it. You must touch their hearts if you want to touch their lives.

The next principle I'd like to share with you is the principle of character and discipline. it takes discipline to be distinguished. A lot of times today, a lot of ministries are crumbled because of lack of discipline. A lot of men and women of God are out of ministry because of lack of discipline. In Proverbs 25:28, it says *he that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down without walls*. That city is broken down without walls.

See, many doors of ministry that by anointing have been opened, but lack of character has closed them. I once listened to a lady and she told me painfully, if this is the only person that can minister for me to be healed, I would rather die. The reputation is so bad, the integrity are zero, that the anointing has disappeared. People cannot feel the anointing again, because the credibility and integrity is not there. Many doors that anointing has opened, character has closed them. It was Billy Graham who said, “When wealth is lost, nothing is lost, when health is lost something is lost, but when character is lost, everything is lost.”

These are principles by which people have long lasting ministry. No wonder that man ministered for 75 years without any scandal. I was reading some of the guidelines that are meant for their staff and I was shocked when I read that you are not allowed to counsel a person of the opposite sex without opening your doors down. That is part of their guidelines for ministry. When I read it, I told

my personal assistant that any time I am with someone of the opposite sex, especially someone he is not familiar with, he should come and open the door every fifteen minutes like he is looking for something, he should just look around and go back. It is better to be safe than to be sorry, did you hear what I said? it is better to be safe than sorry. Character is so important.

Finally, we talk about the principle of absolute dependency on God. It is all about God. If you do not rely on God, then I do not know the kind of ministry you are doing. No wonder some people are turning to all kinds of things. The man who identified the ten principles of ministry said prayer and the word of God are the tools of ministry, any other thing you use, you are on your own. The principal tools of ministry are prayer and the word of God.

So, when we say absolute dependence on God, that is where the work is; that you must so depend on God that you depend only on His word and instructions. When you operate according to His instructions, you are in control.

By the special grace of God, in my few years in ministry, all the things that God told me, I always feel at ease with them. It does not matter what is happening around, I will say this is what He told me and what He said will always come to pass. Lamentations 3: 37; *who saith and it comes to pass when the Lord has not commanded it*. But whatever He has commanded, you must take to it.

When Ezekiel was initially asked; can these bones live? He said, “God, only you know.” But the same Ezekiel said, “I prophesied as I was commanded and bones began to rise up to bones.” Until you learn to listen to Him, you have not started ministry.

I always say that the greatest gift God has given any child of God, any minister, is the ability to hear Him. If you do not hear God, you are like a plane that has lost control, or lost touch with the control tower; that is a disaster waiting to happen. Any man or woman of God who does not hear God is like a plane that has lost touch with the control tower. It is very rare to hear that a flight has lost touch with the control tower and then they will announce that

it has been found, in most cases, the outcome is tragedy. So, when you are a servant of God, you are a man or woman of God who is not in touch with heaven, you are just a disaster waiting to happen.

That is what happened to David, how terrible a situation he found himself? He wept and wept until there was no more strength to weep. But one thing he learnt to do was to ask God, what is the way forward. And God said pursue, overtake, certainly you will recover all.

I have given this testimony of one of my daughters in the Lord who got a job abroad before COVID happened. She prayed about it and God said she should not go, so she stayed back. In the midst of COVID, she got another job abroad and this time God said go. When she told me, I asked her how she was going to go with the COVID situation, but she went. If it is God that said it, you leave the rest to Him, He will execute it. That is why you must be absolutely dependent on God's word.

In fact, I put down in my note as a daily commitment to God's word, receiving instructions. What got Peter out of bankruptcy is receiving instruction. Peter said we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Professionally, it is impossible, but because you have said it, we are moving, and when they moved, they had a great catch. Listen to His word and operate by His word.

Secondly, prayer is the second tool of ministry. There is no way you can do ministry without prayer, unless you have something you are using, like you could be using jazz, and jazz expired. There was a so-called minister in Niger Delta who was using jazz. All the top individuals around that area went to his church. He had four churches. But when the jazz began to fail, the churches began to close up one after the other.

When it remained the last church, someone went to him and said he should go to Foursquare so that they could take over the church from him and give him a job. That was how he came to us. We took over that church; it is a Zonal Headquarter today and then we began to disciple him.

Jazz will always fail because as in John 3:27; *and John said unto them, a man can receive nothing except it be given unto him, for everyone that asketh receiveth.* I tell people that one of the surest ways to do ministry that I know is to pray and read the word of God and listen to Him. That is why the Apostles said; we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. Prayer pays.

I have shared this testimony several times; when I was promoted to be a District Overseer, one of my friends called me and said Congratulations! However, for every new level there is a new devil, but you can handle it with prayer. That is the only thing I heard, the congratulations and everything he said, I did not hear those, what I heard is for every new level there is a new devil, but you can handle it with prayer.

Then he shared with me that every first seven days, first seven nights in his ministry, he holds vigils with his team. He said I can decide to try it, because he knew I was working and he did not know if I would be able to manage it. I did not tell him but I took to it immediately, and for those periods, even those who were praying with me, I was seeing their lives being transformed, to the glory of God, there was no case that was brought into that place where we used to pray that God did not handle.

A woman who was opened up, she had surgery in her stomach region which refused to heal, a young lady already getting advanced in age. As we were praying for her, she said that even when she had not had the surgery, she was looking for a husband, she couldn't get, is it now that her stomach has been cut that she would get a husband? And she was crying. To the glory of God that lady was healed perfectly and not just that, she is married today, and she has a child.

You want to do ministry, I recommend for you at least one hour of prayer per day. If you can do more, it is better, but at least one hour. If you are doing ministry and you are praying '*sukelistic*' prayer, you have not started. But I know that you will end well, you will finish strong, you will go higher, you will be lifted above

your imagination, above your expectation

and say Father we thank you for these ministry lifters, we give you praise, we bless your name, we glorify you, Lord. Thank you Father, blessed be your name, in Jesus name we have prayed.

Prayers

God of heaven and earth, I thank you for these your people, I ask today that you who walked with men of old, you will work with them in the name of the Lord Jesus. If there are some of them who have not had clarity concerning their ministry, because they have shown up in this event, Father give them the purpose of their ministry, in the name of Jesus, open their inner eyes, give them a revelation of the purpose for which you have called them, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I pray for everyone already in ministry, everything they need to succeed, I release into your life, in Jesus' name. Thank you, Father, because you have heard our prayers, in Jesus' name we have prayed.

SWITCH 2.0
MAY 13, 2023

Marketplace
Apostle In The
Market Place
Rev. Tunde Lemo

Let us pray. Precious Father, we thank You because You are God. Thank You because You said in the Scriptures that You are the Lord that gives us power to make wealth. Father in heaven, in the few minutes we have together today to share our thoughts about the new things in the marketplace, our conduct, and what we should be doing, little is much where You are. We cannot exhaust all of it just in 40 minutes or so that we have, but we are trusting You, we are trusting the Holy Spirit to drop in our spirits important things, Lord, that will help transform our businesses. Your name will be glorified. In Jesus' name we pray. Praise the Lord.

So, very quickly I am going to talk about, basically just about what is new. There are so many things I am not going to be talking about because it is a mixed multitude. I cannot drill deep down about business. We have young people, so some of them will also try to get some ideas about how to start a business or, when they are starting, what the landmarks are and then the landmines and those things they should be looking into.

So, I am going to introduce, give you the context, give you the new face of competition in the globalized world, the skills essential for survival particularly today, and then we'll talk about some biblical principles. I thank God for our Father in the Lord who said knowledge is everything and that is true. Today is a world of knowledge.

The difference between the winner and the loser is the body of knowledge that they have. So, if there is anything you must

remember today from a business point of view, it is that you must be at the cutting edge of knowledge and the new things, otherwise you'll be left behind and of course I will conclude thereafter.

First and foremost we need to understand, again our daddy talked about the sons of Issachar who know the signs of the times.

We are in a VUCA world. How many of us have heard the buzzword VUCA? VUCA. Okay, very few of us. When we talk about the VUCA world we are saying that the world in which we live now, the business, and the world generally, is much more volatile than before. It is much more complex, it is much more uncertain, it is much more ambiguous and you then need to do a lot more than before. A lot of things we used to take for granted in those days are no longer there.

In those days you could second-guess the weather and say in December there must be harmattan, rain does not fall in December, January. But today, you may find out that in December, January it is raining like nothing else. I was talking to someone a few days ago and she told me about what happened when she went to Washington DC during a particular winter. It was so hot that it was as if it were summer and that is the El Niño effect.

So, we are in a VUCA world and this affects business and the way we think. So, let us not assume that things will continue to be as before. COVID has brought so many other uncertainties into the world in which we live. Of course we all heard about the financial crisis. In those days we used to pride ourselves in the fact that some banks were too big to fail. There is nothing like that anymore. Not with the likes of Silvergate Bank, Silicon Valley Bank, and Signature Bank, all falling like pieces of cards. These were banks that were rated very, very big before. If it happened far away, it can also happen here in Nigeria. What I am therefore saying is that even from the little things about where you keep your money, it matters.

Some of us are not even dealing only with banks. We are dealing with even microfinance banks, finance companies and so on and

so forth. Please, where you leave your money, you must be interested in the financial health of those institutions.

It is not good for you to have worked so hard and then all of a sudden you find out that that institution has taken your money and then it has disappeared. You have cyber security issues. You know, cyber security is so much of a threat to everybody today. Do not think it affects only banks. You can wake up today and then on switching on your computer, you cannot do anything because of what you call ransomware. You just see that something will pop up and say, "No, you have been grounded and until you pay so much, we are not going to release you."

So, what do you need to do? You need to know more about cyber security. You need to try and reinforce yourself, particularly young people today who are tech-savvy. As you migrate so much of your businesses into the cyber space, yes, you are a lot more efficient, you are cost-efficient and so on and so forth, but then you are vulnerable to cyber security risk. World Economic Forum recently gave a report that currently we are having so much loss to cyber security and they estimated that by 2025, annual cyber security losses could be as high as 10.5 trillion dollars. And that is a lot, that is a lot and do not think you are immune.

There are also the intense things about the geopolitical situation. Look at how the madness of Putin suddenly altered so many things about our lives. When we heard that he was going to hit Ukraine, some of us thought, it is so far away, so why do I have to concern myself? We forgot that about 30% of the food we eat, particularly grains, the bread and so on and so forth, is from that geography, it is from that region. And when it happens suddenly, you realize that the bread you were buying for ₦400, you now buy for ₦800 and ₦1,000.

What about energy crisis, energy cost? It is hitting everybody. If you think it is not hitting you, that product whose prices are going up, maybe that product that takes so much energy, maybe not made in Nigeria but made outside, you have to pay so much for it. What am I really saying? The VUCA world is here for us.

God has already forewarned us in 2 Timothy 3:1, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. We are in the last days, brethren. I cannot explain the details of so many of these things because of the short time that I have, but look at COVID. Many of us did not know how dependent we were on one another until COVID came. And then Europe had to shut down, not because COVID was hitting them, but because so many of the raw materials and the input they use, they depended on in Asia, they couldn't get.

So, we are interconnected and interdependent. When you set up business today, you need to ask yourself: "Where do I source my raw material? How does it get to me?" Isn't it time for me now to begin to think through how I can integrate backward and ensure I am self-sufficient? As you outsource, you are also, of course, making yourself very vulnerable to situations that can come in other geographies.

So, the VUCA situation, but what does VUCA tell us? For every problem, God has a solution. It takes vision to combat a volatile situation. It takes understanding to overcome uncertainties. And it takes courage to navigate complexities. It takes a definite action to ride over ambiguity. And of course, thank God that in Foursquare Gospel Church, this has been declared the month of grace. Psalm 84 verses 11 to 12 says, our God is our sun and shield, and no good thing will He withhold from us in Jesus' name.

In the globalized world that we are in, the first thing and the most important thing you must hold in your hand is that competition is intense. When we were young, you could say I am producing a product. I have this product I am producing, and my competitor is in the next village or in the next street. Your competitor today may not be within your reach at all. That product you think you are producing, you think is a local product, somebody is researching so well in China on how to produce a better version. And so the face of competition has increased, and the way to look at it is even football. Are there local champions in football today? No. You can go to a remote village in Ekiti, and then you see somebody, you say, "Oh, who is your star now?" he mentions somebody in Asia. Tell him to locate where Manchester is on the world map.

He does not know. He may not have even been to Akure, talk less of knowing international airports. But then, the gadgets and all of what we have now has exposed everybody to global stars. What am I really saying? It is a challenge and opportunity, even for young people. You know today, if you think out of the box and you get things others do not get, you can be a world champion, even from where you are. And I want young people to really understand this. I am going to get into that about innovation and things like that.

Your market is no longer defined by your location. Your market is the 8 billion people on the face of the earth. All you need to do is to get things right, to begin to do things that others are not doing. Carve a niche for yourself, and you may just be one person that everybody is looking at globally.

I do a lot of business with young people, and it is amazing what some of them are doing, where some of them are headed. And I know that we haven't seen anything yet, and by the special grace of God, we are going to see many more from your midst, in Jesus' name.

So, the new phase of competition is here. We are in a globalized world. The business you think is captive to you may not be as captive, but then, you also have opportunity to be a world champion in whatever you are doing. And so, coming to innovation, innovation is a continuous process. Gone are the days of, "This is the way we've been doing things." Please, if you still think about that, I remember my days in Anglican Church, that we recite this statement as it was in the beginning, so it is now and forever will be, Amen. I mean, those days are gone.

You think you have a new product today, by next week, somebody is coming up with something else. Let's use a few examples to understand. Of course, you know Nokia. Nokia was one product that everybody loved. About 30 years ago, you remember Nokia? I remember my young days in the bank, the first mobile phone I used to carry was like a walkie-talkie, made by Nokia, you know? so huge. Today, where are they? They thought they had a captive market, they did not do research. iPhone now is everywhere. You

know, it has taken over from them. What about BlackBerry? BlackBerry came, overtook Nokia and even as recent as Obama days, if you remember, Obama used to carry BlackBerry, so much that people thought he was like number one marketer of BlackBerry. But where is BlackBerry today?

In other words, complacency is a bane of business today. Whatever business it is you are doing, if you do not innovate, you will perish. God forbid, you will not perish in Jesus' name. So, innovation is something that is continuous, that you must continue to do. And what is innovation? How do I do things better? How do I have maybe competitive edge, cost advantage? How can I roll this out at a cheaper cost? How can I make it more convenient for my customers? Am I really meeting the needs of my customers? Think out of the box and innovate more and more.

Those in the drink industry know this. I can tell you for free that many of them are struggling now, those who produce minerals (soft drinks) and so on and so forth. Why? Because suddenly everybody has realized how dangerous, how killing sugar is. Today, those who produce just water make more money than those who produce drinks. So, if you are not innovative and you still think, your Fanta, your Coke, and whatsoever, well, good luck to you. The share of throats, there is intense competition there. You better begin to think through how you can then make that drink more healthy, because consumers today, they have knowledge, they can Google the effect of sugar and everybody is running away from sugar. The same way it is affecting the drink business is the same way it may affect the business you are doing. You must innovate.

You all know Yahoo, you know? Yahoo was one of the leading players in the online advertising marketing. Today, it has been taken over by Google and Facebook. The same thing with Blockbuster, IBM. I remember, even my days in Central Bank, the global head of IBM visited Nigeria and she was talking about their market share and so on and so forth. They used to have market share of 80% in 1982, it is now down to 13%. Amazon, Azure, Google Cloud have taken over from IBM. Such a great company.

So, without innovation, we also have JCPenney, Sears. These are giants of yesterday. The list goes on. In fact, research indicates that in the past 21 years, 52% of Fortune 500 companies have been bankrupt, or acquired or they are struggling to exist due to digital disruption.

So, you are a young person, you are doing business, you don't stop learning. If you stop learning, somebody will take your business away from you. You cannot stop learning. You cannot stop updating yourself. You cannot stop updating your skills about customer preferences, customer tastes, how better to do things. You cannot stop interrogating where else to source the raw material at a cheaper cost. A lot of things happen in social media now. Even the Chinese now are helping us to develop how better to do Amala and to do pepper soup and all these things.

Do not be surprised if they now come up with some of the things we do manually and you see it on the shop and then, of course, they are now taking it out as export, things that we should do by ourselves. The list goes on.

There is somebody that I want you young people to actually go and research about, again, because of time. The name is Tara Fela-Durotoye. Have you heard about her? She is 46 years old and she was talking a few weeks ago about her business experience and how she started a multi-billion-naira project in the makeup industry. She said she just looked at the way our mothers used to go to the market to buy all this makeup and they did it all by themselves. And she thought she could begin to have experts who would go to them and do this. That was how she began to build her business. And today, she is not only having a multi-billion-naira business, she is also training other people as makeup artists. And Tara Fela-Durotoye, at 46, has been accomplished.

By the special grace of God, we are going to have so many more Taras in our midst who are in other areas of business. All you need to do is think out of the box. Innovate. Think out of the box and begin to think through how you can do things that are unique to others.

The second thing I want you to know about essential skills for today's survival is your attitude to environmental sustainability and governance, what we call ESG. How many of us have heard about ESG? Now, what is ESG? The world as a whole, led by the United Nations, have realized that the way we conduct our lives is such that if care is not taken, we would destroy ourselves all because of competition. So, there are principles and guidelines now that guide the way you produce things. It must be environmentally friendly. It must not be something that will cause disaster to Mother Earth. You must prefer renewable energy to, for instance, burning carbon and so on and so forth.

So, how does that affect you? If you are in a business where you use PET bottles and petro-plastics or poly-products, your business may disappear tomorrow. You better go and think about how else to do your packaging because the global business community will be penalizing you for that.

As I speak, banks and financial institutions have committed to saying that before they lend to you and I, they are going to be asking you questions about how your attitude to ESG is. Your attitude, the way you run your business, whether you are environmentally friendly and then you embrace sustainability and all those issues. It is a major theme in the UN global policy, and you must also know that as an operator.

There are seven priority areas on ESG. The area of water, the area of waste disposal, biodiversity, urban development, and then, you know, waste management and so on and so forth. You can get grants even if you want to do so much in this area. You can get grants now to convert your business into other businesses, to put in so much of ESG issues so that you can be more environmentally friendly. There are grants that are available and you can make use of that. And you can also set up businesses around that.

Maybe you are interested in waste management. There are so many industrial clusters within the Southwest where cases have been taken to court. Communities are saying, look, you are

polluting our water. You are doing all this. And you can rest assured that before long, they may stop them from doing business. So, you can research into how you can help them to purify their waste so that before they discharge it, it becomes something that does not hurt the environment. It may be a business idea that you are thinking about. Renewable energy also, and then health and safety initiatives. These are areas where you can make business.

The other thing, the third thing I also want to let you know about is the impact of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. AfCFTA is an acronym for a decision by the African Union, that the presidents of African countries made. They realized that the reason why Africa is poor is because whereas other countries trade with themselves, we do not trade with ourselves. We all go north and then we trade with our colonial masters and they cheat us and so on and so forth. So, they believe that the way for Africa to prosper more is to increase the level of trade. So, what they've done now is that if you are exporting goods to any part of Africa or you are importing, the duty is waived. A lot of us do not even know about that. So, you can take advantage of the initiative of AfCFTA and get your business going.

And there are institutions that are ready to assist you. Afreximbank, for instance, African Export-Import Bank is ready to help you. Nigerian Export-Import Bank is ready to help you. The African Development Bank is ready to help you. The Africa Finance Corporation, which is also headquartered in Lagos, is ready to help you. Even Bank of Industry is ready to help you. For those of us who have been reading the news, Mr. Segun Awolowo has been appointed the Secretary of the National Action Committee.

Now, other things you also need to know is that it is similar to the U.S. Some 25 years ago, precisely in the year 2000, there was what we call African Growth and Opportunities Act. What does that tell us? Because America is a very competitive market with its high standards, most of the goods that are imported, that are exported there, are not African goods because we cannot compete. But they decided to lower the standard for Africa and

then allow you to export there duty-free or with steep concession. And there are about 1,800 products. Unfortunately, there are 39 eligible countries, including Nigeria, but out of the countries in Africa, there are 39 countries that are taking advantage of that, 82% of that, and Nigeria is nowhere. Given our population, Nigeria actually should account for the lion's share.

What that tells me is that while others are shining their eyes well and they are seeing opportunities in that area, Nigerians do not. They are not even aware it exists. And what are the things you can export? Basically, things like yam. Who produces yam more than Nigeria? None. But you see, some Ghanaians are smart. They come here, they buy your yam, take it to Ghana, and then export through AGOA, and then they make a lot of money in America.

Textiles, floor coverings, ethnic printed fabrics, folklore articles, hand-loomed and hand-made apparels. These are all products, 1,800 of them.

Now, the other thing is service offshoring. What is service offshoring? How many of us have heard about outsourcing? Outsourcing is when some activities within your organization, you think you do not have time for them, you assign that to other institutions so that you can get done with the core activity. Take for instance, those who sell Coke, maybe Fanta, soft drink. They can sell pet bottles and all these things. I do not have to produce it. Let some other people produce it for me. They bring it, I just put my liquid content inside and then make my money.

Now, when you do it within the country, it is outsourcing, but offshoring is when somebody else outside the country is doing it for you. And this is going on heavily in the industrial countries. In fact, one of the things that exposed how heavy the world is dependent on Asia, particularly China, was during COVID when those things couldn't get in from Asia. But some of us do not know that that provides opportunity for Nigeria. If anybody is doing service offshoring for Asia, Asia is at least twice the distance of Africa to where they are going, which means that for every opportunity there is, an African company that thinks out of the box can get that business and can outpace the Asian counterpart

because of distance alone. And let me just give you one example. Bangladesh is a very poor country, 80%, 90% Islamic country. They are not as rich as Nigeria. An average Bangladeshi is not as rich as a Nigerian, but you know that for the garment industry, they are the ones supplying many companies in Europe.

If you go to Marks & Spencer today and you buy a shirt, you see there, but most of it is produced in Bangladesh. And yet, can these people sell more than Nigerians? I am saying this because if you are into the garment industry and you can produce this thing, you can actually connect to some of these guys abroad, and then you'll be producing for them. People will think it is impossible. It is not impossible. All you need to do is get done with their minimum standard, and then you commit to those standards, then you are in business. The Bangladesh garment industry is estimated at \$10.6 billion. And you can know that if Bangladesh can do that, Nigeria can do much better.

The sixth thing, essential skill for survival is actually technology. This is the tech age. Tech age, young people, given our demographic advantage, we should leverage technology actually to fast-track Nigerian growth. And I'll give you an example. Which company is the biggest transport company in the world today? Uber, thank you.

How many cars, how many vehicles does Uber have? Zero. Praise the Lord. Somebody just sat down and said, look, instead of a taxi driver roaming up and down and then asking where people can be, if I have an application on my phone, all I need to do is to get whoever needs the vehicle, and then I check on my map where the vehicle is close to him, and then I link him up. I was talking to an Uber driver in London a few months ago. He was lamenting and said that the Uber people take about 20% of the price that they charge. When you take off their own fuel and everything, what is left for them is less than 5%, 6%. In other words, they're actually working for them. Again, tech age. So, what you can do for Uber, what has been possible for Uber is also possible for so many other things. All you need to do is, how else can I deploy technology also to help? This is in the area of transportation and logistics.

Technology has assisted in banking. If I say, how many of us have a smartphone today? Almost all of us will raise our hand. How many branches of banks do you think we have in this place? More than 1,000. Everybody that has a smartphone is a branch of so many banks. Not even a bank. A branch of so many banks.

This is how technology has helped us. If I ask you, when last did you visit your branch? You say you cannot remember. But you have forgotten that apart from banking, there are other things technology can do. Companies like Amazon, Netflix, you know, and they've been able to leverage technology. And we can still use technology for transportation, hotel and tourism, and so on and so forth.

And in education, where I play, I know how technology has helped to transform education. Today, if you are a very, very skilled teacher, your class is not the physical class that you have. You can have a virtual class that is 100 times the size of your physical class. All you need to do is to use the Global Learning Management System, GLMS, to actually access many students.

And so, the educational sector has benefited a great deal, but it has been said that they are just scratching the surface. The educational sector can still make do with more of that technology. What about hospitality and health care? Many people travel abroad when they have a health challenge because today you go to the theatre, the expert in ophthalmology who maybe somewhere in Houston or Aberdeen, while the surgery is taking place here will be giving instructions, all done through technology.

So, you can still leverage technology in the hospitality and health care industry, but not so much even for the opportunities we have in agriculture. The world population is approximately 8 billion. Global population and demand for food will increase by 70% by 2050. Technology is needed to decarbonize and new agri-tech startups have recently received funding of over 50 billion globally. For you in agriculture, if you leverage technology, if you want to use more technology, there is global funding for you today.

That is basically what I am saying, that you can access what others cannot access. So, today's agriculture routinely uses sophisticated technology such as robots, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial images, GPS technologies, and these are advanced devices that can be used. It can also be used in industrial manufacturing.

Robotics and automation are being deployed to increase capacity. And then, of course, we have examples in France, Ireland, China, and Czech Republic, where most of these have been. Those in real estate and construction in Nigeria can confirm how technology has helped them. AI systems are used by real estate investors to effectively control expenses and manage risk and gain higher returns using algorithms that are designed to predict and factor in variables and so on and so forth. And then, of course, the airline industry has also benefited a great deal from this.

Within the next 15 minutes that I have, I want to quickly talk about the biblical principles. It is not just for you to note and use these essential skills for survival and so on and so forth. Even the old-time God-given instructions are still relevant. In fact, they are more relevant today than before. So, what are those biblical principles required for business success? Ethics and integrity.

Again, I thank God for this year's theme that talks mainly about it. It is more needed in business. Today, whether you are a believer or not, if you do not embed ethics and integrity in your business, you will soon be wiped out too. The governance rules are now coming up much higher. The fines are becoming very, very, very, very high. You remember that not too long ago, about four or five years ago, one of the telecoms companies, I do not want to mention their name, but we all know them. They were fined with an amount that if it was sustained, it was sufficient to make them fold up from Nigeria.

That is what lack of integrity can do in your business. The Bible says in Proverbs 11:3, "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by duplicity." Proverbs 28:6 says "Better the poor whose walk is blameless than the rich whose ways are perverse." And 2 Corinthians 8:21 says "But we are

taking pains to do what is right not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.” so it is not for you to say God knows I am good, you must also be seen to be ethical.

So, if you are not ethical, you may think you can run away from it but I do not think you can run for much longer. Look at what happened to our senator outside the country. It is part of the ethics we are talking about. In Nigeria anything goes. You want to harvest this, you want to do this, you feel you can do it anyhow. Look at what happened. Let us not demonize him, it could have been anybody, it could have been me. What that tells us is that the rules are becoming internationalized, whether it is enforced in Nigeria or not, you better be sure that you follow them because one day, those things you take for granted may then come to haunt you. May you not fall victim in Jesus' name.

What are the benefits of ethics and integrity? First , you attract more investors into the business. Today if you run a financial institution, you must publish your annual report, it is like naming and shaming, you must publish it so that everyone will see how unethical or how much you abide by rules and regulations. And you know that there is what we call market discipline, the market will penalize you if they read it in your annual report.

It also provides a competitive advantage in terms of the customer. Now today foreign investors are coming into Nigeria to buy into Nigerian businesses. Just yesterday, there was a gentleman who is like number one, one of the best heart surgeons globally. A Yoruba man who was based in America, he decided to relocate about 4 or 5 years ago but he decided to do things ethically. I was pleasantly surprised when yesterday he said that foreign investors are coming and they are taking 10% of his business for \$500 million and they said if he continues like that, in two years' time, they will take that same 10% for \$799 million.

Now what is it that is different from what he has, he may not be different from others who have same gadgets he has, but he decided to do things according to international standard. The lesson here is that no matter how small your business is, do not let people deceive you to say this is Nigeria, anything goes, this is not

abroad, let's do it anyhow. You do not know, the market will penalize you and you do not know when the other guy in the next door that is doing it right will go far ahead of you.

It also builds customer loyalty. Customers are more loyal to you when you are ethical. It enhances company reputation, it also avoids legal issues. People are becoming more and more legally conscious, they know their rights better than before. I know a school that somebody carelessly handled a child and the child died. Before you know it, on social media the parents explained every step of what happened. They ended up in court, the case is still in court, that school was shut down for almost two months. And that is a major scar on the reputation of the school.

So, you can see how reputation matters and how you must do things right. And then of course it helps to retain good staff. In this era of Japa, if you are not ethical, good people will go.

Let me remember to tell you this, every skill you have as a young person, that skill is available not just to people in Nigeria but those outside the country. It does not even matter if you decide to stay in Nigeria. There are many Nigerians today who are foreign staff, and they are physically in Nigeria and they are working outside the country. With technology, all of that is also possible. All you need to do is develop yourself, ensure you are at the cutting edge of the field you are in and through personal development, you can be that virtual staff that they are looking for.

Then of course, that is basically what I talked about: continuous improvement. There is what I call the Rebecca principle. I thank God because I think it was our pastor that was leading and talked about Rebecca. What is the Rebecca principle? It is also relevant in business, it is exceeding customer expectation. Rebecca was not part of the prayer of Abraham's servant that was told to go get a wife. He himself in his prayer told God that when I go, the woman that will not only give me water but also ask to give water to my animals. Rebecca was not there during that conversation, but Rebecca by nature said this man needs water, definitely the camels must need water and that was what transformed her life.

The Rebecca principle can be employed in business, it is exceeding customer expectation. A lot of you say this is the limit I can go, please go beyond that limit.

Let me quickly give this testimony. It is about a meeting we had when I was a young officer in the last commercial bank I worked. We had a retreat and one of the officers was advising management, I was not a director then, I was a deputy general manager. He was advising that we should not sit and allow customers to bring cheques, that for some key customers, we should go and collect cheques from them. One of the directors, an Ibadan man said "What is this one? You want to be like these small banks that are not so strong, no, do not bring yourself down. The customer will come to your bank, why do you need to go there?" We said "Yes Sir." Fast-forward to now, those small banks are now like ten times bigger than that bank. Do you understand, it is exceeding customer expectation.

On ethics, I would also give you a testimony. If you are unethical person, as an employer, I had an experience maybe in 1993, myself and Elder Kehinde Lawanson, we were in a particular bank, we went for a particular transaction, we went to see a customer and we concluded the deal. Then they said they would give us as an aside, ₦500,000 for us to keep in our pockets. It was really king's meat, but we said, "No, we will not take it". They said, if we did not take it, it is not available for the bank. We told them to add it to what our bank would get, after all our bank was paying us salary. They said they would not add it, if we did not take it, then it was lost. We said ok let it be lost and we walked away from that transaction.

Six months later, we discovered that that transaction had been a transaction banned by Central Bank. CBN came after that company, they fired the officer, they fired the banker that did it for them. If we had done it, Tunde Lemo would have been fired, he would not have become Deputy Governor of CBN. Kehinde Lawanson would have been fired, he would not have become Executive Director of First Bank.

What am I saying, there are challenges now in the early stages of your career and this could be deployed by the devil to derail you. Please don't. The Bible says when sinners entice you, consent thou not. ₦500,000 was big then, it was like ₦10,000,000 today but we said, "no way," if you do not add it to our employer's money, we would not take it.

Also, avoid disputes. I have put it there, when you get home go and read Genesis 13 verses 1–13, that is about Abram and Lot. When you read it, you will realise how wise Abram was because Lot was getting greedy but Abram did not make any fuss, he said, "Take whatever you want to take, go your way, I will go my own way". And God compensated him and what Lot escaped with, in the end became zero, he left with nothing. If anyone comes across you in business and thinks he is cheating you, do not waste your time with litigation, just look at it and walk away, report the person to God. Litigation can distract, it can go on for years, just learn your lesson from it and then walk away. Avoid litigation but also avoid strange fellows, do not be greedy yourself.

Finally, there is an announcement here, it is called Skilled Essence 2023, it is organized by the World Trade Organization, our own Okonjo-Iweala is the one informing you and I, particularly young people that there is an annual internship program for young Nigerian graduates and citizens from other nations who gain experience with the World Trade Organization this year. It is a unique opportunity for young graduates from developing countries like Nigeria to receive training and a monthly salary of Swiss Franc 3,500 that is about three million naira and other benefits from WTO. And due to its competitiveness, you are encouraged to quickly apply now and share with the young graduates particularly with those of our church.

Finally, what I have been saying in the last 40 minutes is that the economy in which we are operating today is by far more volatile and you need to be on your toes. Competition has taken a new turn in the globalized world. You are no longer competing with that neighbor, you are competing with everybody in the world. You must innovate, or perish. You will not perish in Jesus' name. You

must be tech-savvy, meaning you must embrace technology and then of course ethics and integrity are not outdated, they are as important as before.

Before I drop the microphone let me also say one or two things about our business, Nigeria and the economy even as we await the arrival of the new administration. You must brace up to pay more for fuel. That is a no-brainer. If you have been holding vigils and praying that it will not happen, forget it, that prayer may not be answered and it is not even in the interest of that prayer to be answered. Rather you should recalibrate and see how you can restructure your business in such a way that your exposure to it is less.

Two; you must be ready to pay more tax. As I speak, taxes are being worked on and especially the value added tax. And those of you that have not been paying tax, go and get your tax papers. The government today is broke. The CBN loan has been added to our loan so we now have officially recorded over 70 trillion naira debt and yet the new government will settle down. One of the ways they will close the gap is to ensure you pay tax. So, if you have been running business and you think you have been escaping it, you may not escape any longer. Rather go and sit and see how compliant you will be. If your business is exposed so much to burning fuel, see what you need to do, whether you want to relocate to where you will not burn much fuel, but I am not a prophet of doom, in the next one year, we may be paying as high as ₦400 per litre. It looks so weird but it won't kill you. By the special grace of God, when we begin to run it, after one or two years, you will look back and say I did not even notice how it affected me. And that is how it would be for those who can think ahead of others.

I need to drop this so that, at least, before it comes, you will be informed.

I think I will end here.

Switch 2.0
May 13, 2023

Marriage
Recalibrate Your
Marriage
Rev Funke Felix-Adejumo

There are two major things you must give to your wife as a married man; space and place. I was watching your man of God when he was brought up to declare this conference open and he made his wife stand beside him. Now, listen beloved, the illiterates of the 21st century are not the people that cannot read or write. They are the people that cannot unlearn and relearn. So, stop saying that behind every successful man is a woman, that is a lie from the pit of hell. It is not scriptural.

When God was going to create the woman, He did not take the bone from behind. He did not take the bone from the head, He took the bone from his side. I feel it was the left rib. So, it is beside every successful man there is a woman. Behind a successful man is a stupid woman. What are you doing behind? What are you doing behind? Stand beside the man, fan him to flame and encourage his heart and the man should do the same for the woman. You brought me here to speak on marriage. So, let us hit the ground running.

Marriage is many things to many people. To some people, it is a necessary evil, to some people, it is a formal relationship in which a woman should give birth to children. To some people, it is a servant-master relationship. To some people, it is, let us just do it because everybody is doing it. But we are believers and the Bible rules our lives.

Marriage is neither African nor Western. Marriage is biblical. Marriage is a gift of God and a gift from God to humanity.

In the African culture, the core African culture, there is nothing called marriage. A woman is only seen, that is if and when she is seen, but never heard. That is why a man can marry five wives. A man can marry 19 wives. A man can marry as many as possible, and when he feels like it, he can send any of them out.

I am so sorry to say this, it is pathetic that even though some men are now born again, tongue-talking, heaven bound, but they still need deliverance from that aspect of the African culture and mentality where the woman is nothing. And it is a pity that some of them are in ministry. If every time, please come my sister, if every time you and your wife are going and you leave her behind, you need deliverance. You are always in the front and the woman is always running to catch up with you. I do not care how anointed you are, you need help.

When last did you open the car door for your wife? When last did you wake up in the middle of the night and you woke your wife up to thank her for bearing with you? Who would have married you 15, 20, 25 years ago with all your idiosyncrasies? When last did you wake your wife up in the dead of the night? Not because you want sex, but to just say, "I just want to thank you. You made life simple for me. You made ministry easy for me. I know you are not perfect, but I want to bless you today." When last did you leave a cheque under the pillow for your wife? Not her birthday, not wedding anniversary, just to thank her. When last did you finish having sex with your wife and you thanked her? Instead of snoring off. Can I be real?

I am going to quote the Scriptures, but I am not here to stand by pastors that do not know how to handle their wives, all they know is the book of Hebrews to the book of Zephaniah. Let us be real. You want to be successful in ministry, maybe you need to add this. A lot of pastors' wives are in pain because pastors can be polygamists. You are married to the church that Jesus gave you and you are married to your wife.

I remember reading about Yonggi Cho in one of his books, he said one day the Lord said to him, "I am going to take My bride from you because you do not know how to take care of your bride. "

When you look at the Bible, marriage was founded in the book of Genesis. The church was born in the book of Exodus in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the church was born when Jesus' body was pierced, but in the Old Testament, marriage preceded the church. Please listen to me for the few minutes that I have to spend with you today. I have prayed and I trust God that it will be about destiny.

This is the order according to God's counsel. God first, you next, your family life before the church or the business, because, pastor, you will not sleep on the altar. If you do not take care of your home, there are pastors' children that do not want to serve their God, because we do not know how to set these priorities in place.

Can I shock you? Like my husband will say, do not die for the church. The person that could die for the church already died for the church. If you die for the church, you have only died in vain. There is nobody that cannot leave your ministry. Do not be deceived. You are not El-Shaddai or else you shall die. "Sir, we will be with you forever, we are here to stay "; it is a lie! Tomorrow they will come and tell you they just gained admission to Australia, they are leaving.

The only person that cannot leave you is your spouse. Even your children will leave, they will go get married.

Recently I was walking through our house and I said, why did we even build this big house? What were we thinking about? The children. Where are they now? They are gone. Canada, America. That is the truth.

I am going to show you an illustration very quickly. Whether you are a pastor, whether you are married or not, I am talking to you today. Please plan for the evening of your life so that you will not be lonely. As pastors, we need to think, because sometimes it can be a thankless job. You kill yourself, you labour, you study.

You think it is easy to preach for one hour? Did you see how many times your G.O. wiped his face when he was preaching, just to

bless you? Those things he shared, he already knows them. If he does not tell us, he is fine, he is doing well, we see God in his life. But just to bless us, did you see the way he was sweating? Scientists have discovered that what he just did for one hour is like you are carrying cement and loading it in the trailer. That is why it is evil for you to dishonour your pastor. It is unkind. Daddy, daddy, where are you? Ah, ah, ah, my daughter is dying. Meanwhile, daddy wanted to sleep with mommy, the generator just packed up. Pim, he is running to go and meet you there. You know what I mean by generator? Yet some of you will still abuse the mommy, some of you will still abuse the pastor. Some of you will still talk against their children.

They are laboring with their lives. And you will be abusing them with your fingers. Or with your mouth. It is evil. It is unfair. Because if he had been working for Shell or Chevron, will he not have access to the things that he has access to? And then you think it is church money. Rubbish. That is not even good there. So, please, set the priorities.

These are the five most important things in your life.

1. God

Number one, God. God is the most important. God did not create a world in which you will not be needed. There is a vacuum in the hearts of every human being that is God-shaped. Only God can fill it. Therefore, I do not want to assume, if you are not yet born again, give your heart to Jesus, and when I am closing, I will be privileged to lead you to Calvary today. That is the most important thing that can happen to you.

I got born again 44 years ago, the only regret I have is I wish I had been born again in my mother's womb. That is when your true life starts.

God is the most important.

2. You

Number two is you. Job chapter twelve and verse number three. What you know I know; I am not inferior to you. Job chapter thirteen and verse two. You cannot forget that. Job twelve three

and Job thirteen two. What you know I know, I am not inferior to you, you are not inferior to anybody. You are primary to you. I am taking you somewhere.

You are primary to you, if you understand that, you will not marry an unbeliever as a believer. If you understand that, you will not go ahead to marry someone that slapped you while you were in courtship.

If you understand what I am talking about, you are primary to you. Every other relationship is secondary. Low self-esteem is a sickness. Your background does not mean your back should be on the ground. It does not matter how you were born. That is not what is important.

Not at all, as the head girl in my secondary school, for two weeks, I would not be able to go to school because of less than one dollar. Look at me today. I do not even know how many children I am sponsoring in school.

So, the point is when you meet with the Lord Jesus Christ, He turns the ladder around. Do not sacrifice your life on the altar of marriage. It is not marriage that completes anybody. Hear me very well and it is not heresy. If you are an incomplete human being, you will meet and marry an incomplete human being and you will have an incomplete marriage.

What is important, more important in marriage is for you to be the right person. Water will always find its level. Do not let any man sleep with you before he marries you. If any man tells you until I sleep with you, I cannot marry you, he is a bicycle, wait for your Bentley. I do not care what goes on in the world. When we were newly born again, if the strap of your bra showed, you would be feeling bad. These days, you see cleavages, you see short skirts. You see, this is not how they raised us. And we need to start changing the trajectory of Christianity. I like the word **Switch**.

Let us begin to be decent in our dressing. I am not giving any excuse for rape. You cannot say you raped me because you saw my cleavage, that is nonsense. You will end up in jail. But I am talking about integrity, dignity, decency.

Nature teaches decency. That is what the book of Corinthians tells us. You are important, it does not matter who has said what about you. You are very important. Do not hand over the driver's seat of your life to anybody. Do not use sex as a trap. Thinking a man will marry you if you sleep with him.

There is no man that does not want to be a hunter. If you give it to him on a platter of gold, he will abuse you. Men were created to hunt, men want to look forward to something. But you go to his house, you must cook, you must wash, you must do different things because you want him to marry you and you think you are thirty-four. God comes late when he wants to come big.

Everything I am sharing with you, I will share with singles and then I will move to the married, then, I will take my leave.

It is based on Genesis chapter twenty-four. We see the prototype of how you should select your marriage partner. So, I said five things are important. God is the most important. You are next.

3. Family Relationship

Then your family relationship. That is the center of gravity. Better not to marry than marry wrongly. I know what I am talking about. Better live your life as a single person till the Lord Jesus comes, than miss it in marriage. Marriage determines a lot.

There is no way your G.O. would have succeeded, if he had issues with his marriage. It is the reality, that is how it goes. Better stay single than marry the wrong person. So, your family is important.

4. Career

Number four is your career. Your career.

5. Relationships

Number five, relationships.

Each of these is a seminar topic but I am not going into them today. I am sticking to marriage.

In Genesis chapter twenty-four, we see the prototype. So, number

one, those of you that are single and you are not yet married, please hear me very well. Marry from your tribe. When I say tribe, I am not talking about Yoruba or Igbo, no. If you are born again, take on 2nd Corinthians chapter six verse fourteen. If you are born again, the problem of marriage is half solved. Marry from your tribe. In Genesis twenty-four, Abraham said to the servant, go back and get a wife for my son. The man said, if the woman refuses, he said then, you are free.

Do not marry someone that has nobody you can report him or her to. Do not marry anybody that tells you; I do not fear anybody, he is a danger on two legs.

Do not think we are stupid when we honor people. When I see mommy Adeboye and I kneel down. Or you see Bishop Oyedepo prostrating for his mentors. Do not think we are stupid. That is your brake system. Any car that does not have a brake system is prone to accident.

Luke chapter number one, beginning from verse twenty-six, as soon as Mary understood what she was carrying, she did six major things. She went uphill to Judah, entered Zachariah's house and saluted Elizabeth. Elizabeth, a mentor, a matriarch who was equally pregnant.

Let me just pause to say this. There are three kinds of people you must run away from. Number one, expired mentors. Saul wanted to kill David. Let us not go into that. Number two, competitive or jealous colleagues. Number three, parasitic protégés. All they do is name dropping. Expired mentors, they are not comfortable with your rising. You preach a message they cannot even thank God for you. Mary went to Elizabeth, everybody needs an Elizabeth. Who is an Elizabeth? Someone that is equally pregnant. Someone that understands ministry like you know, daddy G.O. was talking about a few minutes ago. Someone that understands ministry, that understands the terrain. One of the reasons we could listen to him and be blessed is because we know that he understands what he is saying, we are in this, so when he gives an example, we know what he is talking about.

You need a mentor. I am not talking of somebody's picture that you will put on your screen in your house. Saying Kenneth Hagin is my mentor, someone that you do not even have access to. Locate someone that is secure, that is equally pregnant, that understands how it feels to have morning sickness. Someone you can call and say, my husband just committed adultery, I do not know what to do. And that person will counsel you, pray with you, and still watch you preach without judging you.

I am not talking about mentors that are tormentors. I am not talking about mentors that all they need is money from you. I am not talking about mentors that are not secure. Proverbs chapter four and verse number eighteen, the Message translation says, *"The longer you live, the brighter you will shine."* That is the word of the Lord. Mentors that want you to increase. I do not care what anybody has done for me in life, I am grateful, I am a worshiper, I am a grateful person. But there is no honour I will give to any human being on earth, including my spiritual parents, if I have not given it to my husband. Because when I did not believe in myself, he fanned me to flame. When I did not know that I could become anything, he *"possibilized"* my mentality.

I said to him, even if you cough in church, I will be blessed, because you live what you preach. I said, you are the picture of the future I want for my boys. You live what you preach. Some of you forget the people that held your hands when nobody would have touched you with the longest of poles. Now you have arrived. Let me tell you something, do not tell me you are humble, until some things are in your life like money, wealth, power, position and you can still kneel down to greet the people you used to kneel down to greet. You can still curtsy. They can still call you and you will run there.

Do not tell me you are humble. You say there is a man in our church, he is very humble even though he is poor. What else will he be? What else? When a person like Dr. Lemo shows humility, hey, you know what I am talking about? When a person like the G.O., you know what I am talking about? Do not tell me I am a very humble person. Let us see first of all, get to the position first. Have access to power and money and wealth and let us see if we

can still call you to order.

So, please understand this, Mary was the most blessed woman on earth, in her time and even now. *"My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty has magnified me and holy is His name, His mercy is on them that fear Him. Through all generations He has shown strength with His power. He has cut out the proud in the imagination of their heart."*

That was what Mary said. Most blessed, but she still went, she still went to look for a mentor. You know one thing about mentoring, it is supposed to be mutually beneficial, because Elizabeth was pregnant. She was blessed. But up until that time, she was muted. But when Mary came in, the Bible says she praised the Lord with a loud voice, that is what it should be. Your mentee should be a blessing to you. You should be a blessing to your mentee.

There are so many people that are blessed but muted. Marriage has muted some people. When they were on campus, they were on fire, because they got married now, they cannot serve God again. I am sure you heard that I said I got born again in 1978 and since that time, I have been sweeping in church, I mean sweeping. By God's grace, my husband is a bishop, he has founded many churches, but I still go to church to sweep and I will sweep till Jesus comes. Because it was the broom I was holding before Jesus gave me the microphone. So, why will I leave the broom? Why? When I travel, I pay someone to sweep. As the person is sweeping, I would say, God, you know, I am in Canada now, somebody is sweeping, I paid.

They lifted you a little like this, you will leave the choir. Some of you, I love what your G.O. said. You were the one that helped God to call your husband. In fact, you did not call, you flashed. You flashed God, call my husband father, call my husband. Because you want someone to carry your bag, someone to carry your leg. Someone to carry you and call you our mummy. Do you know there are churches that when the G.O. enters, everywhere is

uptight. I tell the ushers, if I cannot be free among these people that my husband is pastoring, then something is wrong with me. Because if you say this person is a high priest and he cannot be touched, then he is a low priest. He is a low priest. You have seen it; you too want a ministry like that, where your hat will be like a satellite dish and you will be just walking majestically. "Our mama is coming. Our G.O. is coming." Even when the Almighty God comes into church, we do not create such environment.

Do you know that success is more difficult to manage than failure? There are some people that they have prayed but God is still thinking about lifting them, because God knows that if He lifts them, He will lose them. Because even the Almighty God will be tiptoeing around them and asking the angel, "What did he just say? What did you just say?" Not like people like myself, a bush Ibadan girl, that will shout "Oh God!" He will not need to ask any angel.

There are two kinds of people at the top. First Samuel chapter two, He lifted the poor from the dust and the beggar from the dunghill and made them to sit. How do you know which one? The way they praise God. The way they pray. You will know which one is prince and which one was lifted.

Recently I looked at my mates and I could not find my mate among my mates. If you see me roll on the floor, if you see me kneel down, I know what I am doing. He removed the hawking tray from my head and made the commonwealth to give me an award and you expect me not to dance and rejoice in His presence? Excuse me, if God does what He has done for me, for you, you will do more!

All this superficial Christianity, if you know the kind of water I have drunk in my life because of the gospel. We went to a place, sometimes ago during Christmas to preach on the river. Ten of us died. We did not go there to do ceremony, we went to preach.

Look, God does not throw up, God lifts up and He is not a blind promoter.

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0.

AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL CONVERGENCE

Switch

MARRIAGE MINISTRY MARKETPLACE

the **SETTING THE PACE**



Mildred & Kingsley Okonkwo



Dr. Cosmas Maduka



TeePraise



Seun Dede



Rev. Dr. & Rev. Mrs. Sam Aboyeji

Saturday, 18th May '24 || **09:00am**

Foursquare Gospel Church National Headquarters
62/66 Akinwunmi Street, Alagomeji, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria.

ALSO STREAMING AT:
Foursquare Gospel Church, Kubwa District Headquarters.
222, Bakori Road, Phase 2 Site 2,
Off Gado Nasco Road, Kubwa, Abuja.

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Rev. Oluseye Awopetu
Chairman: Switch 3.0

SWITCH 3.0
MAY 18, 2024

**WELCOME REMARKS BY
THE GENERAL OVERSEER**

In the most precious name of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and on behalf of my dear wife, and the National leadership of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to this special and auspicious occasion - the third edition of SWITCH, better known as SWITCH 3.0.

SWITCH is an interdenominational convergence, organized by the Foursquare Movement as an avenue to contribute to the growth and expansion of the body of Christ in terms of offering mentorship opportunities for young ministers, the nextgen and indeed everyone desirous of benefiting from the wealth and depth of knowledge and experience of role models who have made and are still making positive impact in marriage, ministry and the marketplace. Our commitment to host this annual event is borne out of the determination to contribute our quota as a church to raising the next crop of leaders for our nation in different spheres of life.

The Foursquare Gospel Church, known globally as the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel is an Evangelical/Pentecostal denomination founded in 1923 by a renowned Canadian/American lady preacher and first female televangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson in Los Angeles, California, USA. Through the self-sacrificing missionary efforts of an American couple, Rev. Harold & Mrs. Faye Curtis, the Foursquare Gospel was brought into Nigeria in 1955.

Over the years, the work of the church in Nigeria has prospered greatly, resulting in hundreds of thousands of souls finding salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, satisfaction and fulfilment in life as we continue to propagate the Foursquare message of Jesus the only Saviour, Jesus the Baptizer with the

Holy Ghost, Jesus the Healer of all sicknesses and diseases, and Jesus the soon coming King of glory.

Within our system as a church, we are blessed with a large population of resourceful, vibrant and talented youthful population, as can also be said of the general society; and it is the vision and focus of the leadership of the church to ensure that we create the enabling environment for this energetic segment of our demography to express their God-given talents as well as expose them to discipleship and mentorship programmes in preparation for taking on leadership responsibilities, both now and in the future.

In our missions and evangelism efforts, reaching the next generation has to be intentional. We must not be like Eli who assumed that his children would get it and, unfortunately, they became sons of Belial. 1 Samuel 2:12 says, *"Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord."* Neither must we assume like Samuel who was told by the nation of Israel to his face that his children were not following after him and therefore couldn't be priests. 1 Samuel 8:4-5 *"Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.'"*

As an administration, we will continue to create avenues for mentoring the Nextgen - helping them to develop their gifts and allowing them to become partners in ministry. Former US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, *"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."*

This year, we shall be interrogating the topic: **SETTING THE PACE**. The scriptures in Titus 2:7 says, *"And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching."* NLT. Also, 1 Corinthians 9:24 says *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."* Setting the pace connotes the performance of an act of rare ingenuity. It involves

laying a foundation, setting a standard and a yardstick or height of general acceptance for a given circumstance.

As believers, we are born into the household of those destined to be pace setters of this generation through Christ who is the overall pace setter. The words of Mordecai to his niece in the book of Esther 4:14 is apt: *"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* KJV

In our world today, situations and circumstances will always present themselves; and it is in the face of such prevailing situations that God searches for men who will be willing to work with Him so as to set a pace for other men to follow.

On this note, I warmly welcome our guest speakers, Dr. Cosmas Maduka, CON, a renowned businessman and philanthropist who is the Founder, President/CEO of Coscharis Group. Recall that Dr. Maduka graced our 6th Annual Public Lecture in 2019 and his incisive contributions as a discussant still resonates with us. I also warmly welcome Pastor Kingsley and Mildred Okonkwo, seasoned and experienced marriage and relationship mentors, who pastor David's Christian Centre, Lagos. They will be joining me in declaring God's counsel as we bring to bear the divine pathway to success in Marriage, Ministry and the Marketplace.

In closing this remark, let me offer my sincere appreciation to all our partners, especially the Bible Society of Nigeria ably led by its General Secretary, Pastor Samuel Sanusi for supporting us since SWITCH 1.0 till date. The Planning Committee of this event chaired by our beloved Rev. Barr. Oluseye Awopetu are also commended for putting together this program which by all standards is already a success. May God reward your service in His vineyard, in Jesus' name.

Once again you are welcome. God bless you all.

Reverend Dr. Sam Aboyeji
General Overseer

SWITCH 3.0
MAY 18, 2024

Ministry

SETTING THE PACE IN MINISTERIAL INTEGRITY

Rev. Dr. Sam Aboyeji

The time has come for us as a church to reduce the incidence of fatalities and casualties that we record in the ministry. It is so sad that in the year 2018 I was in a conference, and in that conference, a presentation was made about a ministry that was making waves in the United States then. There were a number of our church members who came all the way from the United States, and as they watched the film or the presentation that was being made, they almost walked out of the meeting.

The reason for that is because they noticed that it is like we were not abreast with what was happening, because the ministry whose material was being showcased had actually just stepped down its president, who was involved in a scandal that had lasted two decades.

I am sure many of us here know the Willow Creek Community Church. The scandal lasted two decades, and over the two decades, there was nothing the church did not do to try and cover up, but it was not successful. Trust the press men. The Chicago Chronicle went to town with full details of the scandal, and the man of God was just about to hand over. In fact, the handing over process was just about to be concluded, and lo and behold, the whole process had to be put on hold, and he was instantly stepped down.

What I thank God for is that that incident did not deter the organization from marching forward, and that is to show that the scriptures cannot be broken. Matthew 16:18, ***"I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail."***

I believe that the church can do better. We can prevent that from happening, because how will somebody labour for years, build a church from scratch, as at the time that incident was blown open, the church's population was 25,000, and that brings me to the subject matter that I will be discussing today: "Setting the Pace in Ministerial Integrity, in Order to Finish Well."

I want us to pray. Father in heaven, we thank you, we bless your name, because Philippians 1:6 says, *"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in us, he will finish it."* We ask today that as we communicate and speak to these young ones, Lord, you will help everyone under the sound of my voice to not just finish, but to finish well. I say they will not just finish, they will finish well. They will not be casualties in the name of our Lord Jesus. They will not join the statistics of those who fell off, in the name of our Lord Jesus. Thank you because you have heard our prayers, in Jesus' name we have prayed.

One thing that has always been said again and again is the fact that starting off in ministry is good, finishing is better, but finishing well is the best. That is why I have come up with this discussion this year, because just like what I said earlier, half of the conference speakers in an event that held in 2010 have been stepped down from their various positions within a period of eight years. That is not too good. A professor of leadership at the Fuller Theological Seminary concluded that 70% of leaders do not finish well. In fact, it is stated, according to him, that only 30% of leaders in the Bible eventually finished well.

The six reasons advanced for this ugly situation can be summarized into two: capacity and character. When David was called, these two things were emphasized in Psalm 78, verses 70 to 72: *"He chose David, also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds. From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob, his people, and Israel, his inheritance. So, he fed them according to the integrity of his heart", that is character "and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands", that is capacity.*

Today is not a day to talk about capacity. I will be dwelling on character today. Integrity of character is a choice; it is not a gift. You do not get it with the anointing. So, that is why it is a choice. It is a deliberate choice, like Daniel. It was written about him in Daniel chapter 1, verse 8. The Bible says, "*But Daniel proposed in his heart.*" so integrity is a matter of the heart. It is a choice. I cannot pray for you to have integrity, sorry. I cannot impart integrity on you, sorry. You cannot receive integrity by grace, no. You have got to make an intentional choice of integrity. And I pray that as you listen to me today, you will make this very difficult choice, in Jesus' name.

Let me start by defining integrity. What is integrity? Integrity is a state of being honest and having strong moral principles, doing what is right in all circumstances. The word integrity has the same root word as integer. If you have done mathematics, an integer is a whole number. It is a number that is whole, with no fraction. So, when you say a man is a man of integrity, it means he does not have a split personality.

There are people with split personalities. There are people who have a different personality for the office, a different personality for the marketplace, a different personality for church, and a different personality for the home. They do not have integrity. If you are a man or woman of integrity, you are one person all the time, whether at home, you are one person; whether in the office, you are the same person; whether you are in the church, you are the same person; the same person when you do business.

When people break the law of integrity, they say, "This one is business." As a Christian, you must be one and the same person all the time. And I know that this kind of message will not appeal to the group I have in the house, but it is the secret.

I gave my life to Christ one year older than Dr. Maduka. I gave my life to Christ at 16. I pastored my first church at 23. Like we were discussing in the office, the people who were my seniors then were just 28. I worked personally with them. And the first church that was going to be planted by Winners, I was the pastor in

charge. That was in Ilorin, in 1984. But I am still here today. That is the beauty of it. That is the beauty of it. It is the beauty of it.

Meanwhile, there are so many that have fallen by the wayside. I know many of them. If you recall in this country, there are some names you were hearing before and you do not hear them again. I keep asking myself about them. When we were giving our lives to Christ in the 70s, they used to distribute tracts with a helicopter. Now, I am asking, where are the successors to those people? Because if they were distributing tracts with a helicopter at that time, I believe their successors should be distributing with jets now. Where are their successors now? Integrity.

If anyone is going to last in ministry, you cannot play with integrity, because the Bible says, *"Be sure that your sin will find you out."* I just gave you an example of what happened. For twenty years it was covered, but one day, it was exposed. The reason I am bringing this message is that I do not want any of you to be a casualty. None of you will be a casualty, in the name of Jesus Christ.

You know, being honest, whatever you are in the dark, that is who you are. What are you when no one is seeing you? That is integrity; that is character. Let me make you laugh a bit. In the year 1980, the Joint Campus Christian Fellowship in Ilorin gathered. All the campuses in Ilorin came together for a crusade. Bishop Oyedepo was our leader then. We decided to hold a citywide crusade. You know, Ilorin is more or less a Muslim town. Now, what did we do? We pasted posters around town. You ask me what was written on the posters? "Revo 80. Top secret revealed. Watch out." The whole town began to somersault. All the big men in town ran away, because they did not know what secret was revealed. Some of our brothers who went out pasting the posters were arrested by the SSS. They wanted to be sure which secret was revealed again. Everybody was uncomfortable.

A man once wrote that a jester cracked a joke. He said a man sent a text to 12 of his friends and wrote this: "It has all been revealed. Run away." He sent it to 12 of his friends. Within 24 hours, these big men, 10 of them had vanished. No one could trace them. Only

2 were confident enough to stay. Why? They had skeletons in their cupboard. They did not have integrity. The Bible says that the righteous is as bold as a lion.

If you cannot answer a knock on your door boldly, you have an integrity issue. That is integrity, simply defined: what a man will do when he will not be found out, that is his character; that is who he is. It means to be sincere and straightforward in everything you do.

What is personal integrity? It means honesty and moral purity in the face of severe and daily temptations. Now, pay attention to it. We have an example in the scriptures. Joseph is a very good example. In Genesis 39 verses 7 to 8, his master's wife said to him, *"Lie with me," but he refused. So, it was that as she spoke to Joseph day by day, he did not heed to lie with her or to be with her.*

Day by day is my point. Day by day. Proverbs 24 verse 10 says, *"If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small."* so you cannot tell me that there are naked ladies on the streets. No, no, no. The problem is not the problem of adversity; the problem is the problem of strength. Every day, can you imagine? Every day she was pestering Joseph. This is a lady that Yoruba people call "Iyawo oga" (the wife of the boss), pestering a man, a young man, a beautiful young man. But the Bible says he refused. He refused. That talks of inner strength.

In contrast, look at Samson. Samson went and married three women in three chapters of the Bible. Chapter 14, another woman; chapter 15, another woman; chapter 16, another woman. I said, "E don do" (it is enough). Ah! Only himself; "Get her for me." And it came to pass when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him so that his soul was vexed unto death. The Bible says he told her all his heart, which was the end of Samson's ministry. That was the end of his ministry. I pray for somebody under the sound of my voice that no matter the pressure, you will not fall. I said, no matter the pressure, you will not fall, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, that is one definition: Integrity means standing tall in the

face of daily pressure and temptation.

Number two, integrity means having the courage to say no and taking proactive steps to avoid falling into sin. Not just to say no, but you take proactive steps. Look at what the scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 5:22: "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" The Amplified version says, "Withdraw and keep away from every appearance of evil."

We took over the church, one of our branches, and when we got there, we were told that there was an evangelist in that branch. I took over as the senior pastor together with my wife, and within one month of taking over the church, we noticed something about the evangelist that was attached to that church. There was a particular lady that regularly came around. The evangelist was working in the same place with me. From twelve to one p.m., I would dash to the office. My wife was the resident pastor, so I usually dashed to the office, and I noticed that each time I dashed to the office from twelve to one, there was this particular lady always coming. For the first two months that I took over, I was observing it.

I asked my wife what the problem was and she said she had also enquired from him and he said the lady has plenty of demons. So, he has to keep counselling her to cast them out. I responded, "Does that have to be every day? In the last three months, every day?" Then I said, "Thank God I am the senior pastor here." I requested to see him and when he arrived, I told him, "I know we just came, but for your information, my wife is a deliverance minister and I heard that case is a very tough one. From today, because it is very tough, please pass it to my wife. She will handle it."

Abstain from all appearance of evil. Withdraw and keep away from it. Because how many people are you going to explain to? Yoruba people say when you pass faeces and you do not clean up properly and it is smelly, how many people are you going to open it up to say it is my buttocks that is smelly? No, it is not me. So, it is better to avoid all appearance of evil, avoid it. The Amplified version said, "*Withdraw and keep away from it.*" That is how to

manage integrity: having the courage to say no and taking proactive steps to avoid falling into sin.

Number three, personal integrity is having a solid foundation in the fear of God. Reinhard Bonnke shared a story when he came to Warri to minister. He said there was a man who did not have a farm, so he went to where the farms were and he went to his neighbor's farm with three of his children, himself making number four. He went there to take yams from his friend's farm. And he told the children, "You face east, you face west, you face north. Me, the fourth person, I'll face south." Then one of the children, a very smart child, asked him, "Daddy, who is facing up?" He said, "Because you are only taking care of these four corners. There is somebody who is looking at us from up." That is the fear of God.

Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness and not sin against Potiphar? No! "It is sin against God." so it is caring more about God's approval than man's approval. That is what it is. The measure of a man's character is what he will do even if he will not be found out.

It boils down to three things. Personal integrity boils down to three things.

1. Consistency

Number one, your consistency. Are you consistent? Can we meet you on the same point no matter who is involved? Are you going to be on the same side no matter who is involved? There is a language I normally use for my people. They are used to it: someone saying, "E je ki a consider gbogbo circumstance to surround situation nitori pe situation o different" (let us consider all the circumstances surrounding this situation because situations differ). When you begin to speak like that, you are not consistent. You have got to be consistent.

2. Choices

Two, your choices. Have you checked your choices? What is the quality of your choices? You choose what is best only for you. Are your choices tending towards selfishness or are they tending towards the interest of others?

3. Credits

Three, your credits. Are you quick to give credit to others when they have done something recognizable?

It is so sad that Dr. Hendricks conducted the research and found out that 250 men had experienced moral failure within a space of two years, that is, 250 men in ministry. However, Romans 5:20b says, *"But where sin abounds, grace did much more abound."* After all, Billy Graham had 75 years of solid ministry without scandal. It means it is possible. And you will be another Billy Graham. It is said, "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost. When health is lost, something is lost. But when character or integrity is lost, all is lost."

I want to just give you hints on how you can live a life of, and minister with integrity. I will just quickly run over six quick points. How can I maintain integrity in ministry?

Be Sure That Integrity Is The Foundation Of Your Leadership

One, be sure that integrity is the foundation of your leadership. Leadership is a trust. Leadership is a trust. I think I have heard Dr. Maduka says it over and over again that his character is his collateral, and that is the truth. It is the truth. The people trust you because God trusts you with ministry. So, it is the height of evil and wickedness to betray that trust. That is why when you are called into ministry, it is a high calling. Others can, but you cannot. It is a high calling. Ministry is about trust. God trusted you by calling you.

That is the scripture we read: He chose David. You were chosen. Men also trust you. And I love the way Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 1:12: *"This is our boast, our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world..."* so let nobody tell me that is the way the world is. No. He said we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity that are from God.

Never Consider Yourself Above Temptation

Number one, never consider yourself above temptation. There is

nobody that is above temptation. The great are falling. The medium are falling. The lower ones are falling. That is why the Bible says, *"Let him that thinketh he stands take heed, lest he fall."*

Never consider yourself above temptation. Set clear personal boundaries. One of our leaders here, one day I met him and he said, "I do not take non-alcoholic wine." He said, "I move away very far from anything drinking." Personal boundaries. You know yourself more than every other person. There are people that if a woman shakes their hands alone, throughout that day they will be destabilized. You know yourself. Set personal boundaries.

One of my daughters-in-the-Lord, while she was courting, the husband just touched her. Her reaction was strong. So, the brother had to employ me to come and beg. And when I was begging her, she said she wanted to set a personal boundary. Set personal boundaries.

Make Your Marriage Work

Number two, if you are married, work on your marriage in order to make it work. One of our ministers came to me one day. He said, "I love the way your wife always appears." He said, "So, I want her to take my wife to where she sews her clothes." The grass is not greener on the other side. The grass is greener where they put water. So, if you feel that your grass is not green enough, go and put water. It will be greener.

Guard Your Mind

Number three. Guard your mind. A conference was held and there was a home video that was set in the premises. There were ministers that came for the conference, so the blue film area, they were clocking it to know how many ministers would go to that area. The statistics are embarrassing. There are so many people who are ministers today but their lives and their thoughts are polluted. Proverbs 23 verse 7: *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."* If something occupies your mind, one day it will occupy your personality. A man has said, "Sow a thought and reap an action, sow an action and reap a habit, sow a habit and reap a character, sow a character and reap a destiny."

The real fight starts from the mind. No wonder Paul gave us a thinking formula in Philippians 4:8: *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."* When anything is occupying your mind, please gauge it against this Paul's thinking syllabus.

Keep Watch On Your Spiritual Temperature

Number four. Keep a close watch on your spiritual temperature. Practice God's presence continually. Be sensitive to God's presence. Wherever you go and you know God cannot go there, please withdraw. Wherever you go and you know God's presence will not go with you, withdraw. Jesus said in John 8:29, *"The one who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone because I do always those things that please him."*

Keep promises. Keep your promises. That is how to keep your spiritual temperature. Keep your promises.

Pay your bills. There was an encounter I had with somebody who is a pastor. In the whole street, everybody always paid whatever they called it, security money, and they would be saying in their community meeting, "It is pastor that has not paid oh." Pay your bills.

Do not spend more than you earn. Do not be under pressure. Do not borrow from your members if you are a pastor. I learned that long ago. My mentor told me years ago, "If you borrow from your member, you are likely to lose your money and lose your member." In fact, if I will stretch it, be careful in doing business with your member because when they cheat you, you will not be able to talk.

Tithe faithfully. You are on the altar screaming that people should pay their tithes meanwhile you are only waiting to collect. I heard one of our great ministers of faith, Bishop Mike Okonkwo. He said concerning the Levites that some people use as an excuse for not paying tithes that the reason the Levites have more is because

instead of them to have ten over ten, they collected ten percent from every tribe, that is eleven tribes, so it becomes eleven over ten. So, when you see your pastor being ahead in terms of prosperity, do not be surprised because his own is eleven over ten; yours is ten over ten. Tithe faithfully.

Do your best at work. Your real boss is God. Colossians 3:23: *"And whatsoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, for from the Lord you will receive your reward."* Be real with others. I love 2 Corinthians 4:2 in the Message Bible. It says *"we do not play games and we do not wear masks; we do not maneuver"*. Please be real.

The Damaging Effect Of Moral Failure

Number five: Be reminded of the damaging effect of moral failure. Moral failure is expensive. It will grieve the Lord. You will lose your fellowship with the Lord. It will drag the name of the Lord in the mud. Each time we have had moral failure with ministers in this country, it takes the whole news, Facebook, and everywhere as if that is the only news, because they are excited for an opportunity to drag the name of the Lord in the mud. It hurts and humiliates your wife and your children. It brings shame to your family.

In 1 Timothy 5:20 somebody was asking me why the church has to go to the extent of making it public. I said it is because of 1 Timothy 5:20. Only if you can edit that from the Bible, that is when we can stop doing it. The passage states, *"Them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear."*

It wastes your years of ministry because one thing you should know about ministry is this: In the book of Ezekiel it is stated, when he turns, the good things he has done will be forgotten. It is like when you wear a white dress, you come to this large gathering and you have a spot on the white garment. Everyone that meets you will turn their attention to that spot. There have been times that I had a spot on my dress and I would get so tired because as many people as I met would tell me about the spot on my dress until I got really tired and decided to remove the clothes. That is how it is. No matter how excellent you have been, that spot

will attract attention.

Finally, take precautions to protect yourself. Have accountability partners. If you are a minister and you do not have anybody living who can tell you, "Stop" and you will stop, then you are a disaster waiting to happen. If you are all in all, nobody can correct you and you stop what you are doing, you are a disaster waiting to happen.

A former president of the Christian Association of Nigeria once told me that there were people in this country that if they said he should meet them immediately, he would drop whatever he was doing and go to meet the person. That tells you that if they told him to stop whatever he was doing, he would stop it.

But do you know that there are some generations of ministers that are being raised now? They believe they are the authority that wrote the Bible. Even when people are calling their attention to something wrong that they are preaching, they will turn to the person and say, "Even you, you are wrong." They are the only ones that are right. Somebody told me that it is difficult to manage Christians and ministers because, "Everybody has heard from God." Have a set of personal rules and boundaries. You must have your own set of personal rules.

In conclusion, are you having problems with integrity? Why not pull aside for some time, adjust your life, take a decision to walk in integrity in every area of life day by day. Identify what makes it difficult for you to walk in integrity and deal with it fiercely.

Common Sources of Difficulty in Maintaining Integrity

1. **Association:** If you are in a wrong association, as many times as you try to correct yourself, you will fall back.
2. **Expectation:** If you find yourself where the expectation is too high for you to meet up with, you are not likely to make it. Remember Joshua the high priest was helpless in the face of the filthy garment and the devil resisted him.

My prayer for you is that the enemy will not bring you down. You will finish well, in the name of God the Father, in the name of God the Son, and in the name of God the Holy Spirit.

SWITCH 3.0
MAY 18, 2024

Market-Place

EXCELLING IN BUSINESS AND CAREER THE GOD WAY

(Luke 12: 31 & 32)

Dr. Cosmas Maduka

I have things written down. I just do not know how God is going to lead me, but let me ask you, did any of you pray before coming for this meeting? Be honest about it. Did you pray? Did you ask God to speak to you?

Many times, when we have an idea, we pray. We want God to speak to us, but we want Him to speak to us in the way we want. We want Him to do it the way we have it in our minds. We want something fantastic. We want something spectacular to happen. But if you want to know, I will give you a testimony that God has spoken to us this afternoon.

Starting from when our daddy stood here to speak, actually when he was speaking, I was asking myself if anyone spied my notes to give him or if I spied his note. The people that asked me to speak did not tell me to speak in any particular order. I was just asked to speak on business, which sometimes I do not really feel comfortable about because I do not want people to just know me only as a businessman. I am a Christian in the first instance. My Christian values are what matter most to me.

Many times, when I get an invitation, people introduce me as the CEO of CosCharis, a man who did this and that, but without God I cannot be anything. So, for those of you who do not know, we come here to hold these meetings because of the young people. Young people, please listen to me. You are very important for this hour and for our future. This meeting was organized because of the young people, and if you do not get it right at this young age, it

will be difficult for you to fix.

Google and search this out. It has been proven that 86% of successful people, whether spiritual or natural, became successful between the age of 14 and 28. When you get to 30, you are already on the borderline. If you are already 40 years and above, do not ever call yourself a young person because you have to know that time has run out for you. The best time for success or anything meaningful in life is at that tender age because that is when you are willing to take risks. That is when you are ready to be moulded. This is the time that you can also be somersaulted. Get it right!

I shared with him this morning that what made the difference is that I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ at a very tender age of my life. I used to sleep in a shop in Ebute Meta at 88 Griffin Street when I used to work for my uncle, I and the man that owns Chisco Motors. It was from there that one Man came to buy spare parts from our shop and I asked him how much I should write. That is where Christianity is.

I want to speak on integrity, the same thing our Bishop said, and that is why I said when you come to a meeting, nothing excites you as much as getting the confirmation of the Holy Spirit that what God wants you to say is exactly what you are saying. So, after he had spoken, I felt really good, and if I decide not to say anything, all that God wanted us to hear today has been said. If you combine what he has said and what our brother Kingsley has said, we have gotten everything. God has spoken to us, but many times our ears are deaf so that we cannot hear in the language that He wants to speak to us.

When the man came and I asked him what price I should write in the receipt, he asked me why I asked that question and I told him that when mechanics came to buy things, they always told me to inflate the price on the receipt. He said you should not do that; that is wrong. That was the first time I heard about the gospel. Brother Kumuyi and Brother Adeboye were lecturers in Unilag at that time and they used to come to the dead end of Ebute Meta to minister at that time. Brother Kumuyi used to have Monday Bible

study and Brother Adegbeye, morning devotions, and the man took me there. That was the first time I heard about the gospel.

Young people, what I am trying to tell you is that being a Christian is not a monumental disaster. It is the best thing that can ever happen to you. When you get to know the Lord at a very tender age, it takes you to a different pedestal where nobody will know and understand where you are coming from. It makes you mature beyond your human imagination.

At 15, I made a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and I had a clear sense of purpose in life. I was not confused. I was 14 thinking 40, and at 15, I was thinking 50. You could put me with people of that age bracket, and because I had a clear sense of purpose, I determined that there were 5 things I wanted to achieve before I was 25 years old.

I was properly brought up with the word of God, which is the law and principle that life is governed by. We talk so much about grace today and grace has become a disgrace. Please I warn you, no grace cancels the law of God. Grace is an enablement to keep the law because it is only when you stay within the principles of the word of God that you can get results in anything you are doing. It protects you and gives you courage for anything you are doing.

By, 15, I wrote 5 things I wanted to do. Number one was to have a three-bedroom apartment of my own before I turned 18, and exactly by 18 years, I was living in a three-bedroom apartment, not my parents' house. I rented it myself because I had plans. One of the problems you people have is that you have no plan for your life. Do not panic; plan.

The Bible states that God will give you the desires of your heart. The desire of your heart is the egg you will bring into the equation. The germ and seed will come with the word of God to make it happen because the Bible says whatever you believe, and that "whatsoever" means anything and "whosoever" means anybody. So, there is nothing restricting anybody from being successful and others not being successful.

The next thing I wrote in my list was to have a wife at 20. The third

thing on my list was to have a son, not a child, at 21. I am a Christian. I am standing before the pulpit. The fourth thing was to have a car at 23 and by 25 to be a millionaire.

I did not have it in my head. It was because of the principles I had been taught from the word of God. The problem is that you are facing fake books. There are many books you are facing that are not real. This was the number one book in my generation. We faced this book. If you face this book and apply the principles in this book, there is nothing you set your mind to that will not be achievable.

Those five things were written and placed by my bed. Every night before I went to bed, I would look at the list from the beginning to the end and internalize it in my spirit. When sleeping, I saw myself in Japan discussing with the Japanese. I saw myself clearing containers. These are the dreams I had.

Many of you do not know that there are 5 ways you contact your human spirit: through your eyes, through the things you touch, through the things you taste, through the things you feel, hear, and smell. These are how you contact your human spirit. So, those of you who watch dirty horror movies where blood is being sucked, no wonder you have nightmares and demons come to take blood from you because of the things you fed your soul with. But I never did that.

I grew up with an optimism that the word of God cannot fail. You may not believe, but by 18 years I was living in a three-bedroom apartment of my own. I did not go to school, so you might see my grammar not adding up, but what is important is not your grammar. Because Henry Ford said, “an educated man or woman is a person that can organize his thoughts into productivity.” So, you can have all the degrees, PhD, BSc, but if you cannot show me what you achieve with it, then you are not educated. You are just an intellectual fool. There are many people that speak grammar but there is no substance in the grammar that they speak. We want to see how you can bring those words into productivity.

So, I pursued these dreams I had based on the principles of the

word of God, and by 18 years I was living in a three-bedroom apartment of my own. Somebody once asked me why it was important for me to marry at the age of 20. It was important because I did not want to fool around with any girl. An unwanted child would not allow me to achieve those dreams.

I was very careful to select my friends. People said I was proud. When you have a vision, you are like a mad person. There is another spirit that has taken hold of you. You are not waiting for everyone's approval. I walked this journey on my own. My senior brother was still doing the other things. He did not believe the things I believed, but Christianity got me so matured. By 18 years, I saw a young lady in our church choir. Our church was not bigger than this place where this choir is staying. The church is called Central Christian Fellowship at Nnewi. Our late pastor was Peter Madako.

Every time the choir started singing, one voice would be completely distinct from all the other voices. I was hearing an angel, and suddenly I raised my hand and said, "Lord, I claim her, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is not the size of your pocket; it is the size of your faith. When I got home, I told my mother that I had found a lady that would be my wife. My mother asked where she was from, and when I told her the family of the lady, my mother said that my problem was that I did not know the size of my cloth. Nobody was a graduate in my family, yet this lady's family had not just produced two doctors but they owned a hospital. My mother asked why I was going that way.

When you are a Christian, like our brother Kingsley said, you are special. Let nobody talk down on you. There is something you have that the world is waiting for. There are things you are to offer your generation. But nobody will believe you until you believe yourself. You are the first believer of yourself. When people say that you will never amount to anything, that you are an imbecile, your prayer should be that God should keep them alive. They should not die. They should live to see your testimony. They should share in your testimony. Do not get angry with them. Just pray for them that God will give them longevity. Let them live to see me. That was what I did.

Kingsley has spoken to you about marriage. I am a professor in marriage because I started very young. My wife went to be with the Lord on the 27th of November 2022. Otherwise, September 23rd would have made 45 years of my marriage. Many of you here, I can be your father because I aimed to get a son at 21 years. So, I had 43 years of successful marriage.

When I talked to this lady, I told her I would like her to give me her hand in marriage. Please, sisters, do not ask a young man who wants to marry you if he loves you. That is a wrong question. Instead, ask him where he is taking you to. My wife asked me where I was taking her to, and I replied telling her, "By 21 we will be here, by 22 we will be here, by 23 we will be here, by 25 we will be here." She held my hand and said, "Let's do it together."

That is why young men should have a vision. You should know where you are going in life. I like what Kingsley said: when it gets to the woman, it was said she will prophesy. Because I shared my vision with my wife, there were many times when I had down moments, when it felt like I was doubting myself. She would say, "But you told me the Lord said you will do this. Go for it. You will do it."

So, the older men will dream dreams. A dream is something you wish could have happened, but you are too old to make it happen. That is why our granddad is calling for this meeting now to hand this vision to young people who will sweep this to resurrection, because after we have gone, our lives here will have no meaning if there is no succession that comes after us. But the young man will take that dream and make it a vision, and the handmaiden, which is the sisters, will prophesy. If your husband-to-be has shared his vision with you, then you have something to prophesy into his life.

Brother Kingsley told us that the first thing God gave a woman was a husband, but the first thing God gave a man was a job. God never gave a man a wife without giving him a job, because the man is the foundation of the family to provide. A woman comes into your life as a helpmeet. She came to help you. She did not

come to carry the problem of the home. So, a woman shows up to help a man who is doing something.

If the woman shows up and finds that the man is doing nothing, there will be confusion in the house because she came to help somebody who is doing something, and she found out you are doing nothing and you have no plan or purpose. That is why the need to teach you to have plans and purpose cannot be overemphasized.

Young people, you are the future of our generation. I have decided to dedicate the rest of my life as a fertilizer to encourage you, to add manure to your life, to let you know that there is no mountain that is insurmountable, that there is no dream that is too extreme, and there is no ambition that is unattainable if it is based on the principle of the word of God. God has taken a beggar and made him a king. You need to know what my grammar looked like in 1976. I was using a cutlass to cut it, but that is not what matters. What matters is what is the state of your heart.

Nobody has it all. You might be taller than me, but you cannot be shorter than me at the same time. There are things you have that I do not have, but there is something I have that you need, and God is not partial. He put something in every one of us.

We are telling young people to live right as Christians so that you do not have a tragic memory. You want your memory to be sweet so that, in future when you kneel down, you have nothing making your heart beat. Keep your heart clean. If you want to be a Christian, be a good type of Christian. Give it everything it requires. If you do not want to be one, go and do what you want to do. Do not be haphazard, because God said if you are lukewarm, He will vomit you out of His mouth. He does not want a lukewarm Christian. Let people know that you are a Christian and you are proud of your Christian faith. Let people see you anywhere you are and know that there is something you are holding on to.

Let me go back to my note. My title for this simple message is "The Greatest Act of Leadership." My inspiration is: Character and Integrity is the key. My subject is: "Excelling in Business and

Career the God Way,” and my scripture is found in Luke 12:31–32: *“But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”*

You need to understand the principle of Christianity. The principle of Christianity is not religion. Jesus never brought nor introduced any religion. There have been so many religions before He came. Jesus came to introduce the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is about citizenship. If you are going to be a member of that family, it is not something you join. You have to be born into it. It is not about what you do. You also have to cope with it because there is a responsibility that goes with being in that kingdom.

Our journey of Christianity in life starts with integrity. First, our individual lives in honesty. If there is anything God requires that we bring to the table in our relationship with Him, it is honesty, and He will do the rest for us. Honesty to admit even when we are wrong without anyone having to hold us by the neck. Accept and say, “I am wrong. God help me.” God did not come for perfect people but for people who come in the depth of sincerity. When you start rationalizing sin and you sweep it under the table, nobody can help you. Own up to your weaknesses and wrongs. He will do the rest for us. Be honest to admit when we are wrong when we fail. He will do the rest for us.

I want to thank again the administrators of this assembly of the Foursquare Gospel Church for inviting me. It is with humility and excitement that I stand before you this afternoon. My heart has been here since I received this invitation from our Brother, Reverend Yemi. I was wondering what more I can say to you because I know the word of God is being preached to you here, and I do not want to come to repeat the things you are already being told here.

I am therefore excited to be here to say that we all know that we are living in a difficult time in this country, Nigeria, but regardless of how difficult or tough it is, the God of miracle whom we serve always creates a Goshen for His children, even in the most

difficult times, and He uses the challenges of the time to get the best out of us. What is most important is to get your correct internal mapping, your correct identity, who you are. That is what makes all the difference.

I am going to do something, if the time permits this afternoon, which is to reintroduce you to yourself. An average human being always has internal conflict in correctly identifying with who he or she is, especially in this last generation where we live, where identity crisis is the order of the day. People are no more sure who they are. They are not sure of their gender. They do all kinds of things because of the confusion in their heads. Where do you go when you do not get the correct internal mapping and know who you are?

A lot of young people are not even sure whether they are male or female. Though they claim to be young men, some wear earrings and dress or paint their hair and do all kinds of things. You will go nowhere in life if you cannot get your correct internal mapping. If you are a boy thinking you are a girl, there is already confusion in your head. How can you put yourself and your thinking together to do anything meaningful in life?

Brother, let me talk to you. If you do not have a uterus, it does not matter how many earrings you wear or how much you twist yourself. You are a boy. You are a brother. And if you do not know the difference between a man and a woman, your mother is a woman, so do not look for this too far away. If you are having confusion about who a woman is, just look at your mother. She is a woman.

Please get your Bible and book and let us get to work. You will be doing a lot of writing; otherwise, you will need to get the link to this meeting to listen again seven times in order to internalize the teaching. What I am going to teach you took me 51 years of my life to learn. You are going to learn some of my secrets, and I got them from this kingdom book called the Bible.

The Kingdom Purpose For Resource And Money

You want to take note because we are going to follow some things

to get you out of debt completely, privately or corporately. There are some principles that I have used in my own personal walk with the Holy Spirit that took me out of debt.

By the way, I did not finish that testimony. I told you that I got married. I took my wife to the altar on the 23rd of September 1978. By that date I beat my target by 3 months because I was to turn 20 by December 24 of that year, so I married when I was 19 years plus. It has never happened. It is not a classroom work. My senior brother was not married yet. He was still doing fine boy. I left him because I had a clear sense of responsibility.

I wanted a child at 21, and I did what husbands do to their wives, but God knew that these two babies cannot be making babies, so He closed the womb so that we could get our house together. My first son came when I was 26 years, and the rest is history, but I pursued my dream. By 22 I passed by Mandilas Motors. I saw a Volkswagen, blue colour Passat with 3,000 kilometres. I negotiated it and closed the deal. By 22 I owned a car. I beat my target again by one year.

One day my mother was in the car at the back. My wife was in front. We were traveling somewhere. When this pursuit comes on me, I speak like I am deaf and dumb. I was at the steering wheel, and I suddenly burst out saying, "Chai, time is running out on me!" My mother asked what the problem was, and I replied that I had two more years to be a millionaire.

Many of you are afraid to speak your testimony. When God speaks something to you, the Holy Spirit is the enforcer who forces your testimony. Never, for the fear of controversy, deny your experience. It does not matter what confusion is set against you. Joseph saw himself as a prime minister in Egypt. He could have kept quiet. Instead, he told his brethren, and persecution started. They went to report to his parents. His father called him saying, "Come here, Joseph. What am I hearing about you? Did you go to boast to your brothers?" He said, "Dad, I saw myself sustaining this family."

What a vision does to you is that it makes you inclusive. You are

providing for the people. It is not about you. It is different from ambition, which is about yourself. So, Joseph was declaring how God was going to use him to sustain his family down the line. He prophesied about it, and there was confusion.

When I made that statement, my mother told me that if I said it again, she would get out of the car. My mother was a strong woman. She trained me and brought me up because my father died when I was 4 years old, and I did not know him. The only thing I knew about him was the day that was like a festival in our house. A man was in a black suit with a bow tie lying on the bed, and everybody was giving me rice. Meanwhile, we used to eat rice only on Christmas day. My mother was crying, and I was wondering why she was angry when everybody was feeling happy. It was later in life that I knew that that was the death of my father. But I had a godly mother who told me to believe in God and to believe in myself, and I followed that principle.

So, when she spoke like that, I said, "Mum, I did not insult you. I just told you what I was going to do." My mum still said if I said that again she would get out of the car. I stopped the car. I did not wait for her to get out. I wound the glass down, went close to her, and I said, "Mum, listen. Two more years and I will be a millionaire." My mother said, "Open the door." I opened the door. She got out. I banged the door and started the car. My wife asked me if I was out of my mind. She reminded me that, that was my mother I was leaving. I told her she could also get down if she wanted, and I drove away.

It was my vision. It was not my mother's vision. The Kingdom of God suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Many parents are dream killers. A young CEO born in the family will say, "I am going to run a Global 500 company." The parents will say, "Shut up. Go to school and get a job." Someone will say, "I want to start a business." The parents will say, "Shut up. Go to school and get a job." Must everybody work in an office? There is nothing wrong in working because work is a training ground.

Never forget this: the first thing God gave Adam was a job. In Genesis 2:15 He took him, put him in a garden, and said, "Dress

this garden, protect and keep it.” When Adam did so well, God brought animals, and God said, "Give them names. Activate your brain.” so when he saw the stubborn one that kicked at the back, he called it a goat. He saw the one that moved gently and said, "You are a lamb.” He saw the one that roared loud and said, "You are a lion.” And God said, "You are smart. Now you can handle a wife. Go and sleep.” Because it is a process, He has to train you.

I did that with my mother. I did not go back to pick my mother. I made my first 2 million United States dollars at the age of 24, not 25. I beat the target by 1 year. The rest is history. That is brother Tunde. You can ask him. He knew me about 30 or 40 years ago, and he knew my financial worth, the deposit I put in their bank then. Aaron used to be a member of this church. He used to work in the Manufacturers Merchant Bank. He said when I brought 3 million deposit to their bank, their whole bank share capital was like one-tenth of the money that I brought.

I have played in the industry because I trusted God and what He could do. I am assuring you that if any of you can dare this God and follow Him by the same principles that are laid in the day of Pentecost, you will never miss, and if you miss, come to me. Listen, by the grace of God I am personally out of debt, and I am telling you this because I learnt it from this old book. You are going to learn some of the secrets I got from this kingdom book. I want to begin first of all by talking a little bit about God's concept of wealth.

God's Concept Of Wealth

As you know, we are dealing with the application of the Kingdom of God here on earth. That is what all of these things we are discussing are about. I want to remind you in this particular segment of our discussion of some couple of things which you may need to write down.

Number one: the original purpose and plan of God was to extend this heavenly kingdom to the earth. That is God's original plan, nothing else. That is why Adam was made. We all originated from God. It is the Spirit of God that made Adam. So, originally, we come from God. But God is the God of the universe, and He made

Adam the god of the earth. God was saying, "As my son, administer this earth for me. Subdue it and take control. Dominate everything. Show the world you are my son."

The kingdom purpose for colonization is a kingdom taking over you. The first thing they do is to change your language. That is why when you come into the kingdom of God, He gives you a new language from the ones you knew before.

That is what the British did to us. They came here, took our language, and we started to drink tea. Our great-grandfather did not drink tea in the morning, but because the queen of England drank tea they introduced tea drinking to us. It became a way of life. But when we go back to our origin, we eat yam or amala in the morning. That is the way it was done before.

When a kingdom comes, they bring their influence over you. God wanted man to introduce the heavenly influence over the earth, but men ran out of God's program. However, we will never defeat God's program because the Kingdom of God can never be defeated. If a kingdom is wealthy, it is natural that the colony will be wealthy, to reflect the nature of the kingdom. The purpose of colonization is to extend the kingdom influence over a foreign territory. I want you to get this picture. This is the big picture clearly. Remember that if your thinking is wrong, your life will be wrong, and if your thinking is right, your life will begin to line up with your thinking, and you will begin to live correctly.

I do not pursue money; no, never. Many people think that that is what it is all about. That is not what I will teach you. The Bible says, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God.*" I do not pursue money because money is something that belongs to the kingdom citizens. Many people have the mindset that talking about wealth is being carnal minded. You should think and talk about heaven instead. If you are afraid of wealth, you will have a culture shock when you get to heaven because the streets of heaven are paved with gold. Everything will be beyond what you can imagine.

So, poverty is a foreign experience for the people of the country where I came from. I used to think I am a Nigerian. No, that is a

wrong thought. I came from heaven. I am a son of God. I am here to introduce heavenly influence to my generation.

When Jesus came, He did not say come to church. He said, “Change the way you are thinking.” Many people think repentance is just to come to the altar and cry. No. Changing your mind is repentance. The kingdom of God has arrived. I brought down the heavenly influence. I want you to experience heaven while you are here so that you can be able to come there. You need to practice the things they do in heaven. So, He said let us do here on earth as they do in heaven. That is what He came to do.

Listen, I believe this with all my heart, and that is the way I think now. And to get you to believe this will be my greatest joy so that your life will change. This is the concept of the Christian in the marketplace. How do you excel in business and career the God way?

I am going to give you a little list to write down. Your beliefs will create your values. Your values will produce your morals. Your morals will inform your ethics. Your ethics will produce your character, and your character will control your life. Please follow the system very carefully.

Number one is belief creates values. If you believe that taking something that does not belong to you is not right, that belief will follow the process like our G.O. explained. It is not just about the wrong thing, but avoiding all appearance of evil. It is hard to say this, but if someone has courage to discuss with you to do something wrong that is contrary to the word of God, it is a sign that your testimony is not loud enough. You should say to yourself that it means people still believe that you can do that. You should feel insulted if anyone comes to you to suggest anything that contradicts the word because if you are a Christian, the Bible is our constitution. You go to every section and find out what the constitution says you should do. If you live by it, you are protected.

So, that belief creates a value, and that value creates your moral response to the opportunity of sinning. And because your moral

response and value are too important for you to violate, then your behaviour will become an ethical behaviour. You will have an ethical behaviour. It informs your ethics, and your ethics, which people can see, forms your action. Then people will say you are a person of character, and if you do that constantly, you will have a life of character, and that is how it produces.

My single motive in this little moment I have with you is to inspire you to your greatness in life, for a life of intimacy and personal relationship with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who I met at the tender age of fifteen, revolutionized my life and gave me a new perspective to life.

I want to help you this afternoon to activate 5 quantum powers that will draw to you the resources, people, and skill you need to live a remarkable life and make a difference in the world: tap into the deep source of energy within you, accomplish more in less time, and experience a profound sense of clarity about how to best achieve your goals in life.

My inspiration for this presentation, just as I earlier mentioned, is character, which I call the moral force for leadership. It is also the key foundation of the 21st century. We must understand the priority and purpose of character; otherwise, we will not survive the next ten years if we continue the way we are going in this country, because character and morality have been swept under our nose. Even people in Christian organizations cannot stand up to point out things that are wrong simply because it has something to do with someone from the same village or a kinsman. And once it has to do with us, then it is right. No, it is not right.

The deficit in character in Nigeria is so deep that there is no way we can survive this century if we do not address the issue of defectiveness of character in leadership, because a fish does not spoil from the tail; it spoils from the head. That is why the G.O. was emphasizing about those of us in leadership.

I had a chat with my pastor two days ago. I am an ordained minister in our church. People talk more about me being a businessman. No, this is my real call. I told my pastor, I was in the

airport recently. I do not normally use Facebook or Instagram, but someone created it, and everywhere I went people would meet me, even at the airport, hold my two legs, and say I must pray for them. I said this is putting a lot of weight on me to live a particular kind of life because I do not know who will ask me to pray for them at any time. I do not want to pray for people, laying hands, and the devil will be speaking accusations about a lie I told yesterday or about a sin I committed, and I am now praying for people, putting evil spirit on people. God forbid.

I said people meet me and say they read about me last night. They checked me. They get up every morning looking at my social media page. They do not know the weight they are putting on me. They think it is a compliment. No, it is a weight to live up to that expectation. So, I said he should please pray for me. I am trusting God every day of my life that I will not do anything that will bring reproach to the kingdom of God or His name. Amen.

Character matters. As a matter of fact, I hope that by the time I finish, you will agree with my conviction that character is the most important thing that matters because at the end, all that you have to protect you is your character.

The journey of leadership in integrity: The CosCharis Story. Let me share by saying that the foundation of leadership is character. This statement sounds very simple, but it is not. I did not say the roof of your leadership. I did not say the window or wall of your life is character. I said the foundation of your leadership is character. Reflecting the character in the kingdom.

Friends, brothers and sisters, there are some examples of character that I want to share with you. These are some of those 5 quantum powers that will lead to where you are.

Number one: we call the alphabets character because A is A, B is B at 2 a.m., 3 a.m., 4 a.m. It does not change with time. Anywhere you are in the world, it does not change. The same thing with C. Whether you are in Africa, Asia, or China, it can never be any other thing.

Many people wonder how they can succeed. Success is what God

planned for all of us. Anybody can be successful. Success is promised to you because God never built anything that will fail. God actually never started anything without finishing it. Everyone of you here is a finished product, but because you have not understood it and lived in that realm, you are still not getting it.

Listen, there were about 5 million sperm cells that competed when your father injected into your mother. All of them wanted to live. You are the one that succeeded. They only helped you to catch life, and they died fulfilling their eternal purpose. You are the one that caught life, so you have won before, and you will always be a winner if you understand the principle and follow it.

My P.A. has just told me that my time is up. If you do not understand anything from what I said, I have said that character is the foundation of your life. God bless you.

SWITCH 3.0
MAY 18, 2024

Marriage

SETTING THE PACE IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Pastor Kingsley Okonkwo

Once again it is such an honor to be here. I consider it a great privilege. I want to appreciate all the leadership and everyone for having us. The word Daddy shared this morning was very touching, very powerful. Were you blessed by that? Very, very powerful. Thank you. And I want to appreciate all the other leaders, all the other speakers. Dr. Cosmos Maduka, thank you for being here. I do not know if you remember that you spoke in our church many years ago. I do not know if you remember. I know you speak in a lot of places; you might not remember. Your story is so inspirational. I listen to you a lot. Your story is so inspirational. There are not many billionaires that have stories that are replicable, that everybody can duplicate. Many of them, their stories went in a strange direction, one that we really cannot duplicate. But your story is a typical one that anybody can apply and get results. So, thank you, sir.

Thank you for being strong. My wife and I talk about you a lot. I always complain that Dr. Maduka manages money too much. You know, because I hear him say, oh, when his kids were in school, he did not buy them a car. I said he manages, but my wife said that is the secret of how he got to where he is. So, my wife is always defending you. Sir, you have a lawyer in my house.

You would not know who is learning from your story. We are talking about setting the pace. The problem with setting the pace for young people is that when you are young, you think your life does not matter. You think it is just you.

Let me just tell you one thing for free. This, your "small life" one

day it will be the light other people will use to find the way. Are you catching what I am saying? so do not let the devil deceive you to think it is ordinary you. There is no such person that is ordinary *you*. That your story, one day, somebody looking for the way will find their way in life by the things God has done through your life.

Every child of God is a pace setter. He said we are the light of the world. Is somebody catching what I am saying? He did not say we are the light of the church. We are the light of where? The world. So, the world is meant to see how to do life by watching our own lives. I pray for every young person under the sound of my voice that your life will give direction to others. Is somebody catching what I am saying?

That is the mistake; we just think it does not matter. The day God gives you a sense of purpose, it will change your behaviour. When I was in school, I schooled around here. I schooled in Yabatech, somewhere around here. So, when we were doing exams those days, there were times that we had those lecturers that set questions that nobody knew, except the over-brilliant students that had studied out of syllabus.

The ordinary people like us, we would not know it. So, amidst everybody, nobody knew, except one or two students in the hall. Nobody knew the thing. And those students that had knowledge were teaching everybody during the exam. People were spying from them; they were helping people out. And somebody asked me, "You, wouldn't you copy? There is somebody near you that knows. Wouldn't you copy?" I said, "no". I said, "If I copy, one day I will be preaching on television, and someone will say, "That pastor was my classmate oh, he used to copy in class." I knew that time, while I was in Yabatech here, I knew that I'll be global that time. I knew that I will be on TV that time.

The biggest trick Satan uses is to make you feel your life is nothing, but it is not true. Your story is going to matter to somebody. God will use you to set the pace. He will use you to set the pace in your family. He will use you to set the pace in your church. He will use you to set the pace in Nigeria, in the name of Jesus. When they are looking for a positive example, it is your

name they will mention. That amen can be louder than that.

Come on, tell your neighbour, "I will set the pace." Say it with confidence, "I will set the pace." That is God's plan to use every child of God to set the pace. Some will set the pace in business. Some will set the pace in academics. Some will set the pace in family life. But every child of God is designed to set the pace. I decree you will set the pace, in the name of Jesus. Before you die, at least in one field, people will study your life, study your results, to use to find a way in that area, in the name of Jesus.

I am talking about setting the pace in marriage and family life. And why is it important? Why is marriage such a big deal? Why is it a big deal? I can tell you for free. We have been traveling. We just flew in yesterday night to make sure we are in this meeting. We are flying out this weekend. By Thursday we will be back to the U.S. So, we simply came for this. And last year alone, we organized marriage seminars around the globe in 22 cities. Not invitations like this to speak; these are our own events organized around the world. 22 cities last year.

The Canada leg of the tour alone, we did seven cities in Canada. The Canada leg of the tour alone, Lagos to Canada and back, we were on 20 flights. 20 flights. A team of seven people. We flew so much, I did not even know where I was, because Canada has like six or seven different time zones. Canada is a continent; it is not a country. Before that Canada trip, I flew Lagos to Kenya, five or six hours. Inside Canada, I flew Toronto to Vancouver, six hours, same Canada. That is how annoyingly big it is. During the American leg, one flight landed and took off at the same time, one of our flights. I have never seen that kind of thing before. The flight landed and took off.

When it landed the second time, I waited to talk to the pilot. I said, "What happened?" "Oh," he said, "Do not worry, it is called a go-around or a turnaround." That he was a military pilot, that they usually did it all the time. That if you land and there was so much bounce and you felt you were not going to make the runway, you just go again. I said, "Next time, drop me." You know, we are Nigerians. When we drop, when we land, we give praise. You do

not carry me again to another one.

Why are we doing all that stress to talk about marriages? It is because marriage is one of the most important things to God. As a matter of fact, it is God's secret weapon. It is not a hidden secret. God's secrets are not hidden secrets. How do I know it is so important to God? It is the first thing that God started as an institution. Marriage was the first thing God himself started as an institution.

I always say that if God felt academics would have changed the world, he would have first made Adam a professor. The first thing he made Adam was a husband and a father. If God felt politics would have changed the world, he would have made Adam a prime minister or a president. The first thing he made Adam was a husband and a father. If God even felt the church would change the world, he would have made Adam a pastor or a bishop. The first thing he made Adam was a husband and a father.

I was shocked when God said even the family life comes before church. I did not like that one. I am a pastor. I have been a pastor for about 30 years. Everything about me is pastoring. I have always believed that the church is the most important thing. God said "no". God said that the criterion to be a pastor is to run your home well. I was shocked. God said, "Your home. The church is God's family." God said, "If you cannot run your own family, do not come and mismanage my own family." Is somebody catching what I am saying? The criterion to be a bishop is to run your home well. If you cannot run your own well, forget it.

COVID 19 showed us that everything can be shut down. During COVID 19, they shut down airlines, shut down schools, shut down restaurants. They even shut down churches. Only one thing could not be shut down. Families could not be shut down.

God sees family as a thing that would change the world. The labour we labour as pastors is the work that did not happen in families. If every man is groomed to understand he is the general of his house. The standards we hold our spiritual daddy by, and we hold all the ministers by, is the same standards we need to hold

every father by. Because those fathers say to themselves, "I am just a member. It is daddy that needs integrity." This message that he preached today is for pastors. It is daddy that needs integrity. Me, I am just a member. But you are also the general overseer of your family. Is somebody getting what I am saying.

God values family. He sees it as number one. Unfortunately, we have all been paying attention to other things, and we have left the thing important to God unattended. Why do we have successful lawyers that have unsuccessful marriages? Why do we have successful doctors that have unsuccessful marriages? The reason is simple. They have spent seven years studying law, seven years studying medicine, zero years studying marriage. So, they are succeeding where they have studied. There is no surprise in that.

I always say where you invest is where you harvest. Did you get that? I say where you invest is where you harvest. Some people come to me sometimes and say, "Pastor, I am unlucky with love." I say nobody's unlucky with love. You can either be unlearned, uninterested, uninvolved, uncommitted, but you are not unlucky. You are just not paying attention.

As about seven or so years ago, about seven years ago, nine out of the ten richest men in the world were divorced. About seven years ago. Nine out of ten of the richest men in the world, not in Africa, I am talking about the world. Nine out of ten were divorced. Eight were officially divorced. The ninth one was married to somebody else but living with somebody else, so I added him. He is divorced; he is just not aware. Nine out of ten were divorced.

So, it is not foolish people that fail in marriage. That is what I am trying to show you. It is not foolish people that fail. It is just uninterested people. Do you know how smart you have to be to be among the richest men in the world? Do you know how many documents you need to sign in a day to be among the richest men in the world? So, these guys are not dunces. They are not dull. They are just uninterested. Do you know how many meetings you attend if you are the richest man in the world? Even when you are not in a meeting, you are in a meeting preparing for the next meeting.

How many people here have been to Dubai before? Have you been to Dubai? Can I see your hand? Okay, not many people. Have you heard of Dubai? Dubai is a beautiful city, one of my own favorite cities. I must have been to Dubai now up to 30 times now if I count. I love the city. I have been there to preach. Sometimes I have been there for a holiday. I love the city. If you know the story of Dubai, it started as a desert. Most of you know the story.

It was a desert that today they have developed to the point where as a city, Dubai has broken over 400 world records. As a city, 400 world records. A lot of those records are Guinness Book of Records. The king of Dubai is divorced five times. I am showing you people smarter than me and you. They are failing in marriage. That should tell you that for you to succeed, you must be intentional. Are you catching what I am saying, sir?

So, how do we go on this journey? I said where you invest is where you what? Harvest. So, I brought a lot of our books. We have up to 30 or so books on marriage. Please buy them.

Everybody watching me today, you are a counsellor. Help me tell your neighbour, "You are a counsellor." No, do not be afraid. I am here. Tell your neighbour, "You are a counsellor." Everybody here, you will counsel somebody on marriage. So, buy all my books. Keep them. Everybody will counsel. You know why? One day your friend will ask you. One day your sibling will ask you a marriage question. One day your daughter, some of my biggest fans are grandmothers and mothers. They are always buying materials for their children. Some of you will soon get to the stage where your children will be asking you advice and you cannot give what you do not have. Everybody will give marriage advice. That is my experience. Everybody will give. So, if you are not prepared, instead of counselling, you will cancel them.

Daddy, there was a case I heard of, a young pretty lady, tall, pretty lady like this. She was already divorced in her early 30s. Child custody battle was already on. In counselling I asked, "So, how did you even marry this man? How did you get here?" She said

her parents had four daughters, and the advice the parents gave them was that they must marry from their town. That is the secret, not from their tribe. That would have been a bigger bracket. You say from our town; that is the secret of success in marriage. The 300 kilometers or whatever our town is.

She said out of the four of them, only one was still married, and that was the one that did not take that advice. The remaining three that married from the town, as the parents said, are all divorced today. Did those parents want those children to be divorced? No. They only gave what they had.

You cannot give what you do not have. A lot of things we call generational curses are not generational curses. They are just generational ignorance being passed from one generation to another. Is somebody getting what I am saying?

When we were coming into the U.S. on this trip before I came here, the people that stamped your passport at the border, I always enjoy talking to them when they want to ask you questions like how long are you staying, what are you here for. So, they ask me, "What do you do for a living?" I do not say I am a pastor again, because that one is not interesting. I would say I am a marriage coach, which is true. I am a marriage coach. I would say I am a marriage coach. My visa actually carries "marriage coach." That is why I have a visa that permits me to preach in the U.S. So, it carries "marriage coach." I say I am a marriage coach.

Whenever I say that, every time, like this last case, the guy just looked at me when I said that. He gave me a look and smiled. I laughed. He said, "Do you understand that look?" I said no. He said because 90% of them that work here are divorced. So, this issue is not an African issue. Neither is it an American issue. It is a human issue and history repeats itself when we do not learn from it. Come on, say "I will set the pace."

Purpose Of Marriage

There are five things to look at quickly in this short time I have left. In setting the pace in marriage, there are about four or five P's that you need. Number one P is knowing the purpose of marriage.

Come on, say with me "purpose." Say it louder. Say "purpose."

The first problem I found out is that many people getting married do not even know the purpose of marriage. I want to marry. Why? I just want to marry. My mates are married. One of my books out there is titled "25 Wrong Reasons People Enter Relationships ". So, this thing that doctor just mentioned now is there. I want to marry because all my mates are married. If all your prayer points are "Lord, I want to marry because my cousins are married. I want to marry because I am getting old. I want to marry because I am lonely." If that is just your reason, you are already going to have problems in marriage because your motive is already wrong.

It is like doing business. If you only focus on money, you will never be a genius. If you focus on really solving problems, there are too many problems to solve. If you focus on money, you will just be thinking how to rip people off. Is somebody getting what I am saying?

So, why do you want to get married? You must know the purpose. Even your prayer point, the prayer point we pray in churches sometimes is what is putting people in problem. Oh God, I must marry this year by fire and by force. Why? You see, the person entering marriage with that mindset is entering as a taker, but marriage is for givers, not for takers. You will have problem already because you want to marry because you are pressed for time. So, you are looking for any willing participant.

Is somebody getting what I am saying? If you are a man, your prayer point should show that you understand. Say, "Oh Lord, send me a woman you have assigned me to build." If you are a husband, the word husband is from husbandry, which talks about somebody that tends or cultivates. You are a builder. If you are a wife, you are praying for a husband, your prayer should be, "Lord, assign me to the man you have sent me to help." You are a helper. But if I just pray because all my mates are married, it will show. When I see the way some people dance in their wedding, I know they do not know what they are entering. By their dance, you shall know them. They do not know what they are signing up for.

My elder brother is in the Army. He has gone to different missions in the Army. He is a retired Major General now. I have never seen where they send soldiers to war and they are dancing. If you know what you are entering into, you will be a bit more solemn than we are currently doing it. Your friends will be gathering to pray with you on the journey you are going into. When you see some people's train and their bridesmaids, you know these ones, they do not know what they are entering. They think it is a fashion parade they came for. They think we are looking at their wig and your eye lashes. It does not matter when the problem starts. Is somebody catching what I am saying?

Complement Each Other

What is the purpose of marriage? There are seven purposes of marriage. I cannot list all of them today because of time. There are seven purposes of marriage. One of the purposes of marriage is for us to complement each other. For us to complement each other. So, the way life works, every human being, even though we are complete in Christ, but we were not created complete so that we would not need people. In fact, that is why God said it is not good for man to be alone.

If you are a single man here of age, please marry as fast as you can. Marriage will give you focus, will give you direction, will help you be responsible quickly. Hallelujah. Yes. It is God that said so. God said it is not good. If God says something is not good, there is no amount of reasoning you want to give me that is good. Something God says is not good, you want to say it is good. We are the ones tempting the devil in our time.

I wish if I had the power to change it, that is one of the things I would change. I would help people be mature quicker so that they can also marry quicker. You know when the Bible is saying we should live a holy life and all that, it is not really planning that you would be single at 40. That is not the plan. They call it the wife of your youth. The wife of your youth. So, do not slack. Hallelujah.

So, number one purpose for marriage is for us to complement. So, the way God did it, men and women are different because they complement each other. Compatibility is not in our similarity. It is

in our ability to get along.

So, that is why a pen and a pen cover are compatible. They are not alike, but they are compatible. Did somebody get what I am saying? God created us that way so that we can complement each other.

Every human being comes with certain strengths, but those certain strengths also spell certain weaknesses. So, the way God imagined it, he wanted two people that had certain strengths. Is there any young couple in front, sitting close by in front, a young couple, any couple? I need a couple, on stage.

Yeah, where is your wife? Please, both of you come. Clap for them, please. Where is your wife now? You did not consult her when you were raising your hand enthusiastically. Wife, come now, do not worry. Hallelujah. Come, come, come to this first level if you can. You know your husband before now, why are you looking like you do not know him? Come this way, come this way. Just come on this first level, thank you. Just stay like this. Both of you face that side, yes. Alright, praise God. Clap for them one more time. Let us clap for them. Let us clap for them.

So, the way God designed it, this guy, his front is his strength. In the back are weaknesses. Now, it is just how life is. God did not make one person complete in all. If not, you would not need other people. It is like sports car. What makes a sports car a sports car becomes a weakness when that sports car goes off-road or on a bad road. A sports car is flat; that makes it navigate corners quickly. It also makes it break wind to be fast. That same sports car, if it goes to a rocky road or off-road, that being low will cause problems. Now, an SUV, a jeep, a high car is good for off-road, but if you bring that high car to the racing track, the height and big tires is a disadvantage. Are you getting what I am saying?

That is how God made it. Everybody has strengths and they have weaknesses. So, God said, you know what, I want you guys to complement each other. Face me, please. Face that side. Both of you back yourselves. So, when these two people now back themselves, it is only strengths that are showing. They are both

covering up for each other where they are weak.

So, you will see this in Genesis chapter 2. When he said, "It is not good for man to be alone," he said, "I will make him a helper." The Amplified version says, "A helper that will complement and balance him." You know why? Not just gender differences. There is gender differences. There is also personality differences. That is why you notice talkers always like listeners. Two talkers do not like themselves. Opposites always attract first. Two talkers, if they go on a date together, they will hate it. She will say, "That man talks too much. He did not even allow me to say anything. If he asks me a question, he would answer it by himself. That guy talks too much." so talkers will like listeners.

Listeners, too, won't like themselves. Have you seen two listeners go on a date before? It is horrible. Do not do that. "How are you? How are we? Are you enjoying your juice?" They have nothing to say. So, you will find out an ideal date will be with a talker and a listener. They will ask the talker, "How was it?" He will say, "Ah, I enjoyed it. She allowed me to pour out all my mind." They will ask the listener, "How was it?" She will say, "It was very nice" because she does not have what to say before. She went to somebody that can talk. The date went well.

So, opposites generally will attract. Most couples do this thing unconsciously, but for those of us that studied, we found out that for successful couples, usually these things are present. It is difficult to see two jovial people marry. Rarely. They say it happens, but it is few. They said more times you will see a jovial person marry a quiet person, reserved person. But they say you will never see two moody people marry. So, you will never see. The moody people are not stupid. They are just unhappy. They are not stupid enough to marry each other. Is somebody getting what I am saying?

Now, it does not stop in gender. Like I said, spenders generally attract savers. Organized people generally will attract scattered people. Sometimes, the thing you are complaining about your spouse is why God sent you into their life. Is somebody getting what I am saying? so women, you are so organized, you do not

want to marry one scattered man, and every day you are shouting at him. If you marry another organized person, that one too will not like you. Have you seen organized people? The way they arrange something, eh? If you shift it by one inch, when they enter, they will know somebody has touched this thing. The two of you cannot live together at home. So, you need a scattered person.

Instead of insulting that your husband, my wife has a way she says this. She says women should learn to train their children and love their husband. Most women want to love their children and train their husbands. You cannot train your husband. Somebody that his mother did not train for how many years, is you that want to train him now that he is 40 years old. Why did my wife say that? She said most times women's children scatter the place, you see the woman come and say, "Junior, why did you scatter this place?" She will arrange it. When her husband scatters the place, she will come and say, "You are just a useless, man. Come and pick your things." She says it the other way around. It is those children you should teach to arrange. You can train your children. That your husband, you already know, he scatters his things. So, as he is entering, be following him. As he is dropping it, be picking it. "Thank you, darling." so love your husband, train your children. Hallelujah.

Now, the beauty of it, the beauty of it, why did God bring us to complement each other? Three things will happen. Opposites will first attract. Then after that, opposites will frustrate. The guy that talks a lot that married a quiet person, at the beginning is wonderful. At some point in the middle, he will be telling her, "You, don't you talk at all. You do not have anything to say. In this thing I have said now, you did not say anything." Then after a while, the listener, will be telling the talkative that you talk too much, you are giving me a headache. They will be frustrated.

If they are not careful at this point, many couples either break their relationship or break their marriage. Or they find a system to live together but they are not really together. They are co-tenants. They either move to a different room, you know, run their finances differently, all those things. If you do that, you have

missed the beautiful part because the third stage is where they alternate. If we can survive with understanding the middle stage, you will reach where God was actually going. What God wanted was that this talker, by the time he is married for 10, 20 years, he learns how to listen more and this listener, after being married to a talker for 20 years, learns how to talk. This spender, after being married to a saver, will say, ah, this one helped my own marriage.

Many of you do not know your financial habits until you marry. You know, when you were single, you were the chairman, board of trustees, secretary, treasurer. Only you were everything. So, you will be signing any document for yourself and the accounts will agree. But when there is another person involved, you will start seeing your true habits. I did not know I was reckless with money. Making money has never been a problem for me. Keeping it is the problem. I used to spend more than I was making. I did not know that. You see, marriage will reveal your character.

So, when I married my wife, she was a saver, I was a spender. A few years or months into the marriage, I would say, "Hey, I need money." My wife would say, "How much?" I would say like 100K. She would say, "I have." I would say, "You have money in this house? I thought we were broke." It happened a few times then I found out that my wife does not waste money. She is a saver by nature. Savers price everything but they never buy. So, my wife always has money. The Nigerian government should stop borrowing from China. They should borrow from my wife. She has money. No matter the scarcity you are hearing of in the world, ask her. She has hidden one money somewhere. She is a saver. I was reckless, spending anyhow.

You know that spenders believe that money will always come. My wife would say, "Let us save for the rainy day" and I would respond that rain was already falling. We were already in the rainy day. Spenders have many quotes and sayings that they use to justify bad behaviour. But after some years, when I was turning 40, my wife said she noticed that this her husband had been doing ministry and labouring for many years yet he had no savings. This is what you are sent to marriage to do. It is to help, not to eat meat. You are to be a helpmeet not to eat meat. So, my wife looked and

saw that I was going to be 40 without savings, and God told her not to rebuke me. Instead that He would give her the wisdom of what to do. So, God inspired her to start saving for me, that anytime I take money to spend she should also take money like she wanted to spend but she should save it. That was how she was saving for me unknowingly.

One day, I saw the account. I cannot remember what I was doing with the account but I noticed that money was going out, so I called our accountant to know what was happening, who was taking the money. She responded that it was my wife. I asked why. She said I should ask my wife. Actually the accountant was part of the plan. So, I went to question my wife about it. She did not want to open up but when I pestered her, she opened up that she was saving for me. I was not convinced. I asked her how much she had saved. When she told me the amount, I was surprised. I said, "So, I am this rich and I have been wasting my money since." It was actually a lot of money. So, I said if she could save that much money without my permission, imagine if I was fully onboard. So, I decided that the saving would begin.

Now we are rich. If you are here and you do not save, there must be one of you (husband and wife) that should have more grace or discipline for saving. Let that person run the account. I saw a scripture that says God will bless you in your storehouse. Some people do not have a storehouse. It is not only your going out and coming in that will be blessed. It says there is a blessing that comes as interest in your storehouse. People do not know that there is a blessing for saving. Deuteronomy 28:8: *"I will bless your storehouse and what you set your hands to do."* They are two different blessings, and here is a blessing on what you are doing. There is a blessing that multiplies saving.

So, you should complement each other. My wife is an organizer. She is a planner. Me, I am spontaneous. I do not go for flights until one minute to boarding, but my wife is a planner. She can start planning for a trip one week ahead of time. I did laugh at her when she started packing. I would ask what she was doing. When she replied that she was planning for our travel next week I would burst out laughing, but actually that is the way it can work. That

planner helps the spontaneous but there are times in our lives that we need to make spontaneous decisions. The planner won't be able to make that decision. God brings the two of you to complement each other. That is one of the important reasons of marriage.

It is very deep. I do not have time to go into it. Even the way God structured a man and a woman, men are work oriented, women are family oriented. It is for a reason. If God made two beings that are work oriented it won't be balanced. Some men do not even know why they are working. When they are asked why they are working they will say it is to make money. When the money comes what will they do with it? They will say they will invest it. When the investment comes what will happen? They will respond that they will invest it again. It is later that they will now remember that they will use money for the family. It is because men love work. They get identity from work. But God did not make the two beings like that. He created a woman that is family oriented.

The first thing God gave Adam was work. The first thing God gave Eve was husband. So, women anywhere in the world are family oriented. That gives a balance. If the two are work oriented and that is what the secular world is trying to push women to do. I tell men that I pray for men that they will be so blessed that their wives will only work at the pace that she wants to work. She won't work because she needs to work. Because what the world has done is to make men and women work at the same pace and at the end it is the family life that will suffer. Women trying to get same target as men.

Men love work. Even the hormones that flow in our bodies as men are different from those of women. When men are stressed, they use work to step down. They can say I am so tired let me answer some emails. That is how men relax. We are wired and created for work. You can see men bragging about their suffering. One is saying I spent three hours in traffic. Another is saying he slept in the office. It is like a competition of who suffers the most. This is because we love work.

The hormones that flow in women when they are stressed is called cortisol. It actually destroys them and reduces their immune system. It is found out that the opposite happens when family life is introduced. When women are having family life, the hormone that flows in their body is called oxytocin. It makes them happy. Even when women see children, babies that are not theirs, this same oxytocin flows in them. They are wired for family. When women carry babies for a long time, they will start asking their husbands if they should have one more child. My wife does this. When we visit someone with a new baby, she will be asking if we should do one more and I will have to tell her to drop the baby. Let us go home. Scientists found out that when women see babies, the happy hormones flow in them. They are wired for family life.

I have preached in different continents of the world. Women react the same everywhere in the world when they are offered marriage. They are happy. You hardly see men rejoicing over proposals. They will ask are you okay, are you ready, do you have money. God did it that way. One is work oriented, the other is family oriented. They balance each other.

There are many more differences. For instance, a man is wired for vision. If you are a man, one of the prayers you must pray for yourself is for vision. Your authority in life is tied to your eyes. Also, your problems in life come from your eyes. Men have more nerves in their eyes than women. David was having a great life until he saw Bathsheba having her bath. Job was wiser. He said I have made a covenant with my eyes. As a man you are visually driven. If you notice, it has been discovered that men can see on a straight line better than women can. It is because you are wired for vision. You are also wired for focus. This is why you cannot do two things well most times as a man.

Women on the other hand are wired for details and multitasking. As a helper, you do not need to focus on one thing. You can focus on many things. They found out that men can see better on a straight line but women can see from the corner of their eyes. The ancient men were hunters. They could see an antelope from very far. While the ancient women were mothers. She could have four

children playing. She is looking straight but she is keeping an eye on all four of them no matter where they are.

So, I tell men anytime you are with your wife or fiancée and you are on your phone, both of you sitting together watching TV, she is reading your chat. She might be looking straight but she can see from the corner of her eyes. Most men do not know that women can see from the corner of their eyes. Women too do not know that men cannot see from the corner of their eyes. Women who have tried gossiping with their husbands, pointing the man to someone and saying do not look, the man cannot see without turning to look. He is wired for vision.

When the Holy Ghost came, Joel says your young men shall see visions. The Holy Ghost just enhanced what was there. It says your old men shall dream dreams. The moment they added women, they said they will prophesy. That means they will remind you of what you said God told you. All these things line up with both science and scriptures. Women are past oriented. Men are forward oriented. Men have zero memory because their brains are wired more for vision while women have very strong unlimited memories. She will remember something you did to her 20 years ago like it happened today. A man's favourite words in argument is "let us move on," not just because he wants to move on but he cannot even remember. He is wired more for vision. That is why a man and a woman together make a stronger combination.

For us to set the pace for marriage, number one we must know the purpose of marriage.

Marry The Right Person

Second thing about setting the pace in marriage is we must enter marriage with the right person. Who you marry determines how the marriage will go. One of the best things or strongest points to succeeding in anything is the quality of the members of the team. If you want to succeed in business, your team matters a lot. You can have a great idea and a bad team kills it.

That is why Nigeria has not won any world cup in a long time. The

team is still wrong. By the team you choose, it will determine what will come out. Nigerians are the ones that pray in the stadium. They pray before the match. They pray after the match. There are things prayer cannot do. If you want to pray, pray to choose the right team. Do not come and pray to win the match that day. You cannot only be saying you are praying for a great marriage. You must choose the right partner.

Myself and my wife were flying on a plane, Qatar Airways. There was a barricade in between our seats in case the two people are not travelling together. So, we called the attention of the attendant to know how to bring the barricade down and he said both people have to press the button on their sides at the same time for it to come down. Then I asked how to raise it up. He said only one person needs to press the button to bring the barricade up.

So, to build a strong marriage you need two people intentionally pressing the button but to build a wall to destroy the marriage, only one person can do that. So, who did you choose? You have to choose the right person. Someone might ask how to know the right person to marry. I have a book titled "Who Should I Marry?" I broke down some of these things.

Many young people do not even know the qualities to look for in a spouse. I hear many girls say he must be tall. These movies and music videos that people watch are deceiving them. Have you seen any marriage that has been working for 20 or 30 years and when asked what the secret is the woman said it is my husband's height? Instead of tall, choose tolerance. I have also heard people say he must be a graduate. No. What you need is someone intellectually compatible with you. There are some graduates you cannot talk to. There are some graduates that the way they think is not enlightened.

When I married my wife, she had a Master's degree from UNILAG while I had just OND from Yabatech. The O stands for Ordinary. If that is how they choose a spouse by graduate certificate, she would have missed me. If she had said she must marry a graduate. Now I have an honorary doctorate, so I am a Doctor. Is it not bigger than Master's? I am trying to say that what

you are looking for is intellectual compatibility. Some people say I must marry a rich man. It is because you think you will not be rich so you are looking for someone to rescue you.

Born Again Christian

I dealt with the ten Cs in this book. If you are looking for someone to marry, number one C is Christ. The person must be in Christ. If you are a born again Christian and you want to set the pace in marriage, marry another born again Christian. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. If you are a believer raised in a great church like this, marry another believer. God told my wife many years ago that can you go to the cemetery and pick a spouse? In case you do not know, the Bible says when we were sinners we were dead in trespasses and sins. If you are a believer and you marry an unbeliever you are marrying a dead person spiritually. You are going to the cemetery. God spoke to my wife, even if the guy is nice, he is dead. If he is rich he is dead. If he is handsome or she is beautiful they are still dead. You cannot be a believer, born again Christian, tongue-talking and you marry an unbeliever. The two of you can never be one. What does Christ have to do with Belial? How can darkness and light have communion?

Christ-like Character

Second C listed here, check their character. It is not everybody in church that has Christ-like character. A church is a hospital. Everybody comes to church. Jesus had a Deacon board of 12 people. One was a thief. If Jesus had one thief on his Deacon board of 12, who are you? So just because you met them in church does not mean they have the character of Christ. Look for their character. By their fruits you shall know them. If they are lying anyhow, they do not attend church service, never committed, they cancel things taught in church. Someone once told me that a guy wanted to marry her but when they spoke about premarital sex the man said it is left to choice, if a person wants to have premarital sex or not. I asked her what question she is asking me because the man has shown her his true colour. He has shown that spiritual things do not guide his life. Casual sex always has casualties. So, do not let any devil deceive you. Check their character. Character does not lie.

One of my most touching stories is that of one guy who used to be a cultist in the University. He was a hitman, a huge man. They used to take him from campus to campus to hit people. He came to church and became born again. When he became born again this guy totally transformed. This giant became a gentle giant, tongue talking, hallelujah shouting, Bible carrying, church attending, tithe paying believer, totally changed. He was even now teaching in our believers class, foundation class. This guy was paying tithe every week. His business was booming. He usually came to the church office to harass me. He would say we should tell him the needs of the church so that he could give. This is every Pastor's dream, to have members that harass you for giving instead of you harassing them. The guy was a pillar in church. While this was going on there was another sister in church who was a trouble maker. Her father left her mother. She was fighting her father, fighting her mother, fighting her elder brother, fighting her boss, fighting even me the innocent pastor. She was a trouble maker, always fighting people and the fight got so much that my associate pastor and I told ourselves that the church was still quite young. We would not go forward with this kind of fight so we held hands and prayed to God to send the lady to another church, that we could not cope with her.

Two months later she came to me and said she sensed that God was leading her to another church and we asked her if she was sure. We asked if she had prayed. She left to another church and there was peace and prosperity in the land. The church began to grow. Guess what, we later found out that this guy started becoming friends with that girl and fell in love with her. The pillar fell in love with the caterpillar, married her back into church and she continued from where she stopped, fighting; scattering the church. After some months she left again. After some months he too left. I did not see them. I met the guy after about five years. He told me that the marriage failed from day one. I actually warned him that he could not marry the girl because of her character. He said the only reason the marriage lasted that long for four or five years was because they were trying to prove me wrong. They did not want it to be like what I warned them about was what happened. He said they fought every day of that marriage,

because she was a fighter. That was her character. He said there were times they were driving on the highway. They would park the car, come down and fight, then straighten their clothes and continue the journey. Watch out for character.

Prepare For Marriage

Number three: Prepare for marriage. Desiring marriage is good but preparing for marriage is better. Prepare for marriage. Your single years are not the years you use to wait for marriage. Your single years are the days you prepare for life. Now that you are single, you do not only read books on marriage to prepare for marriage. You read finance books. You read other kinds of books because you are going into marriage as a full package. Prepare. Many people act surprised when something is not working. When you ask them how did you prepare for it, did you even prepare at all.

I did long distance race when I was in secondary school. When my mates were going to the field to practice, I and my useless friends, I was not born again that time, it was a boarding school. We would wake up late and first smoke cigarettes. The people I was to compete with went before classes at about 6:00 a.m. to go and practice on the field. Me I would wake up at 10:00 a.m. and first smoke. Then I and my useless friends would measure the dormitory to know how many times we needed to run in the dormitory to make 1500. You cannot successfully fail without useless friends. So, we would measure the dormitory and I would run in the dormitory and my friends would be timing me.

The day of the race came. Those days I was very popular in school. People were hailing me. That was when I learnt that, in life, it does not matter who is supporting you, if you are not prepared, you will still fail globally. As the race started, people were hailing me greatly. I was following the person that was at the first position and I told myself that I would take second position. You will know a failure by the goals he sets; he does not want to pass, he just does not want to fail. I was in second place running with all my energy. Nobody told me that in long distance race runners save energy till the last lap. I had used all my energy to survive to the last lap. At the last lap, immediately the whistle was

blown everyone else took off. I tried to follow but my heart said, “if you move, you will collapse here today.” The only thing that saved me was that there was a bush in front. When we made the corner, everyone went into the corner but I went straight into the bush. I went to sit there until everyone had left the field. Only my useless friends that measured the dormitory with me waited for me.

Are you preparing? When you are in a church like this, serving in church is part of how you prepare for marriage. Do you know that everything God has asked us to do as Christians is what they have also asked us to do in marriage? There is no new instruction for marriage. If they say forgive people that offend you as a Christian, it is the same thing you will do in marriage. It is only people that have not been practicing as singles that struggle to forgive in marriage. Saying something like “I can never forgive”, are you sure you are a believer? For us forgiveness is not optional as Christians. It is said that a soft answer turns away wrath. It is not a marriage scripture; it is a Christian scripture. If you are already a Christian practicing it, you will practice it in marriage.

I remember one man who got tired. He called his pastor and told him that he was no longer marrying his wife. The pastor responded that the Bible says men should love their wives. The man responded that the woman was not his wife because she had been staying in the other room for months. The pastor responded that the Bible says, “Love your neighbors.” The man responded that the woman was not his neighbor because she had been going to different places telling people bad things about him. The pastor then said, “Love your enemies. They are all in the scripture.”

So, if you have been practicing as a Christian it will be easy. Practice service. If you are in a church and everyone is serving you, you do not serve in any department, know that marriage is for two servers. We serve each other. Because of the way I served the devil, when I gave my life to Christ, I told myself that I will serve God. God will never have a need in His house.



AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL CONVERGENCE

Switch
Marriage . Ministry . Market Place

THEME:
EXEMPLARY
1 TIMOTHY 4:12

MINISTERING:

Rev. Dr. Sam & Rev. Mrs. Olabisi Aboyeji
The General Overseer, FCCN

Anwinli and Ohis Ojeikere
The Winlos

Iyinoluwa Aboyeji
The Future Africa

Aniolajesu Omotoso
Music Minister

9AM Saturday, 3RD MAY, 2025
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Rev. Oluyinka Adebisi
Chairman: Switch 4.0

SWITCH 4.0
MAY 3, 2025

**WELCOME REMARKS BY
THE GENERAL OVERSEER**

It is with a heart full of profound gratitude to God, that I, on behalf of my amiable wife and our entire family, as well as the Board of Directors and National Leadership of our organization, the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, warmly welcome you all to this year's edition of our flagship mentorship program, - SWITCH 4.0.

SWITCH is an interdenominational convergence, organized by the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, as an avenue to contribute to the growth and expansion of the body of Christ by way of offering mentorship opportunities for young ministers, the nextgen and indeed everyone desirous of benefiting from the wealth of knowledge and experience of choice individuals and couples who have made and are still making positive impact in ministry, marriage, and the marketplace. Our commitment to host this annual event is borne out of the determination to contribute our quota as a church, to raising the next crop of leaders for our nation in different spheres of life.

Within our system as a church, we are blessed with a large population of resourceful, vibrant, and talented youth, as can also be said of the nation at large. The church's leadership vision and focus are to ensure that we create the enabling environment for this energetic segment of our demography to express their God-given talents and expose them to discipleship and mentorship programmes in preparation for taking on leadership responsibilities, both now and in the future.

As an organization, privileged this year to be celebrating 70 years of remarkable impact of transforming lives through the Foursquare Gospel here in Nigeria, we will continue to create the right avenues for mentoring the Nextgen - helping them to develop their gifts and allowing them to become partners in

ministry. We are determined to continue to be intentional in reaching the next generation to further guarantee the growth and sustenance of the faith that was handed down to us by our forebears.

This year of our Platinum Jubilee Celebration, we have chosen as a topic: **EXEMPLARY**.

The scriptures in 1 Timothy 4:12 says, *"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."* (NKJV). The scripture encourages believers in Christ to be exemplary in various aspects of life, which will enable us to be respected and influential, not just within the faith community, but also in the larger society, regardless of age. Paul's charge to Timothy highlights the importance of practical Christian living as a means of influencing others. As children of God, we are born into the household of faith that is destined to lead exemplary lives worthy of emulation.

On this note, I warmly welcome our guest speakers, Rev. Ohis and Pastor Mrs. Anwinli Ojeikere – popularly known as The Winlos. Together, they mentor and inspire thousands of married couples and the unmarried. They host their popular show THE WINLOS SHOW (TWS), which covers a mix of pure Christian comedy, stage plays, and music.

I also warmly welcome my beloved son, Brother Iyinoluwa Aboyeji, OON, a global techpreneur who co-founded Andela, a company focused on training and connecting software developers with global companies. He also co-founded Future Africa, the first investor in bold and visionary leaders, building global businesses that solve Africa's biggest challenges. They serve entrepreneurial leaders with capital, coaching and a growing community of advisors they call the Future Africa Community.

The Winlos and Iyinoluwa will be joining my wife and I in declaring God's counsel as we help to establish and set the template for navigating the divine pathway to success in ministry, marriage, and the marketplace.

In closing this remark, let me offer my sincere appreciation to our partners, especially the Bible Society of Nigeria, ably led by its General Secretary, Pastor Samuel Sanusi for supporting us since SWITCH 1.0 till date. The Planning Committee of this event, chaired by our dear Rev. Yinka Adebisi, is also commended for putting together this interdenominational convergence. May God reward your service in His vineyard in Jesus' name.

Once again, you are welcome. God bless you all.

Reverend Dr. Sam Aboyeji
General Overseer

SWITCH 4.0

MAY 3, 2025

Ministry

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY

Rev. Sam Aboyeji

There is a prophecy that has been waiting for fulfillment and I believe that it is going to be fulfilled in this generation. And that prophecy, the first one is in Isaiah chapter two verse number two: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills. And all nations shall flow into it."* I think it has started fulfillment already.

There is hardly any nation in the world today where you do not have believers. In fact, the nations where we thought they are not Christians, we are told that those are the places where we have the highest rate of conversion because that is a prophecy that was made long ago that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted and be established upon the mountains and men, all nations shall flow into it. But hear the second one. The second one is even stronger and that one is in Zechariah chapter eight verse twenty-three: *"Thus said the Lord of hosts, in those days it shall come to pass,"* and I think it is beginning to come to pass now, *"that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations. Even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,"* we are talking about a spiritual Jew now, *"saying, we will go with you for we have heard that God is with you."* That is what it takes to be exemplary. We will go with you. Anywhere you are going, we shall go with you.

You know, when Aaron was trying to invite, you know, in the book of Genesis, he said, *"Come with us because the Lord has promised good to Israel."* But this scripture is saying that the men, ten men will come by themselves and they will take hold of

the skirt of he that is a spiritual Jew and say, "*Take us to the house of your God because we have heard that God is with you.*" I prayed that would be your story. I said that would be your story. That ten men will hold your skirts and say, "What is your secret? How are you doing it?" That is what it means to be exemplary.

Exemplary and excellence, I discovered, are two words that can be used interchangeably. I was discovering for the first time that actually what it means to be exemplary is to be excellent. And look at it, while excellence is the quality of being extremely good, or excellence, exemplary is the quality of being extremely good and deserving to be admired and copied. (Webster Dictionary)

So, it is not a make up. Excellence and exemplary. All of us are used to exemplary being, you know, being an example. But this one is saying that being exemplary actually means being so good that people will desire to copy you. I prayed that would be your story, in the name of Jesus. You are moving from average to excellence. You are moving from good to excellence, in the name of Jesus. Of course, in 1st Corinthians chapter 14 verse 12, *even so you for as much as you are zealous of spiritual gifts seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church.* The Lord's number one concern is for us to excel or be extremely good in building the body of Christ. That is where you can fulfill your purpose. Where your focus is how to build the body of Christ. I pray that you will not miss it, in the name of Jesus.

I will therefore be speaking today on the pursuit of excellence in ministry using Joshua and Elisha. Now, you understand that Joshua made an open invitation. Joshua chapter 24 verse 15. He told the people who are, you know, those who are to be his generation after him. He told them, he said, "Look, I do not know who you want to serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It was an open invitation. If you read verse 18 or verse 19, you will see that the people chorused, "We also will serve the Lord." That is exemplary. He did not need to compel them. He did not need to cajole them. He did not need to oppress them. He simply threw an open invitation.

You see, everybody knows what is good. Are you following what

I am saying? Nobody follows what is bad. And when we are saying exemplary is to be extremely good that people will desire to copy you, Joshua was one. That is why the people said, "We also, we will go with you. We are going to serve that God." I pray that your life will be so exemplary that before you speak, men will decide to follow you. I said before you talk, women will begin to follow you. That is what it means to be exemplary.

Now, when we are talking about ministry, what is ministry? Each time we come every year, I try to define ministry. It is so important because these days, people have turned ministry upside down. They call what is not ministry, ministry. So, I need to keep defining it, so that we do not get lost. Ministry number one, by my definition, is a divine assignment. It is a work or task assigned to an individual to fulfill.

Anyone who discovers his God-given assignment and pursues it will have a ministry. Ministry is not about occupying a position or carrying a title. In fact, first Timothy chapter three verse one says, "This is a true saying, if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good office." Is that what your Bible says? A good work. So, ministry is about work. It is about work.

I met a young man one day. He was just talking by the way and he said, "Look, ah, my goal in ministry is that very soon, I also begin to fly my jet like Bishop Oyedepo." And I looked at him. I said, "He does not know what it means." Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." He did not know what he was talking about.

Many do not understand what ministry is all about. They have taken ministry for showmanship. They have taken ministry for something else. That is what ministry is, hard work. There is a hill in Ilorin, I think they call it Sobi Hill. In those early days, Bishop Oyedepo would go on top of that hill and rain would fall. And when it rained while you were on top of the mountain and tried to come down, you would not be able to come down with ease. You would have to use your chest to crawl down. That is what ministry is all about. It is about hard work.

So, if you think ministry is to wear nice suit, I think you have missed it. If you think ministry is to wear the latest shoes, you have missed it. That is not ministry. Ministry is hard work. It is not even title. A man went to a man of God and he said he was a bishop. The man he went to was a bishop. And when he had finished visiting the bishop and he was going, the bishops were to pray together. Then he was joking, he said, "Archbishop, pray for me because you have Arc added to your bishop." And he prayed for the bishop and he left. After 10 minutes, he came back and the bishop was saying, "Ah, Archbishop, I thought you had gone." He said, "No, there is no fuel in my car." God will use bishop to drop something, to drop a seed. And the bishop looked at him and said, "Ah, this is title without entitlement." I pray for you. May you not have title without entitlement. There are people who are carrying about big, big titles. But no entitlement. If God calls you, he does not call and leave you empty.

Paul said, "The grace of God that is with me is not in vain." There is nothing like empty grace. Grace will leave you loaded and needed, and a needed man is a blessed man. Because even if there is no money in his pocket, because he is needed, those who need him will fill his pocket. Is somebody following me now? That is what ministry is all about.

Ministry is not about just going around in nice shirts and nice suits. Everyone God called, he gave a task. He called Moses and he gave him a task. Go and deliver Israel. Right? Exodus 3:12. When you have delivered them, you worship me where? On this mountain. He called Joshua, who we are going to use in a short while and he told him, he said, "Oh boy, you will take the land and you will divide it. You give it to them." He called Paul and he gave him a specific assignment. My question to you today is: What has he called you to do? What has he called you to do? And you say you have ministry. What exactly has he called you to do?

Just recently, we had our ICML, International Conference of Ministers and Leaders and I remember the man of God who came to minister. He was showing us the difference between a calling and ministry. All of us are called, true or false? We are called into salvation in Christ, true or false? But not all of us have ministry. In

fact, some people have Ph.D. from Bible College, they do not have ministry. Are you surprised? They do not have ministry.

What is your ministry? Are you a pastor? Are you an evangelist? Are you a prophet? Are you an apostle? What exactly has he called you to do? And when you have discovered it, please do not leave the place. Is somebody listening to me? Because what you do not use, you will lose. Do not leave it. Be there. I used to crack a joke, one of my sons in the Lord, he is called to the Children's ministry. And it came to a point in time, his father and mother brought him to me. And they said, "Sir, I thought there should be promotion in your ministry. This our son, has been ministering to children. I think it is about time to promote him to minister to adults." That is their own understanding of promotion. But the guy said, "But this is my calling. This is what God has called me to do." What has he called you to do? It is a question you need to answer.

Ministry is about stewardship. Paul the Apostle in Acts 21, 18-19: *"On the following day, Paul went in with us, and all the others were present and when he had greeted them, he told them in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry."* Ministry is stewardship and reporting to your superiors. Today, for some people, the reason why they are interested in ministry is because they will be on their own. They can do whatever they like. That is not ministry. Paul the Apostle went to the church in Jerusalem and he made known to them what God had done through his ministry. And that is why many people are in ministry today, they are not making any impact, because they are on their own.

Somebody spoke to me one day and he said, "Look, I had about 30 plus churches and one day came, and this one would talk about problem, this one would talk about problem, this one would talk about problem." He said, when he was fed up, he just announced to all of them, "I think you are all a bunch of problems. I think you can go with these churches because they are problematic. Go with it, I dash you."

It is because there is no proper knowledge. Even he himself who

is overseeing, he does not understand that there should be proper way of doing things, getting your name to be written in indelible ink and not invisible ink.

There are so many people, in the name of being in ministry, they just disappear. They get to a place and they spend four years, they spend five years, nobody can point to anything concrete that was done. It is a waste of life. They live throughout life, they are 70, they are still experimenting. Because they have not achieved anything. That is why I want you to pray and say, "Oh Lord, let my life not be an experiment." The fact that you are in ministry is even the more reason why you should achieve. It is not a reason not to achieve. That is what ministry is.

In the life of Joshua, excellence of being exemplary in ministry was clearly manifested. When you look at Joshua, he fulfilled his mandate. Same with Elisha, who asked for a double portion of the Lord's Spirit. Let us look at Joshua. Joshua was an example of ministerial excellence. He is an example of somebody who is exemplary in ministry.

You know, I was touched by the life of Joshua. Because when God called him, in Joshua chapter one, if you read it from verse one, it said the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses. Now, take note of that. The servant of who? Of Moses. By the time we got to chapter five, Joshua had promoted himself, because he had been so much in relationship with God, that when he saw that man that he was asking, as he was about to enter Jericho, and he saw that man, and he said, "Who are you?" And the man introduced himself. He said, "What will the Lord have his servant to do?" In other words, I am no longer a servant of Moses, I am a servant of God. He did not stop there. When Joshua was finishing his assignments, in the book of Joshua chapter 24, verses 28, and 29, look at it: *"So, Joshua led the people the path, each to his own inheritance. Now it came to pass, after these things, that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord."* He has been promoted. That is excellence in ministry. If by the time you are ending your ministry, we cannot see any visible sign of progress, know that you are not exemplary.

This is a man that was excellent. By the time he was ending his ministry, his name had changed from Joshua, the servant of Moses, to Joshua, the servant of the Lord, the original master. I pray for you, you will not end where you started. I say you won't end where you started.

As many of you that are desiring ministry, this is important. Look at, he was given a mandate, in Joshua 1 verses 2 and 6. *"Moses, my servant, is dead. Now, therefore, arise, go over to Jordan. You and all these people, to the land which I am giving to them, the children of Israel."* Somebody told me that one of the things that is not easy about ministry, is that the stakes are high. Now, God told this man that he was going to take all these people to Jordan. And for your information, there were pregnant women among them, there were those who did not like Joshua, there are those who did not like his face, but all of them must cross. That was his business, how he would get them to cross, is between him and God. I pray for you, whatever assignment heaven has given you, he will back you up, you will achieve it.

As a young person, one of the greatest discoveries you can make early in life, is to discover your assignment on earth. If you discover your assignment on earth, you will not waste time. That will be my prayer for you, that you will discover your assignment on earth early, so that your life will not be an experiment, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was given an assignment in chapter 24 verses 28, and 29, it said, "And it came to pass, after these things, that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old." You will not leave this world until you have achieved your purpose. I say you won't leave earth until you have achieved the purposes which God sent you here. It is so important for us to know the reason why we are here.

Ministry is about achievement. A man, one man, went to Ireland, St. Patrick is his name. He went to Ireland, the current place where you have Dublin as a capital. He went there, one man, and we are told that he met Ireland a heathen nation, and when he was leaving, he left it a Christian nation. That is what ministry is all about, making a difference, making an impact. I pray your life will not be an experiment, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How did Joshua become so excellent? What was his secret to have been so excellent, so outstanding, that even when he threw an open invitation, people were saying, "We are going to follow you"? What made his ministry so outstanding, so excellent, that he began and he ended? He began the ministry and he ended it. He did not stop by the wayside, he did not fall by the wayside. What was the secret?

Who Called You?

The first secret of Joshua's ministerial excellence is God. Who called you? If you do not have a relationship with God, you have no business in ministry. That is the first thing you need to sort out. The children of Israel were replying Joshua, in Joshua 1:7, *"According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so we will hearken unto you. Only the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses."* They gave a condition, we are going to listen to you, we are going to respect you, but wait, we hope you have God. If you do not have God, we have no business with you.

There are so many people today, there is no sign of ministry. There is nothing to confirm that they have a ministry, yet they are carrying a microphone every Sunday. God does not send people without giving a confirmation. When he sent Moses, he said, you will come back to this mountain with the people and worship me when you have accomplished the assignment I sent you for. If there is anything you are going to ask for today, if you have been nursing the idea of entering ministry, ask God for a sign that he sent you. Everyone he sent, they have a sign that he sent them, because you need it. I am going to show you the reason why you need it.

So, your God, who is your God? Is your God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is he the God of the gospel? Which God are you ministering under? Which God? Because there are so many people in ministry who are not serving the God of the Bible. Is somebody following me now? Sometimes where I used to minister, one young man, he was making waves everywhere in ministry. All the top, top people attended his church. All of a sudden, the churches began to fail one after the other. He had a

chain of churches. You see, just the way banks fail, that was how the church began to fail and these are big, big churches where big men worshiped. With no explanation, they just started collapsing one by one. When it remained only one, somebody counseled him. He said, "Before you lose this one and you go hungry permanently, go and give it to Foursquare, they will help you to rescue the remaining one." That was how he came to us and we then discovered that what he was using was charm. That is what he was using to run the church. His God was different from our God. He was different. Who is your God that you are ministering under? You need to claim it.

They said, "Only let your God be with you." If it is that same God that was with Moses, then we are all for you, but if it is a different God, please just be far from us, but if it is that same God, anything you say to us, we will do. Because we have tested that God and we know he is true.

Which God? You need to have a relationship with this God. Your God. Every man at some point will be asked the question, who is your God? When all men have left you, you will be left with only your God. Is somebody with me? Paul the apostle said, "At my first appearance, no one was with me," he said, "but the Lord was with me and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." The truth is that if that God is not your God, you are taking a big risk.

Who is your God that you are ministering under? In Exodus 3 verse 14, he told Moses and he said, "My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest." You need his presence if it is that same God. You need his help if it is this same God. What you need is God's help. The Bible said that the people that do know their God shall be strong and they shall do exploits. Every outstanding man or woman in the Bible knew their God. They had a relationship with this God. And that was what made the difference.

Every man will be asked the question, who sent you? Every man who posed to be a servant of God will be asked. People will ask you mouth to mouth, situation will ask you, circumstance will ask you. Who sent you? Even Jesus was asked, "By what power are

you doing what you are doing?" He must have an answer. At that point, you cannot afford to chew your mouth. Because if you are chewing your mouth, they will just say, "My friend, begin to eat your Bible." And the man will be eating his Bible. Have you seen it before? A man was eating his Bible when they commanded him to eat his Bible, because he did not know who sent him. He did not know who sent him. They said, "In the name of Jesus Christ that Paul preaches, come out of him." And the demon possessed man said, "Sorry, come, come. I have checked and I cannot find your name. Jesus, I know, Paul, I know, from where are you coming?" So, instead of us to be cast out, we are going to show you that we too we have some small power, and they pounced on him.

Let me tell you, the spiritual world is real. Are you following me? Very real. It is not a place to play, it is real. As real as I am seeing like this. That is how the spiritual world is. So, who sent you? Situation will ask, man will challenge you. Who sent you? Even Jesus Christ was challenged. Every outstanding man or woman of God knew their God. I pray for you today, if you have not had an encounter with him, you will have it in the course of this meeting. You will know him. That is why Paul said, "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering."

Even with Jesus Christ, it came to a point when God abandoned Jesus, he had to shout, "My father, my father, why hast thou forsaken me?" I have met people who have been frustrated in ministry and when you dig into it, you discover that nobody sent them. They sent themselves. They did not send them. I said, if it is the Jesus Christ that I am serving that sent you, no, it cannot be like this. It cannot be like this. So, you must know the God who sent you. You must have a divine mandate. How dare you want to do God's work without God's mandate? How? You will be asked, who sent you? You need God's help. The Bible says except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it.

God's help is what takes a man beyond his limits and his limitations. That is why you need Him. He will take you beyond your limit and your limitation. Because you cannot do this work with the arm of flesh. You need extra power which only God will

make available.

Ministry Is About People

Let us go on. What again is the secret of Joshua's excellent ministry? His people. You want to have an excellent ministry? It must be about people. Ministry is about people. If anybody is not ministering to people, then he has a wrong ministry. It cannot be true. It cannot be correct.

In Joshua chapter one verse sixteen. Hear what the people said to Joshua, *"And they answered Joshua saying, All that you command us, we will do and wheresoever you send us, we will go."* Verse eighteen, that is the most interesting part: *"Whosoever it be that rebel against your commandment and will not hearken unto your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death."*

These are loyal followers. These are people who are completely loyal. I pray for you at whatever point you will enter ministry, may God give you loyal people. Oh, ask any man or woman of God, what transforms ministry is destiny helpers. If your ministry lacks helpers, your anointing can be overflowing, but it will look as if you are not working. That is how it will look like.

I have experienced it first hand, that just one helper can transform your ministry. I have shared this testimony several times. I was a pastor in a church and we did not have any instruments, we were almost clapping. And we had a very wonderful choir, very wonderful instrumentalists. Until one day a man called me. It was in the 2000, very early, I think year 2000 or 2001, and he gave me a check of four million Naira. You know what that means? My eyes began to turn me. I said, "Four million Naira?" I went, I bought keyboard, I bought drum set, I bought different things, when you see my stage like this, when I set it, you would be in awe. You would know that God was there.

Money transforms ministry, true or false? We are here now in this cozy environment, what do you think did it? It is not only prayer and fasting oh, do not deceive yourself. It is money. It is money. Somebody said anointing without finance is annoyance. It is

money. When God brings ministry helpers across your way, all the labours of the years will be rewarded in a short time. I have experienced it. So, loyal supporters, even Jesus could not do without loyal and committed people. We need them to enhance our work. Many ministers' failure can be traced to not relating well with people. Thank God for God. That is why I put God first, but you see, God has stopped coming down physically to help. He will use people. It is in the course of ministering to people He sent them two by two.

Ministry is not about you. Listen to what Moses told God, so you know it is not about you alone. Moses told God in Numbers 11:14: *"I am not able to bear all these people alone because the burden is too heavy for me."* I have a very funny story to tell in relation to this. One of my very close friends was starting ministry and the first Sunday service he held, there was no usher, the surprising thing was that he did not even have one person to join him. It was only himself and he had sent handbills out, he had given some of us who were his friends, invitation cards. He got to the venue of the meeting for the first service, he was in shorts, he was carrying broom, doing the cleaning, doing everything. All of a sudden, some early comers, a complete family walked in, well dressed. They walked up to him and said they wanted to see the pastor before the service would start. He said he became confused whether to tell them he was the pastor or to tell them to wait and that the pastor was coming, or to tell them that the pastor was not around. He was between those three opinions, eventually he voiced out something, he said he could not even remember what he told them, probably that they should wait, the pastor would be coming, intending to run home to change and return. He said till today, he never saw them again. That church is big now, but the fact is that he attempted to break one of the principles of ministry.

Jesus never sent anyone out alone, minimum two. He sent them two by two. So, ministry cannot be about you, it has to be in a company. Where I come from they say he who eats alone dies alone. It must be about people. You must do it together. In verse 17, hear God's solution to Moses' complaint: *"I will take of the spirit that is on you and will put the same upon them and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it*

alone. "That is ministry.

When Joshua was fighting at the war front Moses was at home with Aaron and Hur, they lifted the hands of Moses because they discovered that whenever Moses' hands were up, the battle was being won. So, it is a team work. Ministry is all about a team; it is not about one man. In fact, the end time move of God is not going to be by one man, no. We all can see that the way God is moving He is not moving only through one man. You will hear that it is happening here, it is happening there. And you will not be left behind. You will join the train. You will join the company. So, you need loyal followers.

Relating Well

This is very important. Many ministers' failure can be traced to not relating well. They do not know how to relate well with people. I said it before, you cannot have a ministry and not be able to relate well.

Success in ministry is 15% work or job performance and 85% people. You cannot be concentrating on only technical side and you are not carrying people along. Ministry is about people. Even Jesus said it. He said in the book of Matthew chapter 20:28: *"Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to make his life a ransom for many."* so it is about serving people. I pray for you that, in the name of Jesus Christ your life will be a thorough example, a thorough example of service, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Finally; Yourself. This is where I want to spend some time, incidentally my time is up, but I want to spend some time on Yourself. The truth is that ministry cannot be done without you. You need yourself to do ministry. You are the most important asset to ministry. Have you ever seen a goat and it is called a pastor? No matter how powerful the anointing is, it needs to rest on a human being and you are the human being that that anointing will rest on. That is why you are so important.

Deploy Your Gifts

First of all, your spiritual well-being is key. You must be spiritually perfect, you must be spiritually sound, you are your

greatest asset and a lot depends on you. Seek to know your sense of giftedness, your grace and your competence. Please as a servant of God, I said it from the beginning, what has he called you to, where do you function best? That is where it starts. Are you a teacher, are you a prophet, are you an evangelist? Whenever I am asked to teach I am very happy. So, which one has he called you to? When some people see demons they are happy, people like my wife. When they see demons they begin to rejoice that it is another opportunity to conquer.

God has not called you to do everything, he is not stupid that only you will do everything. No, what specifically has he called you to and when you have discovered what he called you to, deploy it, utilize it, look for every opportunity to serve, because what you do not use you will eventually lose. Have you ever learnt driving before and for one and half years you did not drive, if you go and drive, you will almost kill people because instead of pressing the brake, you will press the accelerator. You must continue to use it. Skills are developed from using raw talents. Use it, deploy it, you must also develop it.

Meditate On God's Word

How do you grow in power as a servant of God? Meditate on God's word, have personal retreat if you want to grow spiritually. As a servant of God, fast to increase your faith and pray. I recommend at least one hour every day, preferably in tongues. That is how to grow, to begin to grow spiritually.

Before I go to number two, be competent and relevant, be current and correct. Know your trade. I was embarrassed one day when I went for a wedding in a church. As we sat down, the couple marched inside and the next thing they did to start the wedding service was to put rings on both hands, then they began to dance and sing "See what the Lord has done." I was shivering where I sat, because there was no preamble, no understanding of why the ring was there, there was nobody giving anybody to anybody in marriage. Even in the register of court they do better, this is because of lack of knowledge. Do you know that it is only in pastoring that people do not get trained and get licensed. Even a driver must have a driving licence. But today, someone can carry

a Bible, he will start by saying he is a pastor, if you see him in another 6 months, he is an Apostle, in another 6 months, he is an Archbishop only himself just now, no regulation.

That is why the Rwanda president said a person cannot be a pastor in Rwanda unless he has a certificate because there is no job you do in this world that you do not get certificated except pastoring. Get trained for the trade you want to engage in. After all, those of you who want to be medical doctors, do they just allow you to start cutting people, without getting trained, you will kill people, and you think spiritually you cannot kill people without getting trained. Many people have been killed spiritually because of lack of training.

Mind Your Character

Number two, mind your character, your character is your collateral. You want to last in ministry, take care of your character. What you are is more important than what you do. What you are in the dark is who you are. The spirit of a prophet is subject to the prophet. Even the anointing needs direction. That is why you must be up.

Check Your Physical Well-Being

These days you hear of young people having high blood pressure, you hear of young people having diseases of the elderly because of too much pressure. I need to emphasize this for you. The anointing of the Holy Spirit and your body are two separate entities. You cannot say that because you are anointed, then you stand in front of a train; you see a train coming and you say you are anointed. That is what you do when you engage in self abuse. You know what abuse is, just like when you hear about drug abuse, it is an abnormal use of self.

A young man Robert Murray graduated at the age of 14 from the university, at 23 he was pastoring a Presbyterian church of about a thousand people. He overworked himself and abused himself, abnormal use of himself. At 29, while he was dying, he told his friends, "The Lord gave me a message and a horse to ride to deliver it, I still have the message with me, but the horse I have ridden to death." And he gave up the ghost. That would not be

your story, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Desire

So, as I round off this message, if you look at the life of Elisha, there were four things that Elisha had, number one he had a desire. You cannot have ministry without a solid desire. What is your desire for your ministry, is it kingdom related? You cannot say you have ministry and all the desire you have are about yourself, it has to be about the kingdom. That is why Matthew 6:33 says *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* My mentor told me he said "Son, I do not have personal prayer requests." I was wondering how was that possible? He said because all my requests are kingdom related and as I pursue kingdom interest, God begins to meet my own interests. So, your desire has to be checked, the Bible says you desire and have nothing because you ask to consume upon yourself.

Diligence

Number two, Elisha was diligent. Go to this place, he would follow. From Bethel to Jericho, he was always following. Very diligent. Look ministry is not about waking up by 12pm and speaking some scattered tongue. You tie a wrapper at 12 in the afternoon when people who go to the office have finished a better part of the work of the day, and you did not do vigil the night before. You slept normally and you woke up at 12. You are not in ministry. If you think you are in full time, you are not in full time, you are in fool time that is what it is. Diligence is key if you are going to excel in ministry, you have got to be diligent.

Determination

Number three, you have to be determined. I told you before, situation will challenge you. I met a person, he was talking about his frustration in ministry. He said he had to beg to pay rent. He had to beg to do this and that. I said who called you? Go to the man that called you. Who called you? He was not sure. He said I was talking like that because I had monthly pay that I was getting. Under one week, this man, I do not know if he ate something, he was found in his room bloated and he dead. Because when you stop being relevant to God's agenda, death is the next thing. I pray

for somebody under my voice may you be determined enough to stand when things are tough.

Isaiah said "I know that the Lord will help me therefore I have set my face like a flint and I know I shall not be ashamed."

Help From God

Finally, Elisha had the help from God. There is no way you can do ministry without God's help. Even after Elijah had done a thorough handover for him. He gave him his mantle he said if you see me when I am going then you are okay, you do not have problems. He collected the mantle he saw when he was going.

Any time my son was in the toilet, you know when you are in the toilet nobody can help you. If you enter the toilet and you cannot pee or you cannot poo, can you tell your wife to come and help you to poo? My son would be in the toilet and be calling "Aunty Kemi come and help me oh, poo poo is not coming out."

When you are confronted, and nobody can help you, do you have a God you can call on? That was where Elisha found himself, he tried everything that the man told him to try. He said was it not here, this is the mantle that he used before he departed, what is happening? The man screamed, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah!" When you get there and you are confused as a young person, you do not know whether to go forward or to go backwards, whether to go right or to go left. I want to assure you that you will remember the message of today that there is a God in heaven who is interested in your destiny.

There is a God in heaven who is taking you to where you ought to be and your story will be heard at the highest level. You will not just be a number, you will be among those who will be responsible for significance. You will pass through this world and you will be noticed. Your name will be written, not just in invisible ink, but in indelible ink.

SWITCH 4.0
MAY 3, 2025

Market-Place

What God Requires Of His Examples

Iyin Aboyeji

It feels very good to be home. It feels very good to be home. Let me begin by thanking God for the opportunity to be here. I was hoping I would be able to join earlier but I was sent on an errand, but I am very excited I got back in time to catch some of the messages earlier. Thank you very much to the Winlows for their amazing ministry. May God continue to strengthen you.

I would like to also thank our General Overseer and his wife. You know, since 2019, you know we surrendered them to you. So, I have to continually address them in their *honouric* office. When we get home then we can revert to mommy and daddy, not just in the spiritual sense. So, I would like to thank the General Overseer and his wife, Reverend Mrs. Bisi and Reverend Dr. Sam Aboyeji.

Praise the Lord, for the opportunity to speak to you today. Also, I would like to thank the leadership of the church and the council for this amazing ministry called Switch. Our youths in the house, I want to hear a very loud 'Glory to Jesus'. Thank you. I am so, so, so inspired by coming here and seeing this amazing crowd of witnesses here. Yes, praise the Lord and it is especially because as somebody who grew up in this church I know where we are coming from.

I know where we are coming from. I mean, when I moved back to Lagos before my parents, actually my parents were still in Warri, I attended here and we were still finding our feet in terms of youth ministry at Foursquare, which was a bit challenging for those of us that really were very committed to the doctrine and very committed to the ministry that is here, the very special ministry.

I know there were many people that became discouraged and found their way elsewhere. Normally we would imagine something like this would be happening maybe in Pastor Poju's church or somebody down the road but it is amazing to see how this administration in particular and this organization has embraced this ministry of young people. It is so critical for us to raise replacement sons and daughters for the work that God wants to do in our country, in our state, in our local churches and ultimately in the world.

So, I really want to specially appreciate the leadership for being open to this, thank you. Today, I want to make my sharing somewhat short. I am more of a question-and-answer person. I usually prefer to just answer the question and be as transparent as possible about what it takes and what God requires of those he wants to use as examples. But I thought today I would take some time to share just a few things on the basis of our text about what God requires of us as an example. What God requires of us as an example and I will start with the theme text.

The theme text, we can put it up, I know it must have been read many times today but it is always good for us to return to it, so that it does not just, I am not a motivational speaker, so I am not here to motivate you but I am here to just deliver what God has laid on my heart this afternoon to share with you about is Becoming An Example.

What God Requires Of His Examples

So, in first Timothy 4:12 it says, "Do not let anyone think less of you because you are young, but be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, in your faith and your purity. I want to encourage you, even though we might not have time to do that here, to really take your time and really study and meditate on that chapter all the way to the end because it speaks to what I call the ministry of youths and its importance for our country and our generation today.

You know there is no question in anybody's mind that the young people are the country. They are not the future of the country. You

are the country. Even demographically speaking, 70 percent of the people in this country are young people, under the age of 30. So, whenever I see young people complaining about how the country is, I say; so who is this country? Yes the leaders may be old; yes, maybe they may be aged or whatever, but at the end of the day if you are really speaking to the character of the country, you are really talking about the young people and what I realize is that a lot of young people are waiting and wasting their lives rather than take ownership of who we are and what we must be in the hands of God.

We are engaged in a blame-game and here you can see Paul talking to Timothy saying do not let anyone think less of you because you are young. I think this is a call for us young people. It is a call to us young people because it is telling us that indeed, particularly as it concerns the church, but more importantly, particularly as it concerns the society, that everything we need is in our hands.

This is God telling us again today, do not let anyone think less of us because we are young people and I am so glad that the leadership of this church is putting this word in action. Most of the people that have put this program together are young people. We are being given opportunities as young people but even as we do all of this we cannot forget that with every command in the bible there is a requirement.

What is required of us to be an example? That is really what I want to get into today. What is required of us to be an example? I am going to start with my own story because I want to bring it home. I am somebody that grew up in this system. In fact, in 2013, I was a member of this church branch before I went over to Light Arena branch. I am still a member of Foursquare. What I have seen over the last 10 years can only be the hand of God, but again it is in obedience, it is only in obedience that God can make you an example. And what does that mean?

You know for me, when I came in 2013 from Warri, I came with a burden and at that time some of you might remember me. I used to be here. I was working down the street at CC Hub and I would

come here. I was here for Sunday services. Many of the people, my Sunday school teacher was Mommy Mojid, I do not know if she is here. I was active here. In fact, the other day, I was reminded of some work we did with Reverend Zacchaeus, around gathering the data of the church because the gmails were expiring. We were workers here and then eventually when there was an opportunity to go over to Light Arena which was just starting at that time. We went there and God really increased us in that place. But it was because we did not think of ourselves as young people who needed to be spoon-fed, as young people whose agendas needed to be made out for.

That service made way for us even in the professional line. At that time I was just starting my business here in Lagos and at that time 2013, I was just about, I just turned 20, 23, 22 sorry and I had just started my business. I was just building brick by brick, trying to make it work. But the one thing I was assured of when I came back to Lagos was that God was sending me and I remember the verse that God gave me when I was leaving Warri, which was; *those who wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.*

I like to say, the journey since then has been purely a walk of grace. As the Bible says and I always quote this anytime anybody asks me to tell my story, I say no one can do these things unless God is with him.

So, a lot of times people are looking for tricks and tips, but at the end of the day the most important thing is what you carry? What example are you reaching to? Because that is the most important thing, everything else is secondary, everything else is really as the spirit leads but if you do not have anything that you are carrying inside of you, if you do not have an example yourself that you are aspiring to and our only example is Jesus, then you are going to struggle.

One thing I committed myself to early on as I was starting was that there were three things I would not allow to stain my work as a professional, as somebody who built things despite Nigeria. Number one thing I said was money, I would never allow anybody to corrupt me with money. Second thing, women, my

walk must be pure. I would not allow anybody to taint my walk with women. The third thing was making sure that I could maintain my humility, no matter how high I rose. I still understood that I had a covering over my head and that covering was God. That is why any status or anything like that, that connotes status, I am very shy when it comes to carrying all these titles or whatever. I try not to do all those things because I understand that the grace that has led me here is not my doing, it is just Christ at work in me and those were commitments that I made.

I remember those early days, I was committed to following Jesus as an example and I remain committed to that. How a man like Jesus can create so much impact in the world and two thousand years later all of us can feel the impact. We are all gathered here because of Jesus. But he did not have a siren. He did not have security. He did not have a vehicle. He walked to most of the places where he went, even when large crowds followed him, and that is what I was committed to.

So, the first thing I want to let you know today is that you can only become an example when you have the right example, is someone listening to me? You can only become an example if you have the right example.

In my line of work over the last 10 years, I have seen many examples. Some of them I am even very close to; plenty of big people, politicians, CEOs, so many people, but I keep my example as Jesus. I try not to follow what other people are doing. If it is in the word, if it is how Jesus walked, then I follow. If it is not there, we do not follow, no matter how tempting it might be, no matter how anybody may try to rationalize it. And it does not matter because everybody has areas where they are still trying to become like Jesus. I do not follow, that is why you have to follow people as they follow Christ.

So, as a young person do not assume that this is how it is being done, so I have to do it like that. They are showing up with siren, so I have to show up with siren. They have big cars, so I have to show up with a big car. It is not necessary. That is not Jesus'

example. Jesus' example was humility. He was the son of God, yet he related with people as human beings, not with airs. He had every right to be pompous but he related with people.

As a human being he kept himself pure. He did not follow the example of everybody else and most importantly he ensured that he was not corrupted by mammon. Jesus only cared for what he needed. Even to pay tax, to pay tax what did he do? He requested it. When we say give us this day our daily bread, Jesus was a living example of that.

So, the first thing I want to employ you to do today is to maintain the right example and that example is ultimately Jesus, because if you maintain the right example then you yourself will be an example.

I always say, I remember when I was appointed to the National Committee on Industrial Competitiveness and at that time I did not actually have a car. I was sharing with my colleagues, so I did not have my own car. And you know every time they would see me, the security guards at the villa, you know you are expected to show up at the villa in a particular way, but it did not matter to me. It still does not matter much to me. I would show up at the villa and they would be like, no, it is not possible. This name cannot be the name. It cannot be the person that they are expecting. It is not possible. Where is his security? Where is the convoy that is bringing him. But for me that is not Jesus's example. Jesus was meek.

Now, I am not saying that there are not circumstances where that might be necessary and if you are accorded those privileges, by all means take it, but please, please, and please, do not allow that to be the focus of the kind of example you want to be. A lot of us young people, our example is a yahoo boy in our neighbourhood. When we are praying to God, 'God bless me, God bless me,' that is what we have in our heads. Am I saying the truth? It is one big man carrying a convoy up and down, but that is not God's example. That is not how to be like Jesus. When we are saying 'God bless me,' what we really mean in our head is we want God to make us like somebody who has illegitimate wealth, but that is

not God's pattern. God's pattern for us is Jesus Christ and anything that deviates from that pattern is a distraction.

Second thing that I want to talk about, in that verse, and this is one area where I myself have had to work through the grace of God, to work a lot on myself. It says be an example to believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, in your faith and your purity.

I will tell you something, you know growing up as a pastor's child, there is a lot of pressure. How many of us understand what I am saying? There is a lot of pressure because before you say one or two things, people are starting to call your father's name and, sometimes, that is the motivation. You say to yourself; please I do not want their *wahala* so let me just behave. But here the example is not to be an example to your parents, the example is not to be an example to the world, the example is to be an example to all believers.

One thing that God has really really been helping me with is making it okay for believers to express their faith in business and in public. If you are a Christian and people do not know that you are a Christian what kind of Christian are you? In the Bible, it says a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. There are a lot of people like that. When I was in business, people say things like, 'do not say too much about you being a Christian, do not bring it into the business world.' For me I just consider that an aberration. What is the point if you have all these successes, all these exploits and all these promises in the bible; those that wait upon the lord shall do exploits and the person that made it possible, you cannot give him the credit publicly. It is like a politician that everybody knows he has a godfather and then in public he does not acknowledge him. Or if I came to this church and I wasn't acknowledging that G.O. is my father for example, would he take that? No!

But on earth we do this consistently, we try to make our lives separate; this is the life at work, this is our life in church. We do not want anybody to know who we are in Christ. Meanwhile that is the secret of everything that we have.

And so for me, I made a decision, I made in my mind and God really helped me that wherever I am, I must shine Christ's light so that believers are comfortable identifying themselves as believers, and that is something I want to encourage all of us to do.

If you look at the statistics of Christians in Nigeria and you see the way the country is, you may think it is a lie, true or false, true or false? You may think it is a lie. Saying we have 80 million Pentecostals or how many million Christians but does it reflect. Is that reflected in your life, if I saw you outside would I believe you are a Christian? It is so critical for us to set an example in our lives for all believers. It is not just enough for us to come to church. It is not even just enough for us to serve in church. I do not know if somebody's listening to me. In your place of work, are you slothful, do you use church as an excuse to deliver shabby work and then you say I am a Christian.

So, many young people, so many of us young people have a lot of work that the Holy Spirit has to do on us in demonstrating excellence. Those who have been made examples for us in the Bible, such as Jesus, Daniel, David, these were not shabby professionals, are you listening to me? The work that they did outside of their work for God, they did it excellently.

So, the second thing that we must keep in mind is, we must be ourselves an example to all believers, we ourselves must be standards of excellence so that we can show other people that this is how to be. One thing I thank God for is that this thing is gradually changing. There was a time during the time of our parents, when you were looking for a solid professional the first thing you ask is 'are they born again?' But I feel like, at some point, that started to change. People associated being born again with somebody who will make excuses for work because of a prayer meeting, somebody who will ignore customers to pray, somebody who does not deliver the quality of work because they are depending on the grace of God. But those things are not Jesus's example. That is not the example of Christians that we must be. If we call ourselves believers we must demonstrate the excellence that is required of believers and we have to trust God to help us to do that.

For me, everywhere that I had the privilege to work, sometimes some people will not even believe. I remember one day, I was saying that in most of the companies that I built before my current one, I was not the major shareholder but I worked, I worked as if I was the only owner of the business because that is what the bible commands. That is the example that we must set, that we are faithful servants, and that we are willing to do what it takes to demonstrate the highest levels of excellence. That should be our calling. It is not just by calling ourselves Christians or by carrying membership cards. By the quality of our work, people should know that indeed we are Christians, that we are believers.

Finally, the biggest thing that I find when we young people especially come to speak as believers, what we say has power. Is someone hearing me today? What we say has a lot of power. And I find sometimes that believers who are praying for Nigeria are the biggest critics of Nigeria. Have you noticed that? Has anybody noticed that we are the biggest critics of Nigeria.

We come here, we pray 'God help us'! But we do not exercise that faith when we talk about the country. We complain, and you know the funniest thing is that, this is our assignment. God is looking at all of us and saying 'so why are you there?' 'So why did I send you there?' We allow other people to look down on us. We allow other people to dominate the conversation about what we are. We do not walk towards what we believe as believers. We do not act out the promises of God for this country. We do not communicate the promises of God for this country. And you know, our actions do not match our belief.

Do you know that it is in church that the drums of *japa* are the loudest? True or false? On the one hand, we are praying for Nigeria to get better, on the other hand we are praying for visas for everybody to leave. I am not saying we should not leave, but our words must match our belief. Our words must match our belief. A lot of times, a lot of what people say, "oh you should be..., you should be kind, you should be nice. Yes. That is all well and good. But sometimes there is also room for us to speak the truth in love and with courage to our fellow believers.

There is also room for us to confess positive things about this country that we love; this country that God has given us to turn around. There is also room for us as believers to take charge of specific issues, to not just complain about them to somebody, for us to demonstrate leadership as young people again. Back to what Paul was telling Timothy, do not let anyone think less of you because you are young.

One of the proudest moments I have had as a Nigerian, people will not believe it. I do not know how many of us remember EndSARS. How many of us remember EndSARS; it is unforgettable. My proudest moment was when some young people were going to protest but a few brethren took it upon themselves to do a prayer walk. Yes, on Twitter. It might not have been popular, but that was an incredible act of faith, and in my opinion, much worse, those of us that know the backends of what was going on, backend, much worse things could have happened but for those pray.

SWITCH 4.0

MAY 3, 2025

MARRIAGE

What Marriage Will Not Teach You

The Winlos

This afternoon, we will be talking on what marriage will not teach you. No, let us make it "what marriage will teach you." So let us read Proverbs chapter 24, verse 3.

Proverbs 24:3–4 (NKJV) says:

"Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. "

Let us pray. Father, we give You praise. Father, we thank You for Your Word, which we are privileged to read, and for Your children who are privileged to listen. Lord, we ask, O God, that the entrance of Your Word bring forth light in the name of Jesus, and cause transformation. Let there be testimonies that abound in this session, in the name of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, lives will shift; there will be a switch from one level to another, in the name of Jesus. Hallelujah.

Wisdom Is Key for Marital Success

Wisdom is key for marital success. No foolish man enters marriage and succeeds. The reason we are having so many issues in marriages today, in relationships today, is that a lot of believers are not applying wisdom in marital settlements. This is true.

Indeed, the rate of divorce now, even in the Church, is alarming. The rate of marital issues in the Church is alarming. And we are also raising a generation that does not even value what marriage is anymore. Everybody wants to do marriage by the flesh rather than by wisdom, and so it is important that we come into Scripture

today to learn what marriage will teach you. Otherwise you may become a casualty.

Hallelujah. And of course, feelings alone do not build a marriage. This is true. Love without wisdom destroys a home. If you only love your partner but do not have the divine wisdom to build your home, you can destroy your home. So, love without wisdom does not make sense. If your home is to be built, it must be built on wisdom that goes beyond feelings. Praise God.

1. Marriage Will Teach You That There Is No Perfect Person

So, the first thing marriage will teach you is that there is no perfect person. Philippians chapter 3, verse 12, Apostle Paul, speaking, said: not that he had already attained, or was already perfect, but that he pressed on. Somebody say, "I press on." He said that he might lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus had also laid hold of him.

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." (Philippians 3:12)

You must understand that marriage is a journey. It is a learning process; it is an adjusting process. There are no perfect people. One of the major challenges we have in our generation today is that we are looking for that perfect person; the one perfectly made from heaven, spotless, without mistake, without wrinkle, like the one you watch on a home video. Hallelujah. So on your television dramas, you are looking for that man who will come, and, the moment you marry him, will always bring you breakfast in bed, open your car door, we want that perfect one. And many times, the people who are looking for perfect people are themselves not perfect. So, why would you seek what you yourself are not?

Marriage is not the movie world. The earlier you begin to understand that what you watch on screen is not what marriage displays, the better it will be for you. So many people do not accept their reality, and they end up defining marriage as though it were a movie. That is why, when you get into it, as my husband mentioned, you begin to imagine all kinds of things. Thinking of

someone who will sprinkle petals on your bed every morning and say, "My sunshine, the one who makes my world shine, wake up." Or someone who will sweep you off your feet every time, so that you cannot even come down from the bed, all of that.

So, marriage is not a movie world; marriage is the real world, and when you understand that marriage is the real world, you understand that there is no perfect person. There is no perfect person. I remember meeting someone who came to see me, and she said, "I love this guy, you know, but it is just that... I love him, it is not that I do not love him, but he does not know how to dress." Or, "I love this guy, but ah, you do not understand, this guy is nice and caring, but it is just that, for me, I cannot marry somebody who snores." She was simply listing all the things that were disqualifying clauses for her. "I cannot marry somebody who does not dress well. I cannot marry someone who snores." I thought, how do you even know that the person snores? So what it means is that if the person snores, you cannot marry the person. "I cannot marry him because, you know, this guy, when he talks, his English is somehow."

I found that interesting. So people want the person to be perfect. The person should be without flaws, a smooth talker. You know, when the person breathes, the person should breathe perfection. Everything about the person should be perfect. It does not work like that. However, people have weaknesses. It does not matter who the person is. Even if you are marrying a believer, the believer you are choosing to marry has strengths and weaknesses.

So, people have weaknesses, but it is up to you to choose the weakness you can marry. This is true. Nobody is perfect. It is up to you to choose the weakness you can marry, because both partners entering a marriage are each a product of their own socialization process, their background, and what they have been used to over time. And what a person has been used to over time can be either a strength or a weakness.

So you are marrying a person who is made up of both strengths and weaknesses, and who has been used to a particular way of relating to the world. So, when you are entering marriage, know

that you are carrying a kind of baggage for somebody. What baggage are you carrying? Am I speaking to anyone here, what baggage are you carrying?

The reason many people fall out of marriage is that the baggage they were carrying turned out not to be what they expected. They closed their eyes to it. So, what weakness are you carrying that you can live with? If the man is unfaithful, can you carry that in marriage? If the man smokes, can you carry that in marriage? Some of you say, "I will change him", you become change agents. So, ask your neighbor: that baggage, can you carry it? Can you carry it? You must marry the baggage you can carry. This is very important, because Scripture says we are to bear with each other and forgive one another.

Different Socialization Processes

So, we each come from different socialization processes. The way I was raised is different from the way my wife was raised. This is true. So I do not expect her to be perfect; I do not expect her to be like me, and she does not expect me to be like her. So, when we entered marriage, we began to adjust; we began to learn our lives together. That is what makes marriage work.

For example, when I got married to my wife, she came from a Catholic background before she came into Pentecostal faith. So, when she prayed, she was very quiet: "Dear Lord Jesus, how are You doing? What about the angels, did they sleep well?" She was so quiet. But I, having been raised in the Pentecostal tradition, believed that it is the violent who take it by force, and so we prayed loudly. My wife would wake up in the middle of the night and say, "Sweetheart, you are disturbing me." I would say, "How can you say I am disturbing you? We need to touch God." She would say, "Do you have to shout for God to hear you?" At that time, I thought my wife was a witch, because I felt she did not want me to pray. I am telling you, there are people like that.

Some have lost their marriages over exactly this kind of misunderstanding. See how different we were. She is not spiritual enough for me; that is what I thought. So you must understand that we each come from different socialization processes, and we

are on a learning curve in marriage. You must understand this. Some of you are in a relationship now, and it seems the person is a little different from you, and you think, "I do not believe this person is spiritual enough for me, because he does not tarry in prayer." That may simply be a generational or cultural difference. Some believe that until a person holds his stomach in prayer, he has not truly prayed. But those are acts of Christianity, not the fruit of Christianity.

Do you understand what I am saying? So lifestyle is key, because someone can be loud in prayer but not consistent in values. And it is by their fruit that you shall know them, not by their loudness. I am not disputing that when someone prays loudly, it does not necessarily mean the person lacks spirituality or fervor, but you must also look for character.

A lot of people have been deceived on this point. Someone holding forth in prayer does not automatically mean the person is a pillar or a support system. Do not be deceived. What is the person's character? What do they demonstrate? Values are not spoken; values are demonstrated. So, beyond what they speak, what are they living by? That is the true measure, the lifestyle of a person should be what determines your choice of a life partner. I realized this myself as well.

The Dining Table

When we were newly married, the first time my wife prepared food for me, she went to the kitchen. Her mother had told her that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and that she needed to prepare the dining table properly, with the dishes arranged nicely. So she brought out a golden plate, a golden spoon, and arranged everything. She prepared the table and called me to eat. I went to the dining table, dished my food onto the plate, and then went and sat on the floor to eat. My wife said, "I do not understand, how can I set this table like a king's, and you take your food and sit on the floor? "

I am one of those people, young men who, when they want to eat, prefer to eat on the bed with a laptop. Are there people like that here? The food tastes better that way. We take our food to bed with

our laptop, watch a film, eat, and fall asleep with the dirty plate beside us. Now, having entered marriage, my wife wanted to reorganize my habits, and I resisted. What is a dining table for? I had not used one in a long time; I did not know how to use it anymore. My wife was upset and said, "How can I prepare food for you, and you do this? You do not value me." I said, "I do value you, this is simply how I eat." I am telling you, the things that break marriages are often very small things. Very small things indeed.

Saving and Spending

My wife can save for Africa; I spend for Africa. My wife can save; you could give her ten naira and she would save it. When I was praying for a wife, this was one of the qualities I admired. She can save; she buys modest things. She likes simplicity. Hallelujah. That was then, anyway; she still likes to save, it is still in her nature.

But I spend. I cannot even give money away as an offering without spending more than I intend. Money simply goes. Before you know it, it is gone. My wife would become upset: "What is happening? We cannot pay rent, we cannot pay bills." Eventually, my wife said, "Henceforth, I will be the one managing the finances in this house." I did not resist by saying, "I am the head of the house".

Instead, we agreed that whoever is best able to manage finances should do so. It is not a matter determined by gender. It is the one who can manage the finances who should manage the finances. It is not gender-based. Are we together on this?

So, little things like this can disrupt your home. This is true. So, to summarize this point: there are no perfect people. We must look honestly at ourselves and see what works, and begin making adjustments and helping one another.

A Household in Balance

My wife is the tidy one; I am the untidy one. I scatter the place. My daughter has now taken after me; she is untidy too. So, when my wife travels, my daughter and I scatter things everywhere; we jump on the bed, we play games, and the whole room is turned

upside down. We feel completely at home. But the moment we hear that my wife has landed at the airport, my daughter and I would rush to put the house in order: "Mommy is coming, Mommy is coming!" Everywhere must be clean. My wife will notice immediately if even a pair of slippers is out of place. We are all simply different. When you understand this, you begin to appreciate one another.

Understand that each of us is uniquely gifted by God so that we might complement one another. Where I am weak, my wife is strong; where she is weak, I am strong. That is what marriage is about. And honestly, when we understand these differences, we do not force change. We do not insist on change in our partner, and you should not marry someone with a mindset of changing them afterward. You should not choose a partner because you expect them to change. You might think, "I am choosing this person because I know they will change" and then you marry, believing that the exchange of vows itself will transform the person. But exchanging vows does not change anybody.

So, when you are choosing a partner, you choose with an attitude of acceptance, until such a time as they are willing to change on their own. You do not force change onto someone. It does not even make logical sense, honestly. Consider this: the person you have chosen to marry has already lived twenty, or perhaps thirty, years of life before meeting you, shaped by their own experiences, and you cannot expect that person to change automatically the moment you marry. No. Change is a gradual process.

When we accept our differences and where we each come from, we do not insist on change. Many marriages have broken down because the expected change never happened, and one partner tried to force it. You marry, and then you think, "No, she cannot keep doing this," or "He cannot keep talking this way," or "He cannot dress like that; he must pray this specific way." By insisting on these things without acceptance, you continue to strain and eventually break the relationship. When you understand these differences, you grow together through patience.

Bearing With One Another

Colossians chapter 3, verse 13 (NIV) says: *"Bear with each other and forgive one another... Forgive as the Lord forgave you. "*

That is what marriage is about. This is true. I am telling you, your spouse will offend you. Scripture says "bear." Amen? There is no marriage in which your spouse will never offend you. You do not simply decide, upon being offended, to go and marry somebody else. That is not how it works.

Singles in our generation today often say, "If you mess me up even once, I will leave." I find that troubling. Amen? Look again at what the Scripture says: it says "bear with" whom? Each other. So the summary of this point is: marry the person you can live with. Marry the weakness that you can live with.

This is very important, because in marriage, Scripture says, "Bear with each other and forgive one another." If any of you has a grievance against someone, it says, "Forgive, as the Lord has forgiven you." My wife forgives me when I overspend on offerings, and I forgive her too.

2. Accountability Is Safety

The second thing marriage will teach you is this: accountability is safety. Master this. Many singles in our generation today are not accountable to anyone; they have no one watching over them. As was mentioned earlier, one preacher noted that even as an elderly, mature man, he still submits to a mentor and seeks advice from others.

We are raising a generation that moves like a tornado. They listen to no one. Nobody can speak into their lives; they are moved only by their feelings. They wake up one day suddenly "in love," and because of how they feel, nobody can counsel them. "He is the love of my life ". Nobody can teach them.

And nowadays, in our churches, we see a great deal of secret relationships. People say, "Do not tell anybody, let us just watch how it goes." I am telling you, if you enter such relationships,

watch and see: you will watch it fall apart. Saying, "Let us keep this secret and watch how it develops first" only invites trouble, because sin thrives in secrecy. When you find yourself falling into sin or engaging in destructive behavior, it is often because you are accountable to no one, you chose to handle the relationship entirely on your own. Sin thrives in what? Secrecy.

Accountability is not old-fashioned. I know our generation often says accountability is old school, "why would I go and tell my pastor that I am in love with someone?" But it is not old-fashioned. Are we together? The day I asked my wife to marry me, she immediately called her pastor. Before I had even finished speaking, she said, "Hello, sir, he is here, and he says he wants to marry me." Do you understand the benefit of that? If I had been a scammer, the moment I realized she was accountable to our pastor, I would have run away. I would have known this was not something I could hide. Yes, that is true.

A Cautionary Testimony

We would not have as many stories of people being deceived and used if more believers submitted to spiritual authority. There are many scammers in the Church today. I remember, many years ago, a beautiful young lady joined our church and became part of the ushering department. Around the same time, a certain man also joined the church. This man dressed and spoke like a Christian. "Thou art holy, dear sister of God; thou art fairer than many thousands", speaking in that kind of language. This young lady was drawn to him. He told her not to tell anyone, so they began dating in secret, and before long they began engaging in sexual immorality. He had joined the church, and we did not really know much about him.

Occasionally we tried to get to know him better, but it was only later that our pastor received information that this man had been moving from church to church looking for young women to deceive and exploit. At that time, he had impregnated three different women from three different churches. While we were thankful that he had not managed to harm our sister in this way, we did not yet know that there was, in fact, a young woman among us who had never disclosed that she was in a relationship

with him.

So we were trying to manage the situation as best we could. You understand, in church, we do not simply drive people out. If we see someone struggling spiritually within the church, do we cast them out? No, we only preach the Word to bring transformation. We do not stand up and say, "That person is a scam; leave the church." We do not drive people out. That is precisely why you must speak up. There is a great deal of information pastors may have access to that you do not. That is why you must talk, do not remain silent.

We did not know there was a victim among us until, months later, the young woman began to break down in tears and eventually stopped coming to church altogether. She felt she had come to church hoping to find a life partner, only to be devastated by what happened. This is the kind of story that circulates on social media today; "look what church did to me." People say the church is a scam because they did not go through proper discipleship or accountability.

You are correct; she had not gone through that process of accountability. So, we sat with her and told her everything that had happened. She was devastated, because this man had used her, taken her money, and caused her significant harm.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is important that you live under accountability. This is very important. You must live under accountability, because people already carry a certain mindset when choosing a partner. Some believe that if they choose a partner from within the church, that person will not deceive them and the marriage will not fail. But you must understand, as my husband mentioned, that different kinds of people attend church. This is where godly counselling becomes essential, because it provides the guidance needed to avoid simply meeting "just anyone."

Attending church does not, by itself, equate to spirituality. Regular attendance does not mean a person is Spirit-filled. Not everyone seated in church is truly listening to the same message;

some are present in body but not in spirit. So you should not say, "I met this person in church, therefore I do not need a mentor's counsel." Without seeking counsel, you may end up tormented throughout your life.

So, it is very important to take note of this, and not choose a partner simply because he is close to the pastor. Judas was among Jesus' disciples. Proximity to the anointed does not make a person anointed. Just because someone is near an anointed leader, or close to one, does not mean that person carries the same anointing. Accountability is safety.

Ephesians chapter 5, verse 11 (NIV) says: *"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."*

Expose them. Do not be silent. If someone approaches you and says, "I like your figure," you should respond, "Very well, I am going to tell Pastor that you said that." It is that simple. What does it mean to expose something? It means doing so for your own safety. Do not say, "I have never received that kind of compliment before, so what is wrong with accepting it?" What does Scripture say? It says, "Expose them."

If a choir director calls and says, "It is raining, can you come to my house? Let us bond. Let us do a private rehearsal; I want to teach you something," you should call your pastor and say, "Please join this call, listen to what is being said." Expose it. Because secret relationships also thrive in darkness and a lack of transparency.

John chapter 3, verse 20 says: *"Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light."*

You must be accountable, not hidden in secrecy.

Sincerity and Honesty

You must also be sincere. Honesty will always guide a person, because you may choose a mentor or counsellor, and yet still fail to be truthful with them. You may come into your pastor's office, and when asked, "Do you have feelings for this person?" respond, "No, no, no, it is this person who likes me. I have no feelings at

all.” But people rarely fall into relationships without some feeling being present on both sides. Are you struggling with this? “No, not me, I do not struggle.” Even with a mentor available to guide you, if you are not honest, you cannot truly be helped. You must be honest; honest about your weaknesses, honest about your struggles. This is very important.

You may encounter a Christian brother who boasts, “If I walked into a room full of unclothed women right now, nothing would happen to me.” That kind of overconfidence is dangerous, my brother. Be truthful with yourself. I am telling you, be truthful with yourself.

Proverbs chapter 28, verse 13 says: *“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”*

It is very important.

Accountability in Prophecy

Another area where believers should remain accountable is in receiving prophecies concerning marital matters. One of the major problems in the Church today is that people claim God has spoken to them concerning different individuals over time. In one year, God supposedly spoke concerning one sister, and it did not work out. The following year, concerning another, and it did not work out. This year, concerning yet another.

It seems, at this point, as though God were being inconsistent. But the real problem is not God; it is a lack of accountability. When you receive what you believe to be a prophetic word concerning marriage, it is wise to submit that word to accountability, to share it with your pastors and mentors, and say, “This is what I believe God has spoken concerning this person.” I have seen cases where people were not accountable and pursued someone based on a supposed word, only to discover later that the person was already married, simply because they had not confirmed basic facts, such as whether the person was already wearing a wedding ring.

Look at what Scripture says about prophecy. 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 29 says: *“Two or three prophets should speak,*

and the others should weigh carefully what is said. "

So, in the New Testament Church, prophecies were subjected to judgment; they were not simply released without discernment. That is what happens too often in our generation. You hear something you believe is from God concerning a certain person, and you act on it immediately, without placing it under judgment, scrutiny, prayer, or the counsel of trusted friends. That is why you end up in confusion. Some of you have proposed to seven different people within three years. Is God the author of confusion? No. It is you who are confused. Are we understanding one another here?

Submit every prophecy to accountability. Let your leaders help you; otherwise, you may begin to follow familiar spirits, and if you are not careful, you may marry the wrong person based on a word you misheard or misapplied. It is therefore very important: let two or three prophesy, and let the others judge.

Proverbs 11:14 says: *"Where there is no guidance, a people falls; but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety. "*

We are eleven years into our marriage, and we still have counsellors and pastors who speak into our lives. My wife still reports me when necessary. One day, my wife reported a concern to our pastor, and I noticed him watching me closely from the side of the room as I was preaching. I knew then that my wife had spoken to him. After the sermon, he called me into his car and said, "Sit down, I need to speak sense into you."

Do not marry a man or woman who has no pastor over their life; otherwise, in marriage, there will be no one for either of you to answer to, and you will be alone. If you ask such a person which church they attend, and the answer is, "Sometimes I go, sometimes I do not," that is a warning sign. Who is pastoring that person? Who is speaking into their life? Do they submit to authority at all?

Do not marry someone who is only a "pastor on Facebook," correcting the body of Christ from a distance. That is all such a person does. Whenever you bring them to church, they look only

for the errors of your pastor. There are many such people in our generation today, always searching for faults. You may be impressed because the person seems to have deep revelation, sounds spiritually mature, and even corrects everyone, including your own pastor, but in marriage, you will find it impossible to speak into that person's life, because they consider themselves an authority above correction.

Scripture says that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. This is very important; I am telling you. When you speak with many people who are married, they will tell you that there were issues in their marriages that both partners could not resolve on their own; they needed a third party to help. We once held a counselling session in which a woman came in crying: "My husband did this, my husband did that." I asked her to call her husband, and she said she could not, because he would not come. I asked who his pastor was, and she said he had none; no one he spoke to at all. It is dangerous to marry someone who is accountable to no one.

Some people, when asked who their mentor is, will name a well-known author or teacher who is no longer living. While one can certainly gain knowledge from such teachers' books, you need a mentor who is alive and accessible. We have encountered this; someone telling us that a deceased author was their "mentor." If you have a problem, can you reach that person? Can they respond to you directly? You need someone alive, someone accessible, someone close to you. You have pastors here who are close to you, whom you can reach. Yet some look for distant, well-known figures instead, and in doing so, they miss what is right in front of them.

We often receive messages from young people on social media saying, "You are my mentor; we follow you." But no; before you follow us online, follow your own pastor first. I cannot pastor you through social media alone; that kind of relationship is more like that of a fan than a mentee. You must understand that distinction. Our generation is drawn to whoever is popular or "trending" at the moment, even while having pastors right there in church whom they overlook in favour of online personalities. Scripture says

that those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish, not those who merely follow online. So, be planted.

I am not certain why I am dwelling on this point, but it is important, because our generation tends to move like the wind. We cannot stay in one place. We are drawn to whatever is currently popular, to the next big revival or trend, and this instability is part of why we are raising a generation without spiritual roots, without spiritual parents.

This particular point is very important. I once nearly entered a relationship with someone and asked what church he attended; he said he only attended a "virtual church," watching services online. You understand how that can be; some people watch different platforms while doing something else entirely, even something as mundane as cooking, with no one truly aware of their presence or growth. If you are not planted, you are not truly known within a community. So you must find out whether a potential partner is truly planted within a local church, because those planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. When you are planted, you have a pastor, someone who represents God's authority and voice in your life.

Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17 (NIV) says: *"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account."* I am telling you, if our marriage has succeeded, it is because we had confidence in our leaders and our mentors; they were there to guide us. Books alone are not enough; you need physical, accessible pastors to speak with you.

Romans 13:1 says: *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established."*

There is no authority you see today that has not, in some way, been established by God. It is important, therefore, to have physical mentors and pastors you can speak with. I understand that some may say, "My pastor has failed me." The truth is, there are marriage mentors within your local church, reach out to them.

There are couples in your local congregation whose marriages you admire, reach out to them as well.

Do not give up on the Church because one pastor disappointed you. And if you are a pastor reading or listening to this, we should do everything possible to protect the confidentiality of those who come to us. We once encountered a case where a woman confided in her pastor during a counselling session, and the pastor later exposed her struggle publicly during a sermon, "You who fornicated, may the Lord deliver you." When leaders respond this way, the younger generation stops trusting them and withdraws from seeking counsel altogether. They want to talk, but they are afraid; they want to confide in you, but fear how it will be used against them. Celebrate those who come to you sincerely with their struggles.

3. You and Your Spouse Will Not Always Be at the Same Spiritual Level

The third point: you and your spouse will not always be at the same spiritual level. 2 Peter 3:18 says: *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*

A person can be genuinely Spirit-filled without being at the same level of spiritual maturity as their spouse. People grow individually. Perhaps one partner prays differently, studies less, or has less depth of biblical insight than the other. This does not mean the person is unfit for marriage.

We have seen cases like this. I remember one young woman telling me she liked a certain man, but that when it came to discussing the Word of God, he seemed shallow to her, and I was struck by this. He may have seemed shallow in discussion, but was he spiritual? Could she affirm that he was a genuine Christian? She said yes, but she did not appreciate that he seemed less developed in this area. I explained to her that this was simply because she had grown past that particular stage herself.

Like my husband mentioned, I was not at my current spiritual level when I first got married. I came from a Catholic background and did not have the same depth at that time. It took patience, and

it took him understanding that we were simply different. So, just because two people are both Spirit-filled does not mean they are equally mature; he needed patience to help me grow.

Perhaps you have fasted for three or five months, and in a conversation you ask a potential partner, "Have you ever fasted?" and the answer is no, and you conclude, "This person cannot be for me." That is not how it works. No two partners are ever at exactly the same spiritual level. 2 Peter 3:18 says to "grow", the operative word is grow.

So, we can both be Spirit-filled without being equally spiritually mature. You must understand this point, so that when choosing a partner, you do not simply look for someone who mirrors your own current spiritual level, dismissing someone else as "not spiritual" through your own personal rating system. If the person is born again and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit, then that person is qualified for marital consideration, and the truth is, spiritual growth continues from there.

Some people married partners they initially considered less spiritually mature, and today those very partners have gone on to become pastors. Growth can overtake expectation in this area. Perhaps the wife was initially more spiritually mature, but the husband has since become a general overseer, while she remembers a time when he could barely navigate his Bible. So, we tend to select too narrowly in our generation. If the person is born again and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit, that person is likely marriageable for you.

Do Not Choose Career Over the Person

Be careful also not to prioritize a partner's career or ministry title over the person themselves. For example, someone in the choir insisting they must marry a fellow chorister, or a pastor insisting they must marry a fellow minister, pursuing career alignment above genuine compatibility.

I remember one of my mentees, whom I asked which church she attended when at home. She said that sometimes she attended her father's church, and other times her mother's. I said I did not

understand, and she explained: her father is a general overseer, and her mother is also a general overseer, each pastoring separately. I asked how this happened, and she explained that when her father was preparing to marry, he had insisted he would only marry a pastor, so God gave him a pastor.

Two pastors entered that marriage, each carrying a distinct calling from God, and the marriage eventually grew apart because the pursuit of career and calling took precedence over the union itself. Scripture says, "*He who finds a wife finds a good thing*" (Proverbs 18:22), not "*he who finds a pastor.*" Seek a wife first.

A young man once came to me for counselling and said, "Now that I have found my wife, I want to start giving her the microphone, so she can develop the fruit of a pastor as well." I asked him, "Is that really your priority right now? Confirm first whether she is truly your wife? Set the microphone aside for now." He said, "I want her to be like your wife." I told him, "No. I married a wife first, before I ever considered ministry partnership. "

It is dangerous to marry primarily for career. Suppose you say, "I want to marry someone who works in an oil company", and three months later, that person is laid off, with no job in sight. What will you do, when what sustained your commitment was the career rather than the relationship itself? Now that the career is gone, you may struggle to remain committed.

Some of you say, "I could never marry a pastor ". You must remain open to God's will. As Scripture reminds us, God's thoughts and plans for you were established before you had any thoughts of your own. Some of you have made your own plans and expected God to align with them. God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and I ordained you" (Jeremiah 1:5). He has a plan already in place. You may say, "I will never marry a pastor," and yet the man you marry may later receive a call from God in a dream, resign from his position, and enter ministry. The very calling you sought to avoid may still find you.

My wife was once a very quiet person; she said she did not want attention; she simply wanted to serve God. She met me before I became a pastor, and became a pastor's wife shortly after we married. She said, "Oh God, this pastoring life..." Eleven years later, she cannot run from it; it found her regardless.

So do not pursue career alignment, pursue God's will. You are not the author of God's will for your life; He is the One who wrote the story of your life. Stop making these calculations and arrangements on your own, they will fail you. Let God orchestrate your steps; let Him make the arrangements work.

I did not decide, "I want to act in drama," and then seek out a dramatist specifically so that I could marry someone who shared that gift. That is what our generation often does, seeking a partner with matching talents so as to appear like a celebrated couple. It does not work that way. Similarity in gifting does not equal suitability. Both partners may share the same gift, and that alone does not mean they are suited to one another.

Similarity of Gift Does Not Equal Suitability

So, what happens is this: when two people differ in their gifting, what creates suitability is their ability to support one another through those differences. Similarity of gift, therefore, does not equal suitability. As in the story shared earlier, someone was searching for a fellow pastor rather than a wife, and the couple ultimately ended up leading separate churches, because they were drawn together by similar gifting rather than genuine compatibility. Similarity of gift does not equal suitability.

So, what should you look for in marriage? Someone who can support your dream, a suitable helper. Every other matter pertaining to career, God arranges Himself; He orchestrates it in His own way. A suitable helper may be in an entirely different field. You may be in ministry while your spouse works in banking, and they can still be your support system. If your spouse is meant to join you in ministry, let it be God who calls them to that, not you forcing them into it. Do not say, "Because I am in ministry, you must also be in ministry." No.

This is very important. Spiritual growth is individual, and it is gradual. We must be patient and understanding with ourselves and with one another. I was patient with my wife; I did not compare her to other women outside our marriage. I patiently nurtured her in the fear of the Lord. So you must be patient and understanding.

Encourage, Do Not Criticize

Another point here is: encourage, and do not criticize. Avoid saying things like, "Look at you, you are not even trying." Instead, encourage the person. If someone does not dress well, do not mock them, teach them how to dress instead. I did not know how to speak English as well as I do now before I got married; my English was poor, and some young women avoided me because of it, as I frequently mixed up my verb tenses.

I remember, during one of those early days, ministering in church as a single man, my wife travelled from Warri to attend one of my services. As I preached, she was writing continuously, and I assumed in my mind that I had given her such profound revelation that she could not stop taking notes. I felt proud of myself. I believed I had impressed this young woman on her very first visit to my church.

After the service, I proudly asked her how she had found the message. She said, "All your grammar mistakes, come, let us correct them. As you were preaching, I was genuinely embarrassed for you." And she proceeded to teach me proper English. You must remain teachable; do not take pride in your mistakes. That kind of pride is often why people struggle to find a spouse, being too proud in error, resisting correction when someone is trying to help you improve, such as with colour coordination in dress, and saying, "Must you always tell me how to dress?" Or when someone gently points out that your breath needs attention, and you respond defensively, "What is wrong with going natural?" Be teachable.

Ephesians 4:15 says: *"...speaking the truth in love..."* Find someone who speaks the truth to you in love; that is very important. How we communicate with one another truly matters.

Praise the name of the Lord.

4. Marriage Is Spiritual

The next point is this: marriage is spiritual. That is what marriage will teach you, that marriage is spiritual. Marriage is not what happens on social media; it is not what you see your friends portray; it is not simply what you witness at a wedding reception. We all desire a grand wedding reception, a beautiful gown, but that is not what marriage is. Marriage is spiritual. From the very beginning, when God created marriage, the One who authored it was a Spirit, it was God, not flesh, who created marriage. It was not social media; it was not a trend that created marriage.

Genesis chapter 2, verse 18 says: *"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'"*

Who said this? God, not social media. You should not simply watch a film, feel a sense of loneliness, and decide to go and marry someone as a result. Was it God who spoke, or was it a film that moved you emotionally? The Bible states that it was God who said it is not good for man to be alone, and that He would make a suitable helper for him. Who will make that helper? It is God. So you should turn to God, not to friends, not to colleagues, not to your own strategies.

Some people, finding no eligible partner in their own congregation, go searching in another church specifically to "find" someone, but is it you who will create that person? Scripture says, "I will make him a helper", it is very important to trust that God is the One making that provision.

That is why you should not labour in vain. The flesh leads to labour in vain, but when you depend on the Spirit, when you depend on God, everything works smoothly. Scripture teaches that to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. When you choose peacefully, you are able to marry in peace and remain at peace with one another, because your attention is fixed on God.

The Lord God said that man should not be alone, meaning you

need not labour excessively to find a partner through your own effort and calculation. Many people have experienced hurt and heartbreak because they laboured in the flesh, using their own judgment and permutations, thinking, "It should be this person," or "Maybe if I attend this church, I will find someone," or "Maybe if I join the choir, I will meet someone there, because I know something about this person."

The Lord God has already said that it is not good for man to be alone. Fleshly striving leads to disappointment, but when a union is divinely orchestrated, your life will grow, and grow in peace.

So, it is very important that you understand marriage is spiritual; it is not a matter of strategy. When I was preparing to marry my wife, it was a spiritual arrangement, not a fleshly one; the flesh is failing this generation today.

An Illustration: The Lost Driver

Let me share this illustration. Many years ago, I graduated from the University of Ilorin and was traveling home to my state, Edo State, for vacation. I entered a shared vehicle. I enjoy sleeping while traveling. The car filled up, and it was an elderly man who was driving, moving at full speed, so I fell asleep.

We reached a certain point along the way, and I woke to the sound of people arguing in Yoruba, a language I do not understand. I asked what was happening, and they told me we had come to a stop. We asked the driver why, and he admitted he thought this was the correct road, but he was not certain of the way. I said, "How can you join drivers in the garage, load a vehicle full of people, and set out on a journey to Benin without knowing the road?" The man replied that it was not entirely his fault, he had once known the road well, but the last time he had driven from Ilorin to Benin was in 1979. It was only then that it became clear to all of us that we were lost.

Had the road continued on to the Benin Republic, that man might have continued driving straight through the border without realizing it. So, we reversed course, and none of us could sleep after that; everyone in the vehicle began asking questions and

stopping periodically to confirm the route, not only the driver, but all of us together. A journey that should have taken five or six hours ended up taking more than sixteen hours, simply because of the person responsible for guiding it.

Who is guiding your journey toward marital destiny? Do you want that journey to be long, or do you want it to be short? It depends largely on what you know and understand about marriage. Marriage is spiritual; return to God; the manual is clear, and it is the Bible. I am telling you, if you want to succeed in marriage, the guidance is found in the Bible, and you will find favour there.

A Personal Testimony of Divine Provision

When my wife and I were preparing to marry, I was completely broke. I had nothing substantial to my name. I was living with my pastor, and the only property I owned was a laptop. I went to meet this beautiful woman after God had told me it was time for me to settle down, which is why we say marriage is spiritual, not strategic. I approached her and said, "God said I should marry you." She looked at me and laughed. She said, "Ohis, you have come again."

At that time, there was a man who worked for an oil company who was also pursuing her, and she was considering giving him a positive answer. She called and asked what I thought. I asked her to give me his details so I could pray about it. She gave me the details, and I looked him up and realized, based on his background and social circle, that I was not, by worldly standards, a strong competitor for her attention. But I knew that the heart of a king is in the hands of God, and that He can turn it wherever He wills. So I prayed, "God, if You are truly the one who said she is my wife, please orchestrate her steps accordingly."

She eventually came to me and said she had ended the relationship with the other man, and I responded simply, "No problem." I asked when I could see her, went to meet her, and shared my vision for our future together. She gave me her answer, yes, three to five days later. And once she said yes, fear set in for me. One might reasonably ask why she would say yes to someone

with so little material provision. I was living with my pastor, and my only asset was a laptop; the situation was that difficult. But she said yes, and I found myself afraid, having told her that we would be married within a year. She agreed, and it soon became clear to me that a year was not a long time at all, and I did not quite know how we would prepare.

So, I told her that marriage is spiritual, and that we needed to commit to prayer. We agreed that every Friday would be our designated time of prayer within the relationship. We would pray and fast together regularly. And we began to pray. It was not a season for physical intimacy, which is, unfortunately, common in our generation today. It was not a time for physical closeness; it was a time to call those things that are not as though they already were. It was a time to speak into our future and begin to lay a foundation.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are many things to pray about when preparing for marriage; there are generational and cultural patterns at work, some of them harmful, that require intentional prayer. I hope you understand that certain patterns operate broadly across our nation, and that believers need to pray specifically for prosperity in every area of life, including marriage.

For example, the expected age to obtain a driver's license is eighteen, meaning that, ideally, one should be capable of driving by that age, yet in practice, this is often not the case; if someone purchases a car at forty, it becomes a testimony worth celebrating, when ideally it should not be so remarkable. Similarly, many graduate from school and remain without employment ten years later. This too reflects a pattern that must be addressed in prayer. David prayed, "Father, satisfy me early ". There are real issues to pray over. It is not merely a time for romantic gestures such as video calls simply to see one another's faces; there are substantive matters that require intercession.

My wife and I began to pray. Five months into our engagement, there was little material evidence of progress, even after much prayer. She asked, "Sweetheart, we have been praying, what is the

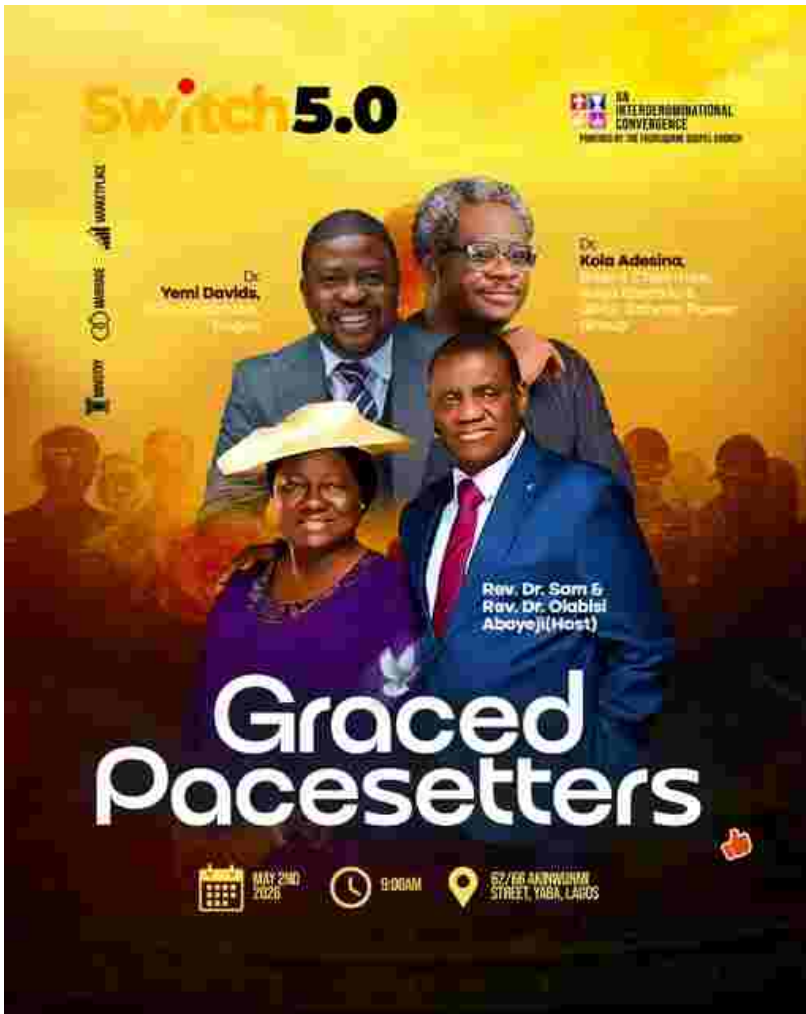
actual plan?" I responded that we were, indeed, getting married. So I went to inform my mother that I was getting married. She asked when, and I said May. She asked who was marrying, and I said, "Me." She laughed and said, "Ohis, I know you enjoy jokes, but you, marry?" We then went to meet her father, who also laughed and expressed doubt that we would be able to marry. We continued to pray.

It was at that point, four months before our wedding, that God blessed a business contract of mine, and I received a substantial sum of money. Rather than spending it all, I reinvested part of it into my business and gave a portion to my fiancée. Then, during a church service, our pastor declared that the congregation would experience favour that week, and almost immediately, a friend called out of nowhere, saying he had just purchased a deep freezer for no particular reason and did not need it; he asked if I needed one. I said, "Is that even a question?" I went straight away to collect it. My aunt, who is quite well-off, called around the same time to say she had just replaced her furniture and asked if I needed the old set. I said yes, and went to collect it. In similarly unexpected ways, we received a gas cooker, a mattress, and a television. Within the space of a month, God provided for us as though we had been working and saving for ten years. Marriage is truly spiritual.

While we were celebrating on our wedding day, we decided that from whatever gifts were presented to us during the celebration, we would set aside a portion to give as a seed offering at Redemption Camp, where I was serving in ministry at the time, and that was where we spent our honeymoon. While there, my wife and I held hands and prayed a simple prayer: "Father, make our marriage a role model." It was a very simple prayer, but we believe it activated something significant, because we understood that we were two people who were serious about our walk with God, not merely playing at marriage, not moving according to the patterns of the world, but focused on Christ.

Tell your neighbour again: marriage is spiritual.

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0



Rev. Dr. Sam. O. Salau

Chairman: Switch 5.0

SWITCH 5.0
MAY 2, 2026

**WELCOME REMARKS BY
THE GENERAL OVERSEER**

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to this special and auspicious occasion, the fifth edition of Switch, better known as Switch 5.0. On behalf of my dear wife and the National Leadership of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, I welcome you all. Switch is an interdenominational convergence organized by the Foursquare Gospel Church as a platform to contribute to the growth and expansion of the body of Christ, and the larger society in general, by offering mentorship opportunities for young ministers, Next-Gen youths, and students in secondary and tertiary institutions, and indeed, for everyone desirous of benefiting from the wealth and depth of knowledge and experience of invited role models who have made, and are still making, positive impact in the areas of marriage, ministry, and the marketplace.

Our commitment to host this event annually is born out of the determination of this administration to contribute our quota, as a church, to raising the next generation of leaders for our nation across different spheres of life. Over the years, the work of the church in Nigeria has prospered greatly, resulting in precious souls finding salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, satisfaction, and fulfillment in life, as we continue to propagate the Foursquare message: Jesus the only Savior, Jesus the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, Jesus the Healer of all sicknesses and diseases, and Jesus the soon-coming King of Glory.

Within our system as a church, we are blessed with a large population of resourceful, vibrant, and talented young men and women, as can also be said of our nation, and it is the vision and focus of the leadership of the church to ensure that we continue to create an enabling environment for this energetic segment of our population to harness their God-given talents, as we expose them to discipleship and mentorship programs in preparation for taking

on leadership responsibilities, both now and in the future.

This year, we shall be interrogating the topic "Graced Pacesetters." Titus 2:7 says: *"You yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching."*

Also, 1 Corinthians 9:24 says: *"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize."*

Setting the pace connotes the performance of an act of rare ingenuity. It involves laying a foundation, setting standards, and establishing a yardstick, a height of general acceptance, for a given circumstance. As believers, we are born into the household of those destined to be pacesetters through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate Pacesetter.

On this note, I warmly welcome our guest speakers: Pastor Yemi Davis, Lead Pastor of Global Impact Church and the Lagos State Chairman of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, and Dr. Kola Adesina, Board Chairman of Ikeja Electric and Group Managing Director of Sahara Power Group. They will be joining my wife and I in declaring God's counsel, as we bring to bear the divine pathway to success in marriage, ministry, and the marketplace.

In closing, let me offer my sincere appreciation to all our partners, especially the Bible Society of Nigeria, ably led by its Executive Secretary, Pastor Samuel Sanusi, for supporting us since the maiden edition of Switch. The planning committee of this event, chaired by our beloved Reverend Dr. Sam O. Salau, is also commended for putting together this amazing program. May the Almighty God reward your service in His vineyard, in Jesus' name.

Please help me put your hands together for these noble people.

Once again, you are all welcome, and God bless you all.

Amen

SWITCH 5.0

MAY 2, 2026

Marriage

Building On The Right Foundation

Rev. Dr. Sam aboyeji

I am going to set the pace. The theme is "Pacesetter," and I will begin by talking about marriage. As I speak on marriage, my own specific area of focus, you will notice that this morning's message will, in a way, cover more ground than marriage alone, because we are here to lay a foundation.

1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 10 says: *"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder..."*

So we are all here as builders; do you agree with me? We are all builders. We are here to build our careers, we are here to build our marriages, we are here to build our ministries. So we are all builders.

Now, what made Paul to confidently say that he was a wise master builder? He said, "I have laid the foundation." That is it, that is it. Every wise master builder lays a solid foundation, because in any building, the most important part is the foundation. It is so key, so important. Whether you are talking about career, the marketplace, marriage, or ministry, the foundation is the issue.

In fact, Psalm 11:3 says: *"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"* So the foundation is the issue, and Paul was helping us understand here that, according to the grace of God given to him as a wise master builder, he laid the foundation.

So, if you are going to be a wise master builder, you have to pay attention to the foundation. In previous years, in the last four editions, I have had the opportunity to speak about ministry. So,

when I was informed that I would be handling the subject of marriage this year, together with my wife (who will be joining us shortly), what the Holy Spirit revealed to me is that in the last four years, we have never truly paid attention to the foundation. And if anyone is going to build at all, the foundation is the most important element. That is why Paul said, "According to the grace of God", and we are talking here about Graced Pacesetters in marriage, "given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation."

That is the question every married couple here should be asking themselves: how solid is the foundation of your marriage? What kind of foundation did you lay? Paul spoke of different materials people build with, some with gold, some with silver, some with wood, and he said the day will reveal it.

Matthew chapter 7, verses 24 to 27, I will not read the full passage, as we are all familiar with it, tells the story of two men, the wise and the foolish. The wise man built his house on the rock, and the foolish man built his house on sand. The foundation made the difference.

He said the wind came, the rain came, the storm came, and beat upon both buildings. Listen carefully: every building will be exposed to exactly the same conditions; every building will face the same weather. Scripture says, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10). The problem is not the adversity, the problem is your strength, your foundation.

So, when you hear that a marriage has collapsed, the foundation is the problem. When you hear that a business has collapsed, the foundation is the problem. When you hear that a ministry has collapsed, the problem is the foundation. There is no challenge one person faces that every other person does not also face. So the foundation is the issue.

Marriage Is God's Idea

Now let us turn to marriage. Marriage and family are God's ideas, and they are God-ordained. God is the originator of marriage. It is a divine assignment, not a cultural one. Marriage is not merely

cultural. Marriage is not exclusive to the Yoruba, nor to the Hausa, nor to Europeans. No, marriage has its roots in the Bible. Genesis chapter 2, verse 18 tells us that God was kind enough to say that it is not good for man to be alone, and that He would make for him a helper comparable to him.

So God originated marriage. Now, if anyone wants to succeed in using a product, and he is wise, the best approach is to look for the manufacturer's manual, is that right?

The Story of the Coloured Television

Let me tell you a story. One of our former General Overseers, now of blessed memory, told a story about traveling abroad and returning with a coloured television. In those days, such a thing did not yet exist here; everyone was watching black-and-white sets. When he saw it abroad, he purchased it to show everyone that something new had arrived. When he got home, however, he did not read the manual; he did not check how to properly connect it; he checked nothing at all. He did not realize that the electrical power required for that coloured television was not the same as the power supply available here.

So, with great excitement, he gathered his entire family, including his young children, and plugged in the coloured television. He had already told the children, "You are going to see colour." They said, "Colour? What is that? All we know is black and white." Everyone gathered, eager to see colour, and as soon as he switched it on, there was a loud noise. It blew out completely. His little boy went to him and said, "Daddy, will you cry? Don't cry. "

There are so many people crying today after marriage because they never checked the Manufacturer's Manual. Their marriage is "blowing" away, and they are shedding tears, because they never paid attention to that manual. What is the Manufacturer's Manual in our case? It is the Bible. It is the Bible. God is the One who ordained marriage.

A Man, Not a Boy

So, when God said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife," pay close attention: not a boy, a man, a mature man. Matured physically, matured spiritually,

matured financially, matured in every area, emotionally matured. Not the kind of man who, at the smallest disagreement with his wife, calls his mother and says, "Mom, she has started again." That is a boy, that is a boy, not a man.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife", it did not say "to his wives." Did you notice that? "To his wife," singular. "And the two shall become one flesh."

Today, we have what the Yoruba people call "Adamodi" marriage, meaning a fake marriage, a man joined to multiple wives, and it is called marriage. I say, respectfully, that is not marriage. There are many fake versions out there; they are not the genuine one. A boy claiming to marry another girl and calling it marriage, no, that is not marriage either.

So marriage, by God's definition, has a standard. Listen carefully: in God's divine order, a man is married to one woman. In God's divine order for marriage and family, there is no room for the "lone ranger," because the essence of marriage is to address the problem of being alone.

Scripture says, "Woe to him who is alone" (Ecclesiastes 4:10), that is why marriage was instituted. However, when God's design and divine order, as prescribed in His Word, the Manufacturer's Manual, is distorted, marriage becomes a tug of war. I am sure you have seen many marriages that have become a tug of war, filled with suspicion and bitterness.

That is why so many young people are afraid when they hear the word "marriage." In fact, someone once told me, "When God created man, He rested; but when He created woman, He did not rest." Is that true? We shall find out who brought the unrest very soon?

The Importance of the Foundation

In anything involving construction, the foundation is important, very important. The most important part of a building is the foundation. If the window has a problem, you can change it. If the door has a problem, you can remove and replace it. Even the roof,

as important as it is, can be removed and replaced. But if the foundation has a problem, what can you do? It means pulling down the entire building.

That is why the foundation is so critical and so important. In marriage, the foundation for our marital lives is a function of our choices and our decisions. That is where the foundation lies: the choice of your spouse is critical to your life and destiny. This is very important.

Deuteronomy 30:19 says: *"I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses today against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. "*

I pray for you: may you choose life, in the name of Jesus. I say, may you choose life, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The Foundation of Choice and Decision

So the foundation is choice; the foundation is decision. All of us will become products of our decisions, today and tomorrow. What you will become tomorrow is a product of what you decide today, a product of what you choose today.

You cannot choose to study art subjects today, while in secondary school, and expect to become a medical doctor in six or seven years. Is that possible? It is not. Whatever you become is a function of your choice, it is a function of your destiny. This principle applies broadly, because Scripture is very clear.

Joel 3:14 tells us: *"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."*

Every day we make decisions; every day you make a choice. Every day you stand at a junction and choose a direction. Every day you must make a decision. Now, in the course of making decisions, some choices are especially critical. One such choice is the choice of your spouse.

Training for Marriage Is Training for Life

I once did a calculation and discovered that, for an average person, if God blesses you with long life, you will likely spend between fifty to seventy percent of your lifetime with your spouse. That is the truth, you will spend more time with your spouse than with your parents. That is the truth. So why would you gamble with such a decision?

A young wife once told her husband, "You are not giving us enough time in this house, because you are never here, you are not available for us." Do you know what his response was? He said, "Well, I have to be trained for my job." And the woman replied, "Oh, so you recognize the importance of training for your job, yet you do not recognize the importance of training for your life, because training for marriage is training for your life."

Unfortunately, even when we were growing up on campus, I remember some believers we jokingly called "Jim-Jim brothers", do you know Jim-Jim brothers? Very spiritual brothers. Any time you raised the subject of marriage, they believed you were being carnal. They would say, "No, no, I am in the realm of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, that is what we are going to minister on now." They had no time for it; they did not read about marriage, did not talk about marriage, and knew nothing about marriage, they entered marriage in ignorance. And God in heaven said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

If you will not prepare for anything, let it not be marriage. If you do not prepare for marriage, then you have not prepared for life. It is the foundation, preparation is the foundation. Consider this: decisions and choices can be tough, but they are inevitable. This is a continuous process; you must make choices, you must take decisions. You cannot make progress in life without making choices.

Most of the time, not making a choice or not taking a decision is, in itself, a decision. Did you know that? Those who decide to set aside the issue of marriage may one day find that someone has simply arranged a match for them, or that a clever individual has planted themselves into their life without any preparation on their

part. Then they encounter trouble, because that building has no foundation. I pray that will not be your portion, in the name of Jesus.

For you to be here, God wants you to have a solid foundation, a solid foundation for your home, a solid foundation for your marriage. I pray that you will not miss it, in the name of Jesus.

Every decision and choice comes with consequence, there is always a consequence, whether the decision is intentional or unintentional. I pray that you will not find yourself amid the bad consequences of a poor decision, in the name of Jesus Christ.

How to Make the Right Choice in Marriage

Now, having established that choices and decisions are critical, not only in marriage, but I will focus mainly on marriage here, how, then, do you make a choice? How do you take a decision in this area?

First: Pray

The first and most important step is to pray. That is the first step, to pray. I have come to discover that, in recent times, many people are more comfortable simply "sampling" different brothers or sisters, using their own natural judgment to make a selection. That approach cannot work. It cannot work. You must pray.

Jeremiah 33:3 says:

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know. "

There are so many things you do not know. My wife told me something recently, I believe it was this week, and I was genuinely shocked. She told me this because of the time I took to pray. In fact, I invited my close friends to pray with me when I was about to choose my wife, and I will tell you why I had no choice but to pray: after the Lord had convinced me that she was to be my wife, I went to her, and do you know what she said? "Go and read your book. You, brother, you are being carnal. Go and study. I am not surprised, you are studying economics; we, on the other hand, are studying medicine, which requires much more of our time. Go and focus on your studies." That was what she said, can you

believe that? And she is the very woman I eventually married. She told me to focus on my studies, but I was already certain that she was my wife.

So, do you know what I did? I had two brothers with whom I regularly prayed on the field at the University of Ilorin. We called ourselves Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So I called my "Shadrach" and "Abednego" and said, "Look, we have a challenge." They asked, "What challenge?" I said, "That sister, God told me she is my wife, and when I approached her, listen to what she told me." The two of them first looked at me and said, "Brother, you have courage, you went to meet Sister Bisi? You truly have courage." This was because they regarded her as someone very spiritual, you would not approach her unless you were serious-minded. But I want to thank God that He ultimately vindicated me.

I am telling you that the most important step, whether in choosing a career, choosing a spouse, or choosing a ministry, is to pray first. That prayer is what saved me, because, as I mentioned, last week, she reminded me of something. When she eventually said yes, I told her about all the women I had once been tempted by; I gave her a long list of names. I said, "It is God who saved you for me, I could have chosen wrongly. You made me wait for two years." How many years did I say? Two years. I said, "It was God and prayer, He gave me patience." I told her, "Look at this sister, look at that one, are they not beautiful?" Because my wife was beautiful; she still is. So I gave her all the names.

Do you know what she told me last week? She said, "Have you noticed that every single one of those women you mentioned have since passed away?" It is true, every one of them is deceased. As we speak, they are all gone. I am thankful that I had already told her these names before, because if I were only telling her now, she might assume I had made it up, but she already had the names, so she simply reminded me. She said, "Have you thought about that? Do you see it?" That is why you must pray. Tell somebody, you must pray. Tell another person, you must pray.

So, the first step in laying a solid foundation for your home is to

pray. Scripture says, "Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5). Even in my career, and even for my own children, I have had to resort to prayer.

A Temptation Overcome

There was a time when the devil came to tempt me. He said, "You see, now you are General Overseer, and all the sisters in Foursquare are, in a sense, under your influence. You also have these young men, your sons, who are not yet married, and they are doing well. There is no one who would not want to marry one of them. Could you not simply identify a very good sister you already know well, and connect them?" And I must confess, I nearly fell for it.

Then the Lord reminded me of a scripture, Proverbs 19:14:

"Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord."

So, if you want a good wife or a good husband, keep praying. And I know some of you, particularly young ladies, will say, "What if I pray, am I not still the one who has to go and meet somebody?" You know what? If you are prayerful, you will not experience all the confusion you may currently be facing. Do you know that? The person who is not meant for you will simply not come. Do you hear that? If you are prayerful, they will not come. Is that not what my colleagues told me? They said, "You, how were you even able to approach Sister Bisi?" She told me stories, before I came to her, of other men the Lord had warned her about, saying, "He is not the one." My wife may share this herself when it is her turn to speak, but she once told me about one man, an already-practicing architect who had a car and everything one might look for, the night before he approached her, the Lord told her, "Such-and-such person is coming; he is not the one." When you are prayerful and spiritually attentive, you face far fewer problems.

Second: Consult the Word of God

Because of time, let me move to the second point: consult the Word of God in laying a foundation for your ministry, your marriage, and your career. Please, consult the Word of God.

Scripture tells us that you cannot convert anybody, did you hear what I said?

2 Corinthians 6:14 says: *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers."*

It is a command, not a counsel; it is not merely advice. Do not be unequally yoked. You are not the Holy Spirit. I have encountered so many sisters who say, "Do not worry, by the time I marry him, I will convert him." We used to have someone like this in our fellowship, a small fellowship in Jebba. Whenever we gathered and asked for prayer requests, her request, without fail, would be about her husband. You can avoid all that heartache by obeying the Word of God. The Word says, "Do not be unequally yoked."

Psalms 119:105 says: *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

Listen: the Word of God is clear on roughly eighty-five percent of the issues of life, very clear, with no ambiguity. The Word of God is so clear that, unless one simply wishes to disobey for its own sake, this instruction stands: do not be unequally yoked.

There was a sister, also from one of our churches, and we asked her, "How did you meet this man?" She said, "We met at Full Gospel." We asked, "Did you look into his Christian background before marrying him?" As it turned out, the man was later jailed as the managing director of a bank, and our sister found herself in great difficulty. Consult what? The Word of God.

Third: Seek Counsel

The third point: seek counsel. I am speaking here about laying a foundation through your choices and decisions, seek counsel. Scripture says, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). You do not have to pay for an experience that someone else has already paid for. Did you hear what I just said? Someone has already paid the price through their own experience, why not draw on that person's experience instead of paying the price again yourself?

Let me share a secret about counselling: when seeking counsel,

seek it from objective, non-partisan people. Are you hearing what I am saying? If someone has a personal stake in the matter, do not go to them for counsel, because their advice will come from a partisan perspective.

Let me share my own experience. When I proposed to my wife and she asked me to wait, I went to someone I regarded as a father figure to ask his opinion. I said, "Sir, consider this sister." I did not know, at the time, that this man was a close friend of the father of the other suitor I mentioned earlier, the practicing professional with a car. So, when I told him about my intentions, he said, "Oh, leave Bisi alone, people from your area and people from our area, when they intermarry, they do not tend to have good marriages."

The Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "That is carnal reasoning, that is not the Word of God." Had I listened to that counsel, I might have missed my wife entirely. God forbid. God forbid.

So, counsel is good, but seek it from a party without a vested interest. If you ask the father of the young man you are considering whether he is the right one to marry, what do you think that father will say? Particularly if you are a good, respectable young woman, he will very likely say, "Yes." In fact, he may even say, "You are exactly the one for him."

So, when seeking counsel, please seek it from an objective source. Counsel itself, however, remains good and valuable. Many have been saved from making the wrong choice by seeking wise counsel. My wife and I have, over the years, been involved in helping break off a number of engagements, and today we continue to thank God for those we helped end it. Let me tell someone plainly: a broken courtship is better than a divorce. Do you agree with me? No matter how long a courtship has lasted, although, these days, people use the term "dating" rather than "courtship", a broken dating relationship is better than a divorce.

On Dating

I will return to that point, because you and I may not fully agree on this: dating, as commonly practiced today, functions as a kind of "singles' polygamy." Yes, it is singles' polygamy. When people

practice this pattern of relating with multiple partners simultaneously as singles, can we reasonably expect them to become faithful once they marry? It becomes difficult, because they are already accustomed to this pattern. In such dating, individuals often engage romantically with multiple people at the same time, that, in essence, mirrors polygamy. So, if anyone asks for your definition of dating, you may describe it as "singles' polygamy." It is very important that you seek counsel in this area.

Fourth: Collect Enough Information

The fourth point: collect enough information, and weigh the options. Please, collect sufficient information and weigh your options carefully, we might call this a SWOT analysis. There is no perfect human being on earth. Even if the Lord confirms, "This is your spouse," it is unlikely that you will see no challenges at all; there will be difficulties. When Abraham sent his servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for Isaac in Genesis chapter 24, a chapter I am particularly fond of, the young man carefully analyzed the situation, considering what challenges might arise.

So, if God is leading you toward a particular man or woman, what should you do? It is not wise to run away the moment you notice a single negative trait. That would not be the right response, because you will never find a perfect man or a perfect woman. Begin instead by striving to become a better person yourself; when you grow, others will appear better in your eyes as well. So, if you notice a challenge, the purpose of gathering information is not to give you a reason to flee, it is to help you know what to bring before God in prayer. Did you hear what I said? If you have genuine conviction that this is your husband or your wife, you do not run; you bring the matter to God in prayer. If it is truly your spouse, God will help address that challenge.

The Genotype Testimony

A young man, in a former church I served, was preparing to marry, and as is customary, we conducted a genotype test. We discovered that both he and his fiancée carried the AS genotype. By our church's standard practice, we generally advised against joining two AS carriers, because there is a statistical risk of having a child with the SS genotype. So, we told this young man

that we could not, in good conscience, support the marriage under those circumstances. He responded, "Sir, we are going to marry regardless." I said, "This is difficult."

Eventually, given their determination, we asked both of them to sign a written undertaking, acknowledging that they understood the medical risk and were proceeding by their own conviction. They expressed strong faith that God had already shown them how many children they would have, their genders, and their overall health. They were remarkably confident. So, we provided the documentation and asked them to sign an undertaking acknowledging their informed decision, similar to how medical doctors sometimes have patients sign against medical advice.

He signed the form for our church's marriage counselling team, and to the glory of God, today they have three healthy sons, none of whom carry the SS genotype. None. That is why I speak of truly knowing your God, Scripture says, "The people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32).

So, gather information. They did. They did not simply close their eyes and proceed blindly. What creates difficulty for many people is that they rush into situations without adequate knowledge. This couple, by contrast, was well advised and well counselled, but they took the matter to God in prayer, and God spoke to them. They listened. Do you believe that God can speak to someone in this way? Yes, God spoke to them, and they acted on it. It was not my place to undermine their faith; the best I could do was ask them to formally acknowledge their decision, so that if anyone later questioned why we approved with the union, I could point to their signed acknowledgment.

Collect information, enough information, please, so that you are equipped to pray effectively.

If you know what others do not know, you are ahead of them, that is part of what makes you a pacesetter; you must be informed. How can you want to marry someone you do not truly know? You do not know their genotype, their age, their background, you do not know anything, yet you say, "The brother simply appeared,

and the Holy Spirit moved in my spirit, so I said yes.” No, that is not sufficient. You must have adequate information. I am not suggesting you should use that information against the person; rather, if there are things that concern you, bring them before God in prayer. As David said, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You" (Psalm 56:3).

The Espionage Story

I once boasted to my wife, saying, "I am confident no one investigated me before you agreed to marry me." She said, "Do not be so sure." She told me that she and her brother had travelled to my village, dressed alike so people would assume they were a married couple, specifically to gather information about me. She said the description they were given was something like: "Unless you know which fellowship gathering is currently taking place, you will not easily find that young man, do not simply go looking for him randomly. If you know of any ongoing program, just go there; he will be present, and he is always carrying a Bible."

Now, many of you, particularly young ladies, may not realize that someone is watching you. Someone is observing you, someone who has taken an interest in you may have sent people to learn more about your character. And perhaps it is precisely during one of those observed moments that a family member provokes you unexpectedly, and you respond harshly, perhaps even losing your temper, only to have that person report back, "Is that really the kind of person you want to marry?" and advise the suitor to reconsider entirely.

Gather information, do not go into marriage blindly. Do not later find yourself saying, "I did not know he was like this." No, no, no, not in this day and age. There are so many avenues available for you to gather information. Some may ask, "Why, then, do you say we should not date?" There are many other avenues for learning about a person without dating in the conventional sense. In earlier generations, fellowship served this purpose, belonging to the same department, group, or workplace allowed you to observe their character over time. As you prayed and served together, God would open both your physical and spiritual eyes to truly see the people around you.

A Son's Testimony

One of my sons, as I mentioned, I was once concerned about my sons, we visited him abroad, and my wife and I told him we wanted to accompany him to church. When we arrived, he simply slipped in quietly and slipped back just as quietly. When we returned home, we asked him which department he served in at that church. He said, "No, I am too busy, I do not serve anywhere; I simply attend." I told him that would not work, it would not work. I said, "Starting next week, join a department." We told him we would pray with him about which department to join. He said he would join the ushering department. Do you know that is where he eventually found his wife? That is how it happened. In the midst of a predominantly white congregation, because the church was largely a white congregation, he reported to the ushering department as advised, and within six months, he met the woman who is now his wife. They are married today and have a daughter.

So, what are we saying here? Many of you attend church regularly, yet no one truly knows you, you simply come in and go out. And in that pattern, one day someone may approach you and say, "I would like to marry you," and you might think, "Thank God, a suitor has finally come", yet you know nothing substantial about that person, and they know nothing substantial about you. You would, in effect, be courting after the wedding rather than before it. Have you heard of that happening? Many people, unfortunately, end up doing their courtship inside the marriage itself. As I mentioned earlier regarding dating as a form of "singles' polygamy", when you are simultaneously relating to three or four people at the same level, how can you make a genuine commitment to any one of them? You end up confusing yourself.

The same applies to both men and women, though, for women, the consequences can be even more serious. I once had a young woman come to me and say, "Daddy, I want you to pray and help me choose among these suitors", she said she wanted to write their names on paper and throw them into the air, marrying whichever name landed first. I told her that was gambling; that is

gambling. God has moved away from that kind of decision-making after the case of Gideon's fleece.

You must gather proper information; you must be well-informed. Even a day before a wedding, someone might come forward with new information and say, "Did you know so-and-so?" I have seen many marriages disrupted within twenty-four hours because of information that surfaced too late, for example, discovering that a partner already has a spouse in another city, something the other party never disclosed and was never asked about. Did you care to find out? Did you truly investigate beforehand?

A Friend's Broken Engagement

One of my friends had his marriage plans disrupted, and it began with a simple argument. Someone had been telling him, "Your fiancée may be seeing someone else." They were nearly married when the conflict broke out. Do you know what triggered it? The young woman was based in Kano, while my friend was in Lagos; since the bank he worked for had branches across the country, he was confident that after marriage, she would relocate to Lagos. One day, simply through conversation, this is precisely why courtship conversations matter, he asked, "So, when we eventually marry, where will we settle?" She replied, "Each of us will stay where we currently are." Someone close to her remarked that it seemed she intend on continuing her relationship with someone in Kano, effectively making my friend the "official" husband while the other man remained the unofficial one. That is how a marriage, just three months from being finalized, was called off. Today, he is happily married elsewhere. I pray that you will not fall into the wrong hands, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why Marriage Requires Careful Precaution

So, when it comes to marriage, it is very important to be meticulous. It is the foundation. Why must you take every precaution regarding the choice of a spouse?

Not Every Person Is Meant for You

First, because not every man is your husband, and not every woman is your wife. Did you hear what I said? No, no, no, you

cannot marry every man; you cannot marry every woman. That is the truth. That is the truth of God's Word. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 2, in the New Living Translation, says: *"Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love."*

Notice the phrase used there, "each other." How many people does that typically refer to? Two people. That is why I appreciate that NLT translation: "making allowance for each other because of your love." Someone once said to me, "You put up with certain things from your wife, if it were me, I would not tolerate it." I responded, "Well, you do not need to tolerate it, because she is not your wife, she is mine. If I am content, I am content. That is what I wake up to each morning and what I go to sleep with each night, because one man's meat is another man's poison."

The choice of who you marry will also, in significant ways, shape your spiritual trajectory. Consider those who have taken their own lives because of marital difficulties, or who have harmed themselves due to marital distress, the choice of spouse carries eternal weight. That is why you must be meticulous, take it seriously, pray about it, and seek God's guidance.

The Choice Affects Your Spiritual Life

Moreover, the person you marry will determine whether you progress or deteriorate spiritually. That person will either help fuel your zeal for God or diminish it. I know many sisters and brothers who, as soon as they got married, seemed to have cold water poured on their spiritual lives, they became less committed and increasingly indifferent to the things of God, simply because of the kind of person they married. So, who you marry will determine whether your journey with God continues or is derailed.

The Choice Affects Your Joy

It is also important because your spouse will determine whether you experience joy or misery after the wedding. The wedding itself lasts only one day, and many people, particularly young people, forget this. They notice warning signs but overlook them. As the saying goes, "Love is blind, but marriage is an eye-

opener.” During courtship, there is often nothing anyone can say that will be heard. “Don't you see this warning sign?” “He will not acknowledge it.” And then, at the altar, everyone joyfully sings, “I do, I do.” Yet within a few months, the very person who said “I do” no longer wants to, precisely because they never took the decision seriously. Marriage is a serious matter. You can find yourself miserable for the rest of your life if you marry the wrong person.

Someone once shared with us that, within a few months of marriage, colleagues at their office began to notice a change and asked, “This is not you, you were not like this before. We expected you to become a better person; look at what you have become instead.” I pray that your marriage will make you a better person, in the name of the Lord Jesus. And that will only happen if you marry the right person.

Proverbs 27:17 says: *“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”*

This is so important. If the person you marry is spiritually “cold,” no matter how spiritually “hot” you were, you will likely become cold as well if you are not intentional about your own growth. If you are elevated and trying to lift someone below you up to your level, what happens if you are not careful? You may be pulled down instead. At the very least, if a potential spouse is not yet at your spiritual level, let them be close to it. Do not marry an unbeliever assuming you will single-handedly convert them, fill them with the Holy Spirit, and develop them into a minister, are you the Holy Spirit yourself? That work, from conversion to the infilling of the Holy Spirit, belongs to God, not to you.

Accepting an Adult as They Are

Adults are difficult to change. If you marry someone, you must be prepared to accept the person largely as they are. Do not marry hoping to change an adult. What we often advise women is this: whatever undesirable trait you notice in your husband, focus instead on shaping that trait in your children, since children can more readily be guided. Avoid trying to command or reform your husband directly, as that approach often backfires. Instead, use

prayer to support and help him regarding the trait you find difficult. But if you notice a similar trait beginning to emerge in your children, gently correct it, without insulting your husband or saying, "That is exactly how your father behaves. "

For an adult, however, attempting to force change is often an exercise in futility. A person accustomed to a certain way of living, for instance, leaving shoes, trousers, and jackets scattered around, as is sometimes common in households of only sons, is unlikely to change simply because you now share a home. It may be too late to change such long-standing habits; you may need to accept your circumstance and adapt, rather than expect the person to conform entirely to your preferences.

So, adults must generally be accepted as they are. If you desire any change in an adult, commit the matter to prayer, that is where true change can occur. Do not overreact by insisting, "I am going to change him. "

The Choice Affects Your Prosperity

Also, the choice of spouse is very critical because your level of prosperity and success in life will depend significantly on it. This is very important, it is not just about your personal life, but a broader measure of your success.

Your success at home is, in many ways, a measure of yourself. If you succeed despite a difficult marriage, imagine how much more you might have accomplished with a supportive one. People often point to John Wesley as an example, Wesley might have achieved even greater ministry impact had he not endured a difficult marriage, yet God still helped him, and it should not be forgotten that his mother prayed for him faithfully every day. Is your mother praying for you every day? So, do not use exceptions like John Wesley as an excuse to gamble with this decision. It remains a measure of success. Many people have become failures, or have had their success significantly delayed, because of a difficult marriage. This is very important, and I acknowledge that not everyone agrees with this observation.

Consider Napoleon Bonaparte, one of history's greatest military

leaders. He was described as nearly invincible while married to Josephine, his wife, because she served as a genuine source of inspiration to him. But from the day he set that relationship aside for a mistress, his fortunes began to decline, and he ultimately suffered defeat and was later exiled, and later died. This pattern repeats in the stories of many prominent figures whose lives were affected, sometimes disgraced, because of troubled marriages. So, it is not enough to say, "As long as I focus on my studies and my career, I will do well." No, marriage can significantly affect the trajectory of your life. But it will not derail yours, in Jesus' name, because you are receiving this teaching, and the Lord will help you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What Is Keeping You From Marriage?

I am going to begin bringing this message to a close, and as I do, let me ask this: help me ask your neighbour who is mature enough to marry, "What are you waiting for?" What are you waiting for? Many parents today, listen to me, many parents' singular prayer point is simply the day they will finally wear their celebratory attire as parents of the bride or groom. That is genuinely what occupies their thoughts. And if you are a mature individual with a stable job, what exactly are you waiting for?

Let me share some of the factors that tend to slow people down.

1. Fear

The first factor is fear. Some are afraid because of marriages they have personally witnessed fail. Did you hear what I said? Some are afraid because of marriages they have seen fail.

A young man I used to pray with, I prayed for him regarding his career and many other areas of his life, once told me, when the subject of marriage came up, "Daddy, please do not go there." I asked why, and he said, "I am not going to marry at all." I asked why again, and he said, "If what people call marriage is what I have seen in our household, I do not want it. It is a constant headache, we wake up to trouble and go to sleep amid conflict. If that is what marriage means, I want no part of it." I told him I would continue praying for him.

About six months later, he was the one who called me and asked

to see me. When he came, he said, "Daddy, I want to marry now, marriage is sweet." I asked what had changed. He explained that his parents had sent him to stay with a Christian family during a summer holiday, and there he witnessed a different side of marriage, the opposite of what he had grown up seeing in his own home. He said, "Daddy, marriage now excites me." He explained that he observed how that husband and wife interacted, and it was the complete opposite of what he had witnessed at home. So, some of you carry fear because of what you have personally seen in the marriages around you.

Let me share about my own father: he had three wives, and I was aware of the difficult circumstances surrounding each child's conception, especially with one of my stepmothers in particular. Being the eldest son, my father would tell me, quite candidly, "Before I could even consider having another child with your stepmother, I first had to open a shop at Oke-arin." He was remarkably candid with me, and given the complexities of polygamy in our household, one might expect this background to have convinced me that a genuinely happy marriage was not possible. Yet, if you ask me today, after thirty-seven or thirty-eight years of marriage, my wife remains the very best in the world. So, do not allow what you observe in others' circumstances to define what is possible for your own marriage.

2. Too Busy to Hear From God

The second factor: being too busy to hear from God. So many of you are simply too occupied to seek God, and God is the only One who can give you the authentic guidance you need. As Jeremiah 33:3 reminds us, "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know." Only God can reveal such things to you. So, if you are too busy, if you have not cultivated fellowship and intimacy with God, you will struggle to get this decision right, and that is precisely why fear and uncertainty take hold, because you are relying only on your own limited understanding.

Perhaps you are caught up in what I earlier called "singles' polygamy", dating multiple people at once. You understand the term now, you have evaluated one option, then another, then

another, and eventually thrown your hands up in frustration. One young man once told me, "These days, you can never seem to find a genuinely good match, the only reliable place to find one is in the place of prayer." So pray. Call on God. Seek Him, and you will find the right one. Do not be too busy.

The Triplets Testimony

There was a couple who had been looking to God for the fruit of the womb, and we gathered a group of senior, experienced believers together to pray for them, as this had become their singular, urgent prayer request. During the course of that prayer time, a prophetic word came forth: the Lord said they were too busy for Him to entrust them with children, that if He gave them children under those circumstances, the children would suffer as a result. They wept bitterly that day. Within less than a year, they welcomed a set of triplets, because on that day they repented and told God, "If You bless us with children, we promise to make time for them." Prior to that, they had been so consumed with their own busyness that they had no time even for God Himself, let alone for the responsibility of raising children. In a similar way, some people search earnestly for a husband or a wife, yet never make time to seek God in the process.

I once heard a story, and I asked myself if I had heard correctly, about someone who had just gotten married, and then left for a two-month course or training shortly afterward. He was not even the one initiating calls home; it was his family calling to ask, "Where are you now? Where are you now?" Is that truly marriage? Such couples function more like co-tenants sharing a space than as spiritually and emotionally bonded spouses. When you are married to the right person, you and your partner cannot easily go twenty-four hours without wanting to hear each other's voice, that is what genuine marriage looks like. So, when you are dating someone who can go a full week without checking in on you, take note, those are red flags. Did you hear me? If you understand, say, "I hear you."

3. Undefined Relationships

The third factor: undefined relationships, many of them stemming from this pattern of "singles' polygamy." People say,

"We are just friends, we are just friends," while serious-minded observers around them naturally assume they are already committed, and treat them accordingly, sometimes overlooking them as prospective partners. When a pastor eventually asks, "Are you two engaged?" the answer is often, "No, we are just friends." But for how long will that remain the case?

You must be intentional, help me tell someone: be serious. Do not gamble with your life. There are many young women who, after being "just friends" with someone for ten years, are stunned when the man eventually shows up with a wedding invitation card, for someone else entirely. Listen: if a person has never explicitly said, "I will marry you," do not assume that they intend to. Do not assume it. There are a few rare cases where an undefined friendship naturally developed into marriage, but that is the exception, not the rule.

If someone has never clearly stated their intentions, and this applies especially to spiritually mature young women, there truly is no one who approaches another person merely wanting to "move together" without a defined destination. What does that phrase even mean, moving where? There must be a destination. Define the relationship. Are you friends? Are you courting? What exactly are you?

If someone refuses to define the relationship, meanwhile he or she is privately intending to marry someone else entirely, perhaps someone based overseas, you may find yourself here, simply labelled as "just friends," quietly hoping and even praying that one day the relationship will be clarified in your favour. But he may have already made his intentions known to someone else. Please, do not entertain undefined relationships, define the relationship clearly before proceeding further with someone.

4. Unrealistic Standards

The fourth factor: do not set unrealistic standards. I once had a young woman in my church whose standard, from the very first time I met her, was that she would only marry a white man. She remained in Nigeria, believing and praying about this day and night. Whenever I asked, "Sister, how are things progressing?"

she would say, "I am still waiting for the white man, he is coming." That is an unrealistic expectation.

Similarly, someone with only a secondary school certificate might insist on marrying a PhD holder or a university professor. I recall an elderly gentleman in our church who once said, "My faith is so strong that if I decide to become the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, they will announce me today." I told him, "Sir, if they announced you today, they would remove you just as quickly." Setting unrealistic expectations is not the same as having genuine faith, I am not sure what to call that kind of thinking, but it is not faith. It is an unrealistic expectation.

In fact, the counsellor of our church's marriage committee once called me from abroad and asked about that same young lady, saying, "How is she progressing?" I told him, "We are still waiting for the white man." I even joked, "Since you are abroad, perhaps you can help us find one and send him our way." Unrealistic expectations are precisely what has kept some people exactly where they are.

5. The Wrong Circle

The fifth factor: keeping the wrong circle of friends. Some people surround themselves entirely with unbelievers, even after committing their lives to Christ. So, when they are reminded not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, they respond, "Well, who exactly am I supposed to marry, then? This one is not yet saved, that one is not yet saved, I suppose I will just have to lead the person to salvation myself and trust that the Holy Spirit will work on him." That mindset is simply mistaken, you would be deceiving yourself.

Let your social circle reflect your values. Most people who marry genuinely God-fearing, believing partners tend to find them within their own social circles. Statistically, roughly eighty percent of the time, you will marry someone from within your existing circle. I gave you the earlier example of my son, had he not joined the ushering department, where do you suppose he would have found his wife? You tend to marry from within your circle, which is why it matters greatly whom you spend your time

with. If the people you associate with are involved in cultism, for example, you significantly increase your likelihood of marrying into that same lifestyle, not because of some curse, but simply because of proximity and shared social circles. But if you surround yourself with believers, I can assure you the outcome tends to be very different.

How I Met My Wife

Consider how I met my own wife: we were both serving at a crusade held at a college of education, running back and forth carrying chairs and setting up equipment. We were both in our first year of university at the time, which is why she later told me to focus on my studies; we were, after all, still quite young. But as I carried chairs back and forth, helping set up the crusade grounds, I saw her pass by, and the Holy Spirit said clearly, "That is your wife." I remember thinking, "All right", but I quickly told myself, "Get behind me, that is not why I am here," and continued with my work.

That night, back at the hostel, I began to pray quietly in tongues, as I typically did before sleep. As I opened my mouth to pray, I found myself speaking in tongues and interpreting it as confirmation that she was, indeed, my wife. I quickly opened my eyes and looked around to see whether anyone else was listening. Fortunately, no one else was in the room at the time. I said, "Thank God, thank God." That is how I received my confirmation. But notice, it all began by being present in a place where we were both serving in God's work.

If you simply slip into church and slip back out, or slip into fellowship gatherings without truly engaging, you cannot realistically expect to find a spouse there, because even if you recognize others, they will not truly know you. Did you hear what I said?

6. Outward Appearance and Attractiveness

Just two more points, and then I will bring this message to a close. The sixth factor involves a kind of "holier-than-thou" attitude regarding physical appearance. Some individuals present themselves in a way that is simply unattractive, while still hoping

to find a spouse. No one is genuinely seeking to marry someone who appears careless or unkempt. Did you hear what I said? You must present yourself decently. Did you hear that? One of the important, though often overlooked, criteria in choosing a spouse is that the person must be physically attractive to you. Did you hear what I said? No amount of spirituality can fully substitute for that. If a person is simply not attractive to you personally, that consideration matters, and should not be dismissed.

And one way to be more attractive is to dress decently. I am not suggesting that you go into debt to dress well, simply be neat in your appearance. Do not use "spirituality" as an excuse to neglect your outward presentation; that is not appropriate.

There was a young woman who, just twenty-four hours before her wedding, appeared visibly troubled, and people kept asking, "Sister, why does your face look like this?" She eventually broke down in tears and admitted, "I do not truly love him, I only agreed to marry him because I believed God told me to." I told her plainly that this reasoning was flawed. That marriage did not last six months. If you find that you have no genuine affection or attraction toward someone, pray earnestly for that love to develop before proceeding, otherwise, reconsider the relationship altogether. Did you hear what I just said? Because marriage is not merely a spiritual union between two spirits, did you hear that? You cannot be so focused on the spiritual dimension that you overlook the physical and emotional realities of marriage. You must also be genuinely compatible and attracted to one another as people.

7. A Poor Christian Life

This is the final point, and then I will conclude. The seventh factor is a poor Christian life, someone who claims to be born again, yet whose life bears little visible fruit: someone who is selfish, arrogant, and shows little evidence of Christian character, yet is actively searching for a spouse.

My wife and I have long held a particular saying between us: whenever we see someone within our church whom we have been mentoring toward greater seriousness in their faith, and instead of

growing, they bring forward a partner who reflects the same lack of seriousness. One young woman, for example, brought a man who openly admitted, in his own words, that he had already divorced two previous wives. My wife was visibly concerned, and I told her, "They are simply operating at the same spiritual level, look closely at this young woman's own life; you cannot expect her to attract someone spiritually grounded while living at that level herself."

If you desire a spiritually sound spouse, you must first become spiritually sound yourself. Do not claim to be a Christian while living selfishly, that is not true Christianity. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 makes this clear. Without the evident fruit of the Spirit in your life, simply claiming the label "Christian" carries little weight. If people around you are already familiar with your romantic history rather than your character, from where does your Christian testimony truly come? I pray that you will not miss God's best for your life, in Jesus' name.

SWITCH 5.0

MAY 2, 2026

Ministry

BEING A GRACED PACESETTER IN THE MINISTRY

Pastor Yemi David

This is amazing. Make sure you smile. Is somebody greeting you? Are you greeting somebody? Hallelujah. What an honour it is for me to be here. What an honor it is for me to be here. I want to celebrate Dr. Aboyeji, our Daddy in the Lord. Let us celebrate him and Mummy. It is good to see you both. Thank you, Sir. Thank you, Ma, for what you are doing, not just in the Body of Christ but in Nigeria. I celebrate all our Daddies and Mummies in the house.

I arrived when Dr. Kola was speaking, and I realised that he had scooped part of my message. Therefore, I am going to sentence you, Sir, and collect a fine from you, Sir. But I am grateful for what you have done already. Let us celebrate Dr. Kola again for blessing us. Amazing, amazing, amazing.

The Critical Role of Leadership

You know, everything rises or falls on leadership. When I was in Ife, God began teaching me or training me about leadership. That training set the pace for what has helped our ministry today, because everything rises or falls on leadership. The better the leader, the better the team, the better the family, and the better the future. Some of us would have been better if our parents had been better.

Those are harsh realities, because decisions are made by leaders, and those decisions impact the people they lead. When parents make decisions, those decisions impact the children. When our President or the cabinet or the Senate borrows money, we as a nation borrow money. It is not them personally; it is Nigeria borrowing money. Whether the borrowing is the best decision or

not depends on the quality of mind making those decisions.

Everybody here, whether you are a grandpa or a student, is imagined as a leader in one way or another. You may lead as a mother, at least in that basic role, or as a father, or as the head of a team in the church, or as a branch pastor, or as a CEO, or while starting a business. Whichever way, you have to develop your leadership capacities, because in the long run, they will determine whether you are a blessing to your world or a curse.

Leadership is either a blessing or a curse. John Maxwell tries to put it politely by saying leadership is the lid. You are either limiting the people or allowing the people to flourish. So when you get married and have children, after ten years, what will your children say about you? All the men in the house, if you are not married, when you get married and have five kids, and then after about twenty years they call for an election in the house and say, "Daddy, stay in one room," and you are the dad, and they ask the children and your wife whether, if they come to this world again, they will vote for you, will you win that election? Especially when they tell them they will not let Daddy know who said yes or no. Just write yes or no. Will your wife say, "Yes?" Will the children say, "Yes?"

Leadership Determines Outcomes in Church and Ministry

Everything rises or falls on leadership. The better the leader, the better the church. Churches never get better until the pastor gets better, believe me, or the pastoral team gets better. In our church, when we notice a particular arm of the church slowing down, it is the leadership we address first. You do not fire the team; it is the leader. The team may have a problem, but change the leader first and work on the leadership first. The leader can then restructure the team.

I mean, Arsenal had the first leg. Praise the Lord. I will talk about it. I am looking forward to it, is it Wednesday night? No, it is Wednesday. Tuesday. I am really looking forward to it. You know, as a leader, you are always looking at other people's leadership to learn and to see whether they are repeating the same mistakes every year or have broken the jinx. So we look forward

to such opportunities. I wish this was going to hold again next week so we can talk to each other.

Praise the Lord. So we are here to get better. Tell your neighbour, "We are here to get better." It is another way of saying, "I want to set the pace." As Dr. Kola said, "I want to stand out. I do not want to be generalised in my generation. I do not want it to be said, 'Look at that entrepreneur' or 'Look at that pastor.' " No, I do not want to be generalised. I want to stand out. I want to be outstanding. And you are not in this conference by chance. God brought you here. For the few moments we have left, I want you to sit down, pay attention, and pick up relevant, powerful lessons. Look, some of your colleagues should have been here, but maybe they are playing outside or watching Netflix. Your coming here should make a difference.

If you are here, be here. Tell your neighbour, "Be here." Yeah, you have to concentrate. You have to listen. One statement can be your breakthrough. One statement or one illustration can stick with you for another thirty years and make a difference. I have some slides. We will run through them, and I am so glad we have a panel session after this where we can answer questions.

Hunger: The Starting Point for Impact

Number one: Hunger. Yeah, hunger, that is intense desire. I cannot help anyone who is not hungry for impact. I have met lackadaisical people. I have met laid-back people. I have met people who are just there, saying, "Let us see how it goes." You cannot make the difference with that attitude. Hunger is a strong force. As I stand before you, I am still hungry, desperate for greater impact. Whatever you have achieved, yesterday is gone. What do you see for tomorrow? Hunger for impact and hunger to make the difference matter, because where hunger stops, impact stops. Where hunger stops, influence stops.

I learned that when you are hungry for food, you do not go to the bathroom. When you are hungry, you want to eat; you do not go to the bathroom. But when you are pressed, you go to the bathroom.

So the mystery of hunger is this: whatever you are hungry for

directs your life. It starts with hunger. Oh, I am thirsty; I need water. I do not go to the toilet. Somehow, I gravitate towards the fridge, is it not? When I am pressed, I do not go to the fridge. I gravitate towards the restroom because your hunger determines your direction in life. So you see somebody moving. Somehow, we try to stop their movement. No, first check whether they even have hunger. That movement is a function of their hunger. If he does not have anything inside, he will be moving wrongly.

Yes, show me your friends, and I can tell the kind of mindset you have. So we try to work on the symptoms, giving advice such as, "Change these friends. I do not like this." No, no, no. If you do not change the state of the person's heart, if you remove the bad friends today, he will pick up bad ones again. Sir, I have noticed that people who are addicted to those things, those bad things, when they move into a neighbourhood, nobody tells them where they sell them. I do not want to mention those things, but you know what I mean. When they go out, they just move around. By instinct, they know where they sell those things or where someone who is also taking them is. Your addiction determines your direction.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will birth in you a fresh hunger for impact, to be a thousand times better than your parents, to repair Africa, and to turn Nigeria around. I pray that the Holy Ghost will birth fresh hunger in you, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Instead of telling somebody, "Hey, you must study," if there is no hunger, he will not study. All those things are symptoms. But when there is hunger, he will study so much that you will say, "Stop studying." He will be so disciplined that you will be the one to say, "Ah, take it easy." No wonder Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Those are the people for whom grace will work to set the pace.

Humility: The Enemy of Pride and Key to Wisdom

Number two is humility. For leaders here, and I believe everybody is a leader in the making or already holds a portfolio, one of the main enemies of wisdom is pride. Pride is the enemy of wisdom. Whether you are seventy-five or twenty-five, we need to

maintain a learning posture forever. Humility. Armed with enough humility, anyone can learn from anyone, from anything, and from anywhere. I have been here for only a few moments, and I have picked up a lot of lessons.

Do not ever get to a point where you stop learning. It is easy to feel like a learner when you are just striving, but when you start obtaining fruits, when you start seeing some results, maybe you are pastoring a church of a hundred and now see a thousand or two thousand, you can start feeling invincible. Or you have some multi-millions or some kind of influence, and you can start thinking, "Okay, I am the one who should be teaching people now." No, no, no. Yes, we are learning from you, but you still have so much to learn for the future. It is the force of humility that helps you to keep picking up lessons.

I am looking at us now. You know, they say we are all blind-sided one way or another. I do not know what is happening at my back, right? I can see the cameras and the setup when asked what I am seeing, but I cannot see what is at my back. If I need details about what is at my back, I need to learn from you. I need to listen to you: "Oh, hey, there are two lions coming at you from the back." I cannot see them, but you can see them glaringly. Now, if I refuse to learn from you, that can be my undoing.

Focus creates blindness. I am seeing you, but I cannot see everywhere. Because I am so focused on what I am doing, which is great, it means there are many areas I am not seeing. So, I need to learn from others to know what is on that side and what is on this side, so that I can have wholeness. Five plus three equals what? Hello? Five plus three equals what? Four plus four equals what? Nine minus one equals what? Eight. But different perspectives help.

I am still amazed at the meekness of Moses, especially for us in the ministry here, because it is not really failure that kills people; it is success that destroys people. I am amazed that a man who saw God, in quotes, God wrote on his iPad (you know, Moses was the first person who used an iPad; that scripture called it a tablet), and God wrote on it, and he had conversations with God. I am amazed

that that same person could listen to his father-in-law, Jethro, teaching him administration and leadership. I am amazed that he could still learn from Jethro. I looked at myself: if I had such spiritual encounters, which is what affects people, God talks to me, I hear from God, could I still listen to another pastor? It was Jethro who taught Moses delegation. Amazing. Somebody would have said, "No, if God wanted me to know about delegation, He would have written it on the tablet."

So I realised that all I need is beyond what I hear from God. Hearing something from God is not all that I need. The rest will come from sources to which I need to listen. Take Nicodemus and Jesus. In case you do not know, Nicodemus was a fellow pastor. We call them Pharisees and Sadducees. They were fellow pastors. In fact, they had been in the ministry before Jesus. He just came on the scene at thirty years old, and the church began to explode, and that had impact. All the other Pharisees and Sadducees began to fight Him. "Who are You? Who is He?" And they were already plotting to kill Him. But one man had sense. He went to see Him by night. Oh, there are people you need to visit like that. "What is the key? What are your secrets? What are you doing right?" And do you know, it was that conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus that brought out the statement about being born again. It did not just come like that. It was another pastor, maybe an older pastor, asking a younger pastor for secrets and keys. And Jesus said, *Except you be born again*. And that statement came about. Maybe we should credit Nicodemus for that, for having the humility to learn.

So if you are a business owner here, I know you are doing well. But there are people you still need to see to expand. If you are a pastor here, there are some pastors you need to sit with and ask questions. There are times I schedule meetings with pastors, sometimes you do it *Nicodemus-ly*. To one of them, I said, "People have been asking me, 'What is the secret of your friend?' I said, 'I do not know; they should leave me alone.' They said, 'I should ask you, so tell me so I can tell them.' But it is me that needs to hear the secrets. Every time somebody opens a treasure from their heart, your life never remains the same.

Renewed Vision: Seeing Determines Going

Let us now turn to vision, renewed vision. The year 2026 is still a bit early. As far as your eyes can see, that is as far as you can go. Vision transports people from point A to point B.

I need to do an experiment here. (The speaker climbs down the podium to the audience, faces a young man in the audience and asks him a question). Are you married, Sir? You are not married? You can cook Jollof rice? Let us assume you are married, right? And your wife's birthday is next Wednesday, and you have a vision to cook Jollof rice to surprise her, because she told you that she loves Jollof rice. What are the ingredients for Jollof rice? Sit down. No problem. Sit down. Of course, rice. curry, thyme, yes. Ginger, yes. Pepper, yes. Scented leaves, yes. You are trying. Seasoning, yes. Carrots, hmm, you have gone very far. Please put your hands together for him.

Now, the vision is, like what you are saying, you want to cook Jollof rice to surprise your wife. Now you are talking about the ingredients you need to put together to make that work. So for instance, if there is no rice at home, and there is a woman or a man that sells rice on your street whom you have never had a conversation with, because of this vision, you start talking to that person, right? So your vision determines who you relate with. Vision determines the things you gather, you understand?

Now, if as you are planning to cook the Jollof rice, your wife just comes home tomorrow night and says, "Ah, I am tired of Jollof rice. I want to eat a special yam pottage on my birthday." You know this changes the vision. Now you will say, "Okay, I need to move from Jollof rice to yam pottage." So what are the ingredients for yam pottage? Yam, obviously, yes. Palm oil, correct? What else? Seasoning, yes. Pepper. Now, the moment the vision changes, something just flew out. Rice does what? Your vision determines what stays and what leaves. Just changing from Jollof rice to pottage changes everything. So what do you see about tomorrow? Thank you, Sir.

So what do you see about your education? I am telling you, vision drives people. If he has no vision to cook anything, he will not

gather any ingredients. It is as basic as that. What do you see about the future? Write the vision, make it plain that he may run.

I am talking about what you see in the next five years and what you see in the next ten years. This is early May; the year is still young. Can you take out time to sweat and write things down about the next ten years? Because all the ingredients he was mentioning, either you gravitate towards them, or they gravitate towards you, that is the law of vision. You start seeing differently. I cannot change you until I change your vision.

Look at this beautiful auditorium. We have various frequencies here. We have CNN here. We have Sky News here. We also have NTA here. We also have, mention them, TVC. They are all here. Arise News. They are all here. That is how life is, they are here. Now, if you bring your device, it is the frequency you tune to that manifests in your life. That is what vision does. The moment you change the channel from Jollof rice to yam pottage, you saw how palm oil came in that was not there before in that sense.

So your vision determines your frequency. Where there is no vision, there is no frequency; nothing happens. And where there is higher modulation, like FM, because your frequency determines what sounds, I mean, without prejudice to NTA, you agree that when you change it from NTA to CNN, the picture looks better? Does it look better? Okay. Just changing it.

There is this word I struggled with growing up: provision. We did not have money in our family, so I tried to dream, but when I wanted to dream, the first thing was, "Where will I get the resources from?" So I just streamed back. My breakthrough came when they explained the word provision to me. Provision means "for the vision." When I have the vision first, the resources to make it happen begin to swim in my direction. So I do not have the friends, and I do not have the books, and I do not have the connections, but I can have the dream. I mean scriptural dreams of greatness and of impact. And I started that before I got into Ife, just thinking greatness.

When God met Abraham, He said, *'I will make of you a great*

nation.' I said, "Wow, I am destined for greatness. " And then I noticed that that vision began to edit and audit my friends. It began to attract mentors into my life, because the vision you have determines even the ideas that heaven will reveal to you. Brother Adeshina was talking about the power sector that in his lifetime we will have twenty-four-seven electricity. It is a vision. He may not even know the details of how it will happen, but when that vision is there, if somebody has to move from Cyprus to do it in Nigeria, the person will move in, because your vision is an attractive force.

So do not let your background, do not let the state of our nation, do not let your past failures or some experiences that are not palatable hinder you from changing your channel. In fact, if you would experience a different future, if you would experience a different tomorrow, it is by renewing your vision.

I want you to sit down this month, in these first two weeks. If you have not done it, draw a calendar, either on your device or on paper, and begin to write. It changed my life. Maybe you did not even believe you could go to university. Write it there: September 2026, BSc starts. It is a four-year course. You go to the fourth year, 2031 or so, BSc finish. Start writing things. Start writing. There are many things you will write; you will laugh at yourself, but Sarah laughed like that. That is a miracle.

And this thing can be applied by top CEOs in this place or the most basic person in terms of starting your journey. Write the vision. You can do a one-year plan or one-year vision. You can do two years. Stretch it to five years. There are times when you start it like that and for a whole day, you only do six months, no problem. It is your life. Go and sleep till the next day, but at least in the next two weeks, there should be a document that seems to represent what you are seeing in the next five or ten years. If you do not do it and other people do it, they will lead you. You will work for them. You will be like slaves to them.

You know, it is like when we fly. When we book our seats in advance, you know, if three people want to travel and the trip is in two weeks' time, and one of them goes there and books the seat

ahead, he will be given a seat. Others are just there, saying, "I am travelling in two weeks' time. I need to travel." And then the day of the journey comes. Then they say, "Okay, we are travelling today. We want to book our seats. " Then they realise that other people have taken the seats. They are now left with the one that is close to the toilet.

When people write visions like that, they are booking seats in the future. People are already taking 2027 and 2029. They are taking their seats. "I am going to be the leader in this sector. I will be this one. " They are taking their seats. If you do not take your own seat, by the time we arrive there, whatever is left, you have to manage it.

Becoming a Pace Setter Through Vision

When I was on campus, you would hear me say things like, "I am the head and not the tail. I am above only and not beneath." And I love that word: pace setter. Because when God was teaching me about leadership, He said, *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a candle and puts it under a bushel but on a lampstand, that it may give light to everybody in the house.* That is a leader, that it may give light to everybody. That means if I am the light of the world, I am setting the pace. So I remember we used to say, "I am a pace setter in my generation. I am a pace setter. I am just beginning. "

I want you to renew your vision. Sit down, and there are some pictures of maybe buildings that you like. Cut them out and put them in your room and laugh at yourself. "I will live in this kind of house or even better than this one." Or put it on your phone. Cut some videos on YouTube that speak to your life. I have pictures at home of speaking at the United Nations, you know, making a delivery at the United Nations about peace and resolving conflict in Africa. I have all those things, and I checked the vision board some days ago. I said, "Wow, the majority of these things have been fulfilled." If these ones can be fulfilled, that means these other ones will happen.

Write the vision, make it plain. Get pictures. Get pictures. Get pictures. What you repeatedly see, you become. You know, I think

in 2 Corinthians 3 it says, *We all, with open face beholding as in a glass, are changed into the same image.* You change into the image of what you are seeing. If you are seeing nothing, you might end up as a non-entity, but you can fix the slides. That is what God was telling Abram when He said He needed to change this guy's name from Abram to Abraham, because when I say "elephant", do you think about the spelling or do you think of the image of an elephant? What is it? The image. So when He says Abraham, it means father of nations. It is to change the channel from barrenness to fruitfulness. "Hey, Mr. Father of Nations, where is your wife? Mother of Nations." God was helping him to change channels. He said, "Go and count the sand. Go and count the sand." "Ah, I cannot count it." "That is how your children will be." God was trying to help him to see a great nation coming up in the future, both the natural Israel and the spiritual Israel. All those things are God helping him.

When Jacob was dealing with Laban, or Laban was dealing with Jacob, you remember, Jacob said, "Okay, okay, all the spotted and speckled goats and sheep will be that of Jacob, and all the plain ones will be for Laban." Laban was excited: "Okay, this guy is going to suffer." And there is something that Jacob did. I do not even think Jacob really prayed, but he applied the law of vision. When the goats and the sheep were lapping in water or mating, he set before them spotted and speckled sticks, poplar sticks. And Scripture says that which they were seeing was what they conceived.

What you are seeing is conception. What you repeatedly see, you are conceiving, and you will birth it one day. So wise people now determine what they see by putting the right videos on their phones, on their iPad, putting pictures around, so that the more they see it, the more they are transported into it. Jesus, *"who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated."* So what is set before you is what you will sit in, in 2028 or in 2030. That is why advertisement is very important. They understand it. Just keep showing them. The more they see it, the more they buy it. What you see, you will buy. What you see, you engage. What you see, you become. They spend a lot of money researching on the pictures and on the videos. Do you

not see it? Coca-Cola, for instance, those pictures are to set before you, and that which you see, you will spend your life on. Vision is very powerful, but you can be intentional about it.

Vision Boosters: Prayer, Exposure, and Learning

As I close, let us talk about vision boosters, things that will help me see. Because seeing, especially if you are in a climate where the economy is not the best, development is not at its best, or maybe family background was challenging. Look, I do not know how you grew up, but my family was not so comfortable. I used to take a bottle of Coke for two weeks. I know some of you did not even have a bottle of Coke. You just sip a bit and put it in one rickety fridge because you do not want it to finish. That is the way I grew up. When they told you in our estate then, I do not want to mention it here, that somebody would be having a birthday on a particular day, you crammed the day because it is your day for your next chicken or your next Jollof rice. Because of the way we grew up, when God began to show me these things, it was not so easy. You wonder, "Can it be? Can it be?" But Scripture was able to shatter those limitations.

So I call these things vision boosters to help me dream. And at the top of it, there is prayer. The least you can do: "Lord, help me to see the future You have made for me." Oh, you are making a demand on God Himself. Jeremiah 33 says, *"Call to Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."* Oh, what a beautiful God. But call unto Me. Your business is making three billion, blah, blah, blah. "Lord, what can we do to get times five of this in the next two years or next one year?" Or you want to get married. "Lord, help me to see the kind of woman that fits my destiny." Ask Him. Ask Him. *Call to Me, and I will answer and show you, not small things, great and mighty things which you have not seen before.* Life is filled with possibilities.

Another thing that helps us to see better is exposure. Look, to see better, go to better places, and we can start in your community. In our church, I send our leaders to go to some churches *Nicodemus-ly*. Go and sit at the back and just watch. Just watch and come and give me a report.

Stop staying in your village and say everything is fine. Move. Tell your neighbour, "Move." Yeah, I know your business is doing fine, but you have only two outlets. Somebody else has a thousand outlets. Move and go and check. Go to one of their outlets and sit down and buy and see how they are doing it. You are cooking something; they are not eating it. Somebody else is cooking, and they are eating it. Go there, buy yourself some, and taste it. "Okay, the Jollof rice is not like this man's own." And then you travel. When I travel to the U.S., it is not to go and preach most of the time. I have opportunities, but I decline. Most of the time it is to go and see. Where you see infrastructure, you see excellence, you see systems, it enters you. When you come back, look around and see what can be changed.

I think it was in Daystar Christian Centre, when Pastor Sam Adeyemi sent some of their leaders to Dubai just to see, many years ago, just to see how things can be orderly. When they got to the airport, some of the people sat on the floor. They exclaimed, "Eh, see life." They were shocked. "What? Can something be clean like this?" You do not know how dirty your place is because you are still there. You know when water stays on the rug, it begins to stink? At first you perceive it. You know, after a while, your nose balances it. You do not even know it is smelling until somebody new comes. That is why you need to visit places. Many people stay in mediocrity. They do not even know it is mediocrity again. They now enjoy the mediocrity. They celebrate the mediocrity until somebody comes and says, "Oga, you have expired," or your stuff is expiring. You need to move.

Some things we call success today, in years to come, will be expired. There are buildings we used to celebrate in Lagos. Growing up, you look at the shape and you say, "Ah." But if you look at them now, you pity the man. How many of us know V-Boot? Growing up in Lagos, I thought V-Boot to be the best car forever. May I never use V-Boot again? Because, come on. How many of us used Sajem? Trium? Motorola? 33-10? The first faces of our GSM, it looked like breakthrough. Where was Samsung then? Where was iPhone?

The best of God is never in the past. Always learn that. In ministry, in technology, in life. The best of God is never in the past. It is the reason why you must keep moving so that you do not stay in an expired season. I used some of those phones, 33-10, Blackberry. WhatsApp was not even a word. But look at it now. How many of us know Leventis in this Lagos? How many of you know Leventis existed? And then boom, boom, boom, it moved a bit to open markets. And then ShopRite came. Now ShopRite is gone out of Nigeria. We have Booku. Remember, God is always on the move. Those who refuse to move, He just leaves them where they are. This is your choice. And one of the ways to keep moving is to be exposed. Go and ask, "How are they doing it now? What app are they using now? What strategy now?" Keep moving.

Ask. You travel before you travel. Do not say, "Ah, how will I ever travel?" Start where you are. Me, before I got some of those cars that I am privileged to use now, I would go to a car shop. It is not a sin to go and price cars. You dress up when you want to go. "How much is this Mercedes Benz?" And you speak well. They say it is 2022. "That is fine. Can you just start? Let me see it." And when they start, you say, "Ah, I like this. How much is that one?" You know? "Okay, that is fine. I think we might need to test drive this round. I want to feel it. Is that okay, Sir?" "Yeah, yeah." And when you finish, what is the next thing? "I will get back to you." You cannot arrest me. And when I say I will get back to you, I mean it. I do not know the time, but I will get back to you. Well, I will get back to you. I will get back to you.

Your parents never bought a plot before? Do not die in that state. Call an agent and ask, "How much is a plot of land?" Ask, "How much is a plot of land in this place?" When they first mention the figure, shake inside, but look straight on the outside. "How can one plot of land be 500 million?" But just look at it and say, "Okay, 500." Though inside of you, you say, "Hey, hey!" Call a travel agent. "I want to go to the UK. What does it cost? What does it take?" Ask.

We travel before we travel. Success happens twice: first within, then without. The earlier you do the one within, the earlier the one

without happens. You have to investigate. Ask. "What does it take? What does it take to go to Singapore?" Let them give you all the details. Just look at it. Let it enter you. Go to some factories if you are a manufacturer and you are doing small scale now. Go to a large place in Ikorodu or somewhere in Lekki. Do a tour and see machines!

Ah! I remember when our church was younger, I would go to Canaan Land for meetings. And you know, I would just sit down as a young pastor. They said the choir should stand up. When they stood, I said, "Eh, all our ministry people is somebody's choir." Everybody in the ministry at that time was somebody's choir standing up. It will get you angry, but you need such anger to make progress. If not, you will be celebrating little things. Exposure is key. What can you do this year to expand your mind? Instead of saying, "I am okay," no. Check how they sew clothes now. Check how they process things now. Go to places. Search online. Ask, and go there physically. Sometimes it is on YouTube. Watch the videos. "Oh, wow! So they have even moved from this phase to this phase."

We do not put crude oil in the car. We put refined crude in the car. So I will say, ask questions. We are saying you need to allow yourself to go through refining to be useful. Formal education, informal education, and that never stops. We keep learning. We keep reading. We keep refining so that we can be useful, so that the possibilities, the great author on your inside, the great CEO on your inside, the great father on your inside will come out. If you do not read books on relationships, you will destroy your marriage with your hands, believe me. Chemistry will not teach you relationships. Medicine will not teach you. You can be a medical doctor and be a foolish husband. You can be a great engineer and be a very stupid wife. They are two different things.

Understanding Human Differences for Better Relationships

A woman is not the same as a man. I am sure you know that. They are different. If you do not know that, you will be reacting over things you should not react about because you do not know. Men are logical most of the time. One plus one equals two for a man, most of the time. When we see a list of things to buy, we just want

to calculate it. It is 500 extra. But a woman is more emotional. One plus one does not always equal two for a woman. It depends on her state. If one of them has typhoid, it cannot equal two. If one of them is sick, it cannot be equal to two. A woman can cry easily because they are emotional. When your wife is crying or your daughter is crying, do not start shouting. You are damaging the person. You do not know?

The statement that "I treat all my children the same" is foolishness. All my children are equal, but they have different temperaments. We have four daughters. One of them, if you shout at her, you are damaging her because of her temperament. If you do not understand, you will be building one and destroying another. It is not the same. You sit her down and talk to her. She will get it. She will not cry. She will change. That is her temperament. That is her makeup. But there is another one among the four. If you do not shout, you are wasting your time. The shock absorber is ready. You need to drive it home. We have different temperaments. We have different upbringing.

Some of us grew up with household staff. They washed. They cleaned. They cooked, which is okay. But you, as a man, you did not have any. There was no household staff. There was no money to employ anybody. So you know how to do those things easily because there was no money to employ anybody. Now you marry a woman that had all those things growing up. You now get married and expect that she must do these things. Why? Why? "That is how I grew up." But that is not the way she grew up. Scripture says, *"Dwell with them according to knowledge lest your prayers be hindered."*

We are different. I am left-handed, for instance, and I am grateful my parents did not force me to change it. When I was writing in primary school, I bent my books. If someone does not understand that now, they will say, "You have a problem." I do not have a problem. I am just left-handed. Somebody else is right-handed. Somebody is extroverted. Somebody is introverted.

Peter was extroverted. Even amongst your team, you have to understand human relations. You have to read these things. Do

not be a spiritual person without wisdom. It is the difference between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist waxed strong in the spirit. Scripture says Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and favour with God and man. Do not just know God; know man. Peter is an extrovert. They talk what they think. "Can't you see? "I can never betray You. I can never betray You. If everybody in this team betrays You, I can never betray You." Jesus would say, "Peter, you talk too much. You talk too much." The same thing: he saw his Master on the water. Without even asking for principles or what to use, he said, "I want to walk on water." "Okay, no problem." But you saw that the Master did not condemn him. When he began to sink, He pulled him back up. Well, you hardly hear John speak, but do not now say, "John, speak. Speak." They are different.

In marriage, opposites often attract each other. Extroverts would attract introverts at times, at most times. And if you do not know, that same difference is what can destroy the marriage. One of our couples, the wife is a sanguine. Sanguines are the excited people, like Peter. They just talk. They bring life to the party. When Dr. Kola was speaking, I could tell a bit that I think he might have a bit of a sanguine because they are always very colourful. They express themselves. They are always flowery. But they have their weaknesses. They forget things easily. They forget deadlines. Everybody is their friend, but they are not close to everybody. Without sanguines, our world would be dull. So they got married. They would go out with a taxi. The wife is a sanguine. She would forget the key of the house, her own bag inside the taxi, and they would come down laughing. So it happened like three times. I spoke to the man. I said, "She is not a demon, oh. It is her temperament. While she is working on it, do not give her the key to be holding. And then you might need to remind her when you are dropping: 'Hey, your bag. '"

That is how, if you understand it, you anticipate people's mistakes rather than kill them with their mistakes. You anticipate their error. You tolerate them better, because while you are seeing their weakness, you too have your own. I am a choleric, for instance. We are like Paul. We are project-driven. It must happen. We do not talk too much, but we want to do. Without choleric, there

would not be civilisation, but they have their other side. Because of that project-like mindset, they are not very patient. They do not express emotions too much. So if you have a choleric as a boss and you do not understand him, and you are writing him a letter, "I like you, Sir," you are wasting your time. For choleric, just do your work and do it well. All those things you are saying, "I appreciate your leadership in this office", I do not want to hear those things. The work I gave you, do it well. For somebody else, if it is a melancholy boss, and you send him a message in the morning on Monday, "Thank you for leading me in this office," it touches him. We are different.

Sometimes when they give me gift envelopes, I want to see the gift inside immediately. So one day, I was opening one envelope wrongly until I tore dollars. It was like \$10. But my wife can be meticulous. So when they gave me some gifts, I would say, "Babe, help me open it." And she would be so careful, no matter how they knot the thing. She would do it so that both the gift and the pack are rescued. We are different. We are different.

See them singing for David, those women. It is because of who David was. He is a sanguine. They like him. "Oh, David." And David did not know. He did not know that from the first day he brought down Goliath, the ladies in Israel were after him. Because you ask yourself, why did they not sing for Moses when he divided the Red Sea? Which one should they sing for? Dividing the Red Sea or bringing down Goliath? So that temperament is where the enemy would try to channel his attacks through. For Moses, they did not sing, but they were getting him angry. Anger was his weakness. They were annoying Moses until he hit the rock instead. So one day, they woke up in heaven and Jesus shouted, "Yeh!" Somebody hit Me on the head. And God said, "Who did that? Go and check." And they said, "It is Moses. He was angry and he just hit." And God called Moses, "What have you done?" But they were not annoying David. He is a sanguine. Sanguines like people that celebrate them easily, because they like applause. They are sanguines. They like you to hail them. So when the people were singing, he did not know that was the beginning of attacks. It first put him in problem with his boss. I was wondering, why can you not sing that God has helped us to

bring down Goliath? Oh, they did not even mention God. Can you imagine? "Oga (the boss) has killed one thousand. Omo-ise (apprentice) has killed ten thousand." It is wahala. It is not right. It is not right.

So you know your strengths when you study. You know your weaknesses. You know where attacks can come through, so you can prayerfully reject it and deal with it. Peter was like that, always talking. That is why he fell. Thank God Jesus prayed for him.

I hope with these few words of mine you have been blessed. Thank you very much. God bless you.

SWITCH 5.0

MAY 2, 2026

Marketplace

Grace Pacesetters In The Marketplace

Dr. Kola Adeshina

I indeed, I feel greatly honoured and delighted to be here today for many reasons. One of them is that I once worked as a bus conductor and regularly travelled along this very road. Today, forty-two years later, I find myself speaking inside Foursquare Church. For that privilege alone, I am deeply grateful.

First, let me express my heartfelt appreciation to our father, our pastor, and our leader. Interestingly, I met Reverend Sam Aboyeji before I actually met him in person. I first encountered him through his son, Iyinoluwa Aboyeji. Iyin visited my home, and we spent considerable time discussing business opportunities and many other matters. As many of you know, Iyin is passionate about business and innovation. During our conversation, however, I noticed something different about him. His humility, warmth, openness, and unusual character stood out. He was remarkably different from many young people of his generation, and I found myself wondering about the kind of parents who raised him.

When I eventually searched online and learned more about his father, I realised that the saying is indeed true: *the apple does not fall far from the tree*. After listening to Reverend Aboyeji today and reflecting on what I had previously read about him, I became convinced that Foursquare is truly a place where principles guide decisions and actions. That conviction explains why he has raised four outstanding children while faithfully serving as the leader of this great church. As I arrived today, I noticed that he and his wife were dressed in similar colours. I smiled to myself and thought, *"This marriage truly came from Heaven."* By the time I had

listened to both of them, I sincerely wished I had brought my wife and children along to witness such a beautiful example of love.

I accepted this invitation for several reasons, one of which is the privilege of having many dear friends in this church. In particular, I would like to honour my brother, my friend, and a man I deeply admire, Elder Tunde Lemo. Many years ago, I came to appreciate this remarkable man. I am not sure everyone here truly knows him. If you know him only for his humility, you have seen only one side of him. When you look deeper, you discover a man of profound wisdom and exceptional vision. He is one Nigerian of whom we should all be proud. Sir, I celebrate you.

Of course, I must also acknowledge my brother and friend of nearly forty years, Reverend Yomi Oyinloye, who recently celebrated his sixtieth birthday. We attended the University of Lagos together and have remained friends ever since. I was scheduled to chair the launch of his book, but Elder Tunde Lemo kindly represented me on that occasion. Therefore, being here today truly feels like coming home. To the entire Foursquare family, thank you. I sincerely appreciate the leadership of this church for extending this opportunity to me.

Every Believer Carries Grace

My first point is both simple and profoundly important. Every one of us gathered in this auditorium, and everyone joining us online, carries grace. Many people do not fully appreciate this truth. As long as you are breathing, able to move your head, walk, see, hear, and speak, you are already a carrier of extraordinary grace. The greatest grace of all is the gift of life. Our Lord and Creator, who made every one of us, keeps us alive by His grace for a divine purpose.

Apart from the subject of marriage, which has already been discussed extensively, I sensed something while our Master of Ceremonies invited us to hold hands. To everyone presently in the season of singleness, I believe that someone here will one day get married within this church. You will remember this very moment and testify that you once sat beside your future spouse, held hands during this meeting, and later became husband and wife. When

that joyful day comes, please remember to invite me. I would be delighted to celebrate with you.

Introducing the Theme

As I speak on "**Being a Grace Pacesetter in the Marketplace,**" I invite you to journey with me. Originally, I intended to speak without notes. However, I sensed within my spirit that I should follow my prepared material. My prayer is that this message will be delivered as God intends and that, ultimately, the majority of us will leave here transformed. Before I proceed further, however, I would like to address our father and leader.

Investing in the Next Generation

Sir, you shared many profound insights today, and I learned greatly from them. If I may respectfully make one suggestion, I believe the next major emphasis should be directed toward children aged fifteen years and below.

The reason is simple. It is much easier to bend a young tree while it is still tender than to reshape it after it has matured. Once a tree grows beyond a certain stage, it becomes extremely difficult to redirect. At that point, one either leaves it as it is or uproots it entirely. That principle also helps explain the familiar statement: *"Many are called, but few are chosen."* Often, people become resistant to change after they have grown beyond the stage of being easily moulded.

If we truly desire to see the grace of God producing lasting results, we must invest in our children while they remain teachable, while they can still hear, observe, practise, and embrace the right values. I would be deeply encouraged if, at the end of today's interaction, many of us experienced transformation that extends beyond this conference and beyond the walls of this church.

Are You Shaping the World, or Is the World Shaping You?

Over the years, I have spoken at numerous conferences around the world, and I can say with confidence that, statistically, most people do not apply what they hear. One of the greatest challenges facing the Church today is that many believers behave nobly while inside the church building. During those one or two hours, they worship, pray, praise God, and conduct themselves well. Yet,

the moment they step outside, they leave the values of the church behind.

That, in my opinion, is one of the greatest tragedies in our society today. For that reason, I respectfully encourage our leaders once again: let us reach people while they are still young and teachable. As for me, although I am now sixty-two years old, I am still learning.

With that in mind, I invite you to continue this journey with me. The first question I would like to ask is this: Are you shaping your environment, or is your environment shaping you?

There is a profound and consequential difference between the person who merely participates in the marketplace and the person who defines it. There is a difference between the one who follows the current and the one who redirects it; between the professional who simply shows up and the pace setter who steps forward to lead.

In every generation, across every sector and every economy, countless people participate in the marketplace, but only a few truly define it. Today, we have gathered to speak about those few, to examine what distinguishes them. We want to understand the combination of preparation, mindset, courage, and, indeed, grace that elevates certain individuals from mere participants to genuine pace setters.

My charge to you before I conclude is this: when you leave this beautiful auditorium today, may you leave, not merely inspired for a fleeting moment, but convinced and convicted that you are called to become one of those few. If that happens, it will bring joy not only to me but also to our Maker.

Understanding Grace

What is grace? Grace is not merely a slogan. It is not motivational language dressed in religious clothing. Neither is it something displayed on a conference banner and forgotten once the programme ends.

Grace is a state of being. It is the condition of a person who

understands that his or her capacity to achieve the impossible extends beyond ordinary human limitations. Grace cannot be fully explained by a résumé, a professional network, or even years of experience.

We have all encountered people with remarkable records of achievement. Some of us have worked with them, while others have worked for them. As you listen, think about someone you know who fits that description. Perhaps you have worked alongside someone whose judgement seemed tuned to a frequency others could not perceive, a leader whose instincts consistently proved right in ways that exceeded the information available at the time. Or perhaps you have observed an entrepreneur who built a thriving enterprise in an environment where every rational analysis predicted failure.

How do you explain such outcomes? Do you simply call it luck? Some may describe it as favour. Others may call it exceptional talent. However, most people in this room have lived long enough to know that talent and luck alone do not consistently produce enduring success.

Grace Works with Competence

Grace is the distinguishing factor. It is the divine enablement that goes beyond human effort. Favour may open a door, but competence remains essential. Grace provides a capacity that extends beyond what training and experience alone can produce. That is where grace makes the difference.

However, grace must never be viewed as a substitute for competence. I repeat: grace is a multiplier; it is not a replacement. Zero multiplied by any number remains zero. Grace, applied to shallow preparation produces shallow results. Grace applied to deep preparation, diligent work, and genuine expertise produces outcomes that others describe as miraculous. From the inside, however, you recognise that while the results may exceed the visible effort, the effort itself was real. Grace rests upon preparation in a way that produces sustainable results.

The Apostle Paul expressed this beautifully in **1 Corinthians**

15:10: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. "* (ESV)

Have you ever reflected carefully on that statement? Paul acknowledged the grace of God, but he also acknowledged that he worked harder than everyone else. Notice that he did not merely say he worked hard. He deliberately stated that he worked **harder than all of them**.

Grace did not make Paul lazy. When you study his life and the impact of his ministry on the earth, you quickly realise that his extraordinary results were not produced by hard work alone, nor by grace alone. Rather, they were the product of diligent labour crowned by divine grace.

Paul understood what he wanted to accomplish, and he gave himself wholeheartedly to that purpose. You must stretch yourself if you expect grace to stretch your results.

Grace Raises the Standard

In the marketplace, grace does not excuse mediocrity. I repeat: in the marketplace, grace does not excuse mediocrity. Instead, it condemns mediocrity. If God has entrusted you with more than can be naturally explained, then more is expected of you than of the average person.

Grace, rightly understood, raises the standard. It raises the bar. It never lowers it.

Who Is a Pace Setter?

A pace setter is not simply a high performer. High performers exist in every organisation. They achieve their targets, receive promotions, and consistently perform with excellence within the expectations established for them. We rightly celebrate such people. However, they are not necessarily pace setters.

A pace setter is something far more specific. A pace setter is someone who changes the definition of what is possible within his or her field. Let me repeat that. A pace setter changes the

definition of what is possible within a particular field.

As you listen, continue asking yourself an important question: Am I becoming that kind of person?

Think about competitive athletics. When a pace setter enters a race, that individual does more than compete. The pace setter establishes the standard for competition itself. A pace setter sees what others have not yet seen, not necessarily because he or she is more intelligent, but because different questions are being asked.

Consider Nigeria today. What questions are you asking? What opportunities are you discovering? What possibilities do you see within Project Nigeria? While others study only the present, the pace setter imagines the future. While others merely observe today's landscape, the pace setter is already shaping tomorrow's.

Conviction Rather Than Confirmation

A pace setter moves before others are ready. This is important because timing is everything. Most people wait for consensus. They wait to be persuaded before taking action. They seek confirmation, validation, and the approval of friends and colleagues.

The pace setter understands something different. By the time consensus finally arrives, the opportunity has often disappeared. Therefore, a pace setter moves with **conviction**, not merely with **confirmation**.

Creating New Standards

Perhaps most importantly, pace setters create standards that others eventually follow. Ask yourself: Within your own sphere of influence, are you establishing standards that others desire to emulate?

Pace setters do more than perform at a higher level. They shift the baseline. They make what was once considered exceptional become the new normal. Such people do not achieve these results through luck or circumstance alone. They do so through deliberate choices, often made at considerable personal cost.

I am confident that everyone here knows two remarkable footballers, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. Is there anyone in this beautiful auditorium who does not know Ronaldo or Messi? Excellent. That means everyone knows them. Now let me ask another question. Are they the only footballers in the world?

Certainly not. Between the two of them, how many FIFA World Player of the Year awards have they won? Whoever answers correctly, I will give one hundred dollars! Ah! I know this generation very well. Before raising your hand, many of you would immediately search online or ask ChatGPT so that you would claim the prize!

The interesting thing about Ronaldo and Messi is not merely their talent. Study their lives carefully. They train longer than most of their contemporaries. They arrive on the training field earlier. They practise beyond what is ordinarily expected. They love the game, and they are deeply passionate about it. Whenever either of them steps into the pitch, they compete with complete commitment. Their attitude is one of total dedication.

My Personal Testimony: Breaking the Cycle

By the way, I used to be a vendor. I sold fuel for a living. During that period of my life, my parents faced many challenges. Sir, your father had a greater challenge than mine. My father married two wives; yours married three. The pressures you experienced were therefore different from mine, and I will gladly learn from your experience.

In my own case, I am the first child among twelve children. You can imagine what that meant. Our family alone could probably have helped someone win a local government councillorship election.

Without any doubt, one of the greatest reasons I will continue to express gratitude to God throughout my life is that I became the first university graduate in my family. In fact, I was the first graduate in the entire Adesina family lineage.

Before me, no one had attended university. Education was simply not valued in either my mother's family or my father's family.

They loved trading and believed that formal education was unnecessary. Their reasoning was simple: *"Jimo Odutola became successful without going to school, so why should anyone else?"*

Because they had accepted what I would describe as dignified poverty, which they regarded as prosperity, they settled for an average way of life. I chose a different path, despite having very limited resources.

The greatest poverty that destroys the possibility of grace is not poverty of the pocket. It is poverty of the mind.

Think for a moment about the African business leader whom many people celebrate. Let me mention one example, Alhaji Aliko Dangote. As I begin moving toward my conclusion later in this message, I want to raise an important question. We all celebrate Alhaji Aliko Dangote as Africa's wealthiest individual. Why should the person occupying that position not be a Christian? Why is it not a Christian who presently leads Africa in terms of wealth?

I am encouraged by what Iyin Aboyeji and many of his contemporaries are accomplishing. Nevertheless, I believe many more people can emerge from this very auditorium. I see billionaires coming out of this church.

Now, the way you enthusiastically said "Amen " is exactly how passionately you must be willing to work. Success is not a Sunday experience. It does not come merely from attending meetings or listening to motivational messages.

The greatest form of motivation in the world is self-motivation. No amount of preaching or inspirational speaking, whether from this platform or anywhere else, can propel you to greater heights if you do not personally believe that you can succeed.

I consider myself a pace setter, yet I believe I am only just beginning. I have not even scratched the surface of what God has prepared for me.

Daddy and Mummy continue serving faithfully because they still

have a race to run. They are running that race faithfully, and by the grace of God, you will finish well in Jesus' name.

Grace is never intended to produce complacency. Instead, it empowers believers to become transformational influences wherever God places them. That truth naturally leads to an important principle about the marketplace itself.

The Marketplace Is Not Neutral

The marketplace is not neutral. Let me repeat that. The marketplace is not neutral. Sometimes we speak about business as though it exists in a moral and social vacuum, as though the only important measurements are profitability, market share, and shareholders' returns.

I understand why people think that way. Business is already demanding without adding questions of ethics, values, and social responsibility. However, such a perspective is dangerously incomplete.

Allow me to explain it more simply. The marketplace is a battleground of ideas. I repeat: the marketplace is a battleground of ideas. It is the place where values, influence, and ideas are constantly exchanged.

There is really nothing in this world that can honestly be called *the best*. The best is still to come. When Jesus Christ came into the world, there was no modern media. He did not have access to the technologies we now enjoy. Yet, look at how far His message has travelled, and continues to travel.

Imagine what the spread of the Gospel might have looked like if today's digital communication tools had existed during His earthly ministry.

Every day of your life should be spent asking one important question: "How can I improve what already exists?" If you do not live with that mindset, you can never become a pace setter. Every single day presents another opportunity for improvement.

If you are not sufficiently curious about the environment where

God has placed you, and if you are unwilling to identify opportunities for improvement, you cannot become a pace setter. Curiosity is one of the distinguishing marks of transformational leadership.

Spectators or Participants?

Speaking again of Ronaldo and Messi, have you ever considered how many millions of people follow them around the world? Take a moment to search online, and you will discover the astonishing number of people who follow their careers.

Now let me ask another question. Can you name even one spectator who attended one of their matches? Who was that spectator? Exactly. Most of us cannot. May you never become a spectator in this world. I repeat: may you never become a spectator.

Do you know why? There are no medals for spectators. Many people in this auditorium passionately support Arsenal, Manchester City, Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool, and other football clubs. I have seen people become so emotionally attached to football that they develop headaches because their favourite club lost an important match. Others anxiously wonder what miracle might enable their team to qualify for the UEFA Champions League.

Yet, regardless of how passionately you support a football club, your support alone does not place a medal around your neck. Permit me to tease some of our Arsenal supporters for a moment. From what history has shown, Arsenal often comes very close to winning the league but somehow falls short at the final stage. That is why I jokingly refer to Arsenal as "**Shoroyé**"—they see the prize, get close to it, appear ready to grasp it, and then somehow miss it.

If you intend to become a pace setter, do not merely get close to your goal. Finish the race. Of course, Arsenal may yet win the league one day. If that happens, celebrate quietly.

The important lesson, however, has nothing to do with football. It is this: Do not spend your life cheering from the sidelines while

others make history. God created you to participate, to influence, and to leave your own mark on the world.

What Are You Spending Your Life On?

Our God is a wonderful God. He is gracious, faithful, and good. The opportunities that the richest people in the world discovered, and continue to discover, still exist today for every one of us. The real question is this: What are you spending your time on?

There are two questions every pace setter must continually ask. First: What am I spending my time on? Second: What am I spending my money on? The answers to these two questions reveal the direction in which your life is moving.

Time is one of life's greatest treasures. None of us knows when our earthly race will end. You ultimately become the person you deliberately choose to become.

Grace is the icing on the cake, but it does not replace intentional living.

Consider the life of David. When Samuel visited Jesse's house to anoint Israel's next king, Jesse presented every son he believed was qualified. David was not among them. Samuel eventually asked, "*Are these all your sons?* " Only then did Jesse remember David and reply that one son remained, the young shepherd caring for the sheep.

David had been overlooked even by his own father. Yet everything David had experienced while caring for the sheep had been preparing him for a defining moment. His encounters with the lion and the bear were not meaningless experiences. They became preparation for the day he would face Goliath. That single moment changed the course of his life forever.

Once again, what you spend your time on and what you invest your resources in reveal the future you are preparing for.

You Were Created for a Purpose

Every one of us has been created for a purpose. The talents, gifts, and opportunities God has given us were never intended to

benefit us alone. They exist to improve the lives of others. Love is demonstrated when we seek ways to make life easier for people around us.

Allow me to ask a simple question. How many of us actually know the person sitting beside us? If the person next to you is already your friend, that is wonderful. If not, perhaps today presents an opportunity to begin a meaningful relationship.

Love Sees Opportunities. Love enables us to recognise opportunities for service. Love asks questions such as: *"Cancer is taking so many lives. What can I do to help?"* Love is never centred on self. Love is always looking for ways to make another person's life better.

Yesterday, I lost a member of my staff to cancer. He was still a young man. To be completely honest, standing before you today is possible only by God's grace because I hardly slept throughout the night. I kept thinking about him.

When he joined our organisation in 2009, he was vibrant, energetic, and full of life. Then cancer struck. It gradually reduced his strength until it eventually claimed his life. As I lay awake during the night, one question continued to occupy my mind: *"God, what more can we do about cancer?"*

Purpose Beyond Personal Success

One thing that gives me deep joy is not something people often mention about me. Because I decided that I wanted to become part of the solution rather than merely complain about the problem, I established a cancer treatment centre.

By God's grace, that centre has already seen six cancer patients recover. The joy that brings me surpasses almost every other achievement in my life. Knowing that someone who might otherwise have died is still alive today because help was available is an indescribable blessing.

Every additional day of life that you help another person experience becomes an eternal investment in Heaven. Many people live very selfishly. If becoming a billionaire is the only

measure of your success, then you have misunderstood success. If the titles of Managing Director, Chairman, President, or Chief Executive Officer are the only things that satisfy you, then you are pursuing temporary achievements.

Those titles may impress people, but before God they are not the ultimate measure of a life well lived. The greater question is this: How much love are you demonstrating through your gifts, talents, and abilities?

We were created for a divine purpose. As this message continues, that purpose will become even clearer.

Five Frameworks for Becoming a Grace Pacesetter

As I begin to draw this message towards a conclusion, I would like to present five practical frameworks that have guided my journey. I encourage you not only to listen carefully but also to write these principles down. They have the potential to transform both your thinking and your future.

Framework One: Meaning Know Why You Are Here

The first framework is Meaning. Everything depends on meaning. Why are you here? I am not referring merely to your presence in this auditorium today. I am asking why you are here on earth. Why are you occupying the position you currently hold? Why were you born into your particular family? Why were you born in Nigeria?

These are questions every pace setter must answer. Looking around this auditorium, I suspect that more than half of the people here would like to relocate abroad. Many people refer to it today as "*japa*." Am I correct? Remember, you are in church. If you are not being truthful, God knows.

When I was growing up, almost everyone in my generation dreamed of travelling to Holland, the Netherlands. After that came Belgium, then the United Kingdom. Interestingly, the United States was not even a major destination in the thinking of many people during those days.

My father worked for a Swiss couple, Mr. and Mrs. Rossler, building their properties. One day, Mr. Rossler spoke with me and was impressed by my responses. He turned to my father and said, *"Your son is brilliant. May I adopt him and take him to Switzerland?"*

Without hesitation, my father agreed. Mrs. Rossler then smiled and said,

"Let's ask him. "

She turned to me and asked,

"Would you like to come to Switzerland?"

I simply answered,

"No. "

My father could hardly believe what he had heard. He looked at me and asked,

"Are you all right?"

The Rosslers explained that they would never force me to go without my consent. When we returned home, my father called my mother and said, *"This boy cannot be my son. Do you know what happened today?"*

My mother asked what had happened. He explained that the Rosslers wanted to take me to Switzerland, but I had refused. My mother calmly replied, *"My son, not our son, let him do what he wants to do. "*

God Does Not Make Mistakes

One of the reasons I especially love my mother is because of that response. Looking back today, I realise that the decision I made changed my life for the better. I could have gone to Switzerland. Perhaps I would have spoken French fluently, worn fine suits, and enjoyed a comfortable life. Yet I am not convinced that I would have experienced the opportunities, influence, scholarships, relationships, and kingdom impact that God has graciously allowed me to enjoy today.

Do you know why? Because God does not make mistakes. Where you are today is not an accident. There is a reason God placed you where you are. When it is truly your time to travel abroad, you will not have to force it. The opportunity will come naturally in God's own time.

Nigeria is your place of destiny. Foursquare is your place of honour. Remain faithful where God has planted you until He directs otherwise.

Look around Nigeria. The challenges are many. But the opportunities are equally abundant. Everything that many people describe as a problem is, in reality, an opportunity waiting for someone to solve it. The difference lies in what you choose to see.

Avoid the ministry of complaints. Do not become merely a social commentator. Many people have already enrolled themselves in what I jokingly call "The Ministry of Complaints. " When Reverend Aboyeji invites people to serve in ministry, some never respond because they already belong to another ministry, the Ministry of Complaints. It is probably the largest ministry in the country.

Such people constantly complain:

"Why is there no electricity? "

"What kind of country is this? "

"The roads are bad. "

"There is no pipe-borne water. "

"Things used to be better. "

"I am tired of Nigeria. "

Complaint after complaint. Day after day. While they spend all their time complaining, life itself continues to move forward. Time does not stop.

Sadly, some people who were created to become solution providers gradually transform themselves into perpetual critics. Instead of creating answers, they simply write articles, make social media posts, and criticise everything around them.

People often become consumed with politics. They devote enormous energy to discussing who should or should not become president. My own perspective is different. If the current president is re-elected, congratulations. If another leader emerges, congratulations. Whichever way events unfold, my God-given purpose will not pass me by.

That is why I return to the same question: Why are you here? Purpose provides direction, but purpose alone is not enough. Once you understand why God has placed you where you are, the next challenge is determining how you think about the opportunities before you.

That brings us naturally to the second framework.

Framework Two: Mindset What Occupies Your Mind?

The second question you must continually ask yourself is this: What are you thinking about? What occupies your mind every day?

I appreciated the point Reverend Aboyeji made earlier regarding friendships. When Scripture says that we should not be unequally yoked, it reminds us that the people around us greatly influence the way we think.

There is an old saying: "Show me your friends, and I will tell you who you are. " That statement remains true. The quality of your relationships reveals the direction of your life.

The mind is god's greatest laboratory. What occupies your thoughts? What ideas are constantly developing within your mind? The greatest storehouse of unlimited resources that God has given us is the human mind. The most fertile ground He created for us to cultivate is our thinking.

Our mindset is critically important. A person with a positive mindset sees a completely different reality from someone with a negative mindset. When the sun is shining, one person complains, *"The weather is too hot. "* As a result, that person stays indoors. Another person says, *"This weather presents a business opportunity. "* He or she asks for capital, buys ice cream, and begins selling because the heat has created demand.

Exactly the same weather. Completely different results. The same principle applies during the rainy season. If you intend to profit from rainfall, buy umbrellas before the rains begin. Then sell them when the rains arrive. That is the practical application of

opportunity thinking.

The reason many people remain where they are is that their minds are not consistently producing ideas that create value in the marketplace. People who achieve lasting success do not waste their thinking on matters that add little value. Instead, they continually operate in what I describe as the laboratory of ideas. They are constantly searching for better ways to improve what already exists.

Framework Three: Mobilization Execution Through People

The third framework is what I call Mobilization. Mobilization is the ability to execute through people. No one becomes a pace setter alone.

If you study marathon races carefully, you will notice an interesting pattern. The athletes who eventually win are often not the ones leading from the beginning. One runner may set the pace initially. Later, another runner takes over. Then another follows.

It is not because the others are incapable of running. Rather, they understand strategy. They know when to conserve energy and when to accelerate. Ultimately, they reserve their greatest effort for the final stretch.

One important lesson emerges from this observation: Never attempt to do everything alone. Every truly successful person is supported by many other people performing many different roles. Whenever you see someone accomplishing extraordinary things, remember that success is rarely the work of one individual. It is usually the result of coordinated effort, collaboration, and collective contribution.

The Human Body: A Model of Teamwork

Even my ability to stand before you today illustrates this principle. God gave me the grace to wake up this morning. He gave me the grace to place my feet on the floor. He gave me the grace to kneel in prayer. He gave me the grace to rise again and come here. Yet none of these things happened in isolation. They were possible because the organs within my body were

functioning together in harmony.

In fact, the human body itself provides one of the greatest lessons in leadership and management. Every organ has a role. Every organ contributes. Every organ depends on the others. If the heart and the brain cease to function together properly, the consequences become obvious immediately. The body teaches us that effectiveness is the product of coordinated effort.

Have you ever suffered from whitlow? If you have, then you understand how a small part of the body can affect the whole person. When whitlow strikes, it can feel as though your entire heartbeat has moved into that finger. Suddenly, you become aware of something you normally take for granted.

The experience reminds you that every part of the body matters. Likewise, every member of a team matters. When everything functions smoothly, we often fail to appreciate the importance of collaboration. However, true mobilization requires us to understand that while one person may run fast, many people working together can accomplish far more.

The Relay Race Principle

I often use the illustration of a relay race. Consider the 4 × 100 metres relay event. Why is the combined performance of four runners often so remarkable? Because four people are contributing to the outcome. Where one runner slows down, another accelerates. Where one person has limitations, another provides strength. Success is distributed across the team.

There is also strategy involved. A relay race is not simply a group of people running around a track. Each runner has a specific role. Each runner understands when to receive the baton and when to pass it on. The success of the team depends on preparation, coordination, and execution.

A Leadership Lesson from University of Lagos

Many years ago, while I was at the University of Lagos, I had an experience that taught me a valuable lesson about preparation and teamwork. Who among us attended the University of Lagos? Great Akokites! Greatest of the greatest!

I served as Chairman of Fagunwa Hall before it was converted into a female hostel. In fact, that experience forms part of the story I share in my book. I became Chairman of the Hall during my third year at the university. Interestingly, I first contested for the position during my second year.

People often assumed that my interest in leadership was purely driven by a desire to serve. While service was certainly important, there was another practical reason. I did not have a house to return to. The university provided a stable environment, and I recognised that leadership could also help secure accommodation.

Therefore, I contested. And I won. After assuming office, I worked hard. We renovated the common room. We replaced beds. We improved facilities. As a result, people appreciated the work being done.

When my tenure ended, many students encouraged me to contest again. I did. And I became the first individual to serve two consecutive terms as Chairman of Fagunwa Hall. That also meant two years of accommodation.

During one of the inter-hall sporting competitions, I went to support our team. When I arrived, the Sports Secretary approached me with a problem. One of the athletes was unavailable. He suggested that I should take the vacant position.

I was surprised. I asked, *"You want me to compete?"* He replied, *"Yes, Chairman. Don't worry. You will run the first leg. Even if things go wrong, the rest of us will recover."* Within myself, I thought, *"These people are about to witness history."*

The race began. The starter fired the gun, and I took off. Initially, I was leading. At one hundred metres, I was still performing reasonably well. Soon, however, other runners began catching up. Then they started overtaking me.

By the time I reached approximately two hundred and fifty metres, it was no longer a question of energy. It had become a

question of survival. At that point, I realised that if I continued much longer, the story would end badly. So I simply stepped off the track.

Afterward, the Sports Secretary was upset. He asked, "*What kind of Chairman are you?* " I responded, "*What kind of Sports Secretary are you?* " I reminded him that I had not trained. I had not prepared. I was not even wearing appropriate athletic shoes.

Meanwhile, the athletes had trained for the event and were properly equipped. I told him that if he had arranged the relay differently, perhaps I could have contributed in another capacity. But assigning me the first position without preparation was a mistake.

Grace Requires Preparation

The lesson is simple. You must prepare yourself for grace. Grace does not simply fall from the sky. You must work for it. You must prepare for it. You must position yourself for it.

Many people desire extraordinary outcomes without undergoing the process that produces them. That is not how life works. Preparation creates the platform upon which grace can operate effectively.

Consider Jesus Christ. What do you think He was doing during the first thirty years of His life? Those thirty years were not wasted years. They were years of preparation. The public ministry that changed the world lasted approximately three years, but it was built upon decades of preparation.

Many people hope that wealth, influence, and transformation will suddenly appear in their lives without preparation. Unfortunately, life rarely works that way. Sustainable success requires intentional effort.

You will never find gamblers dominating the list of the world's most enduring success stories. If your life is built entirely on chance, it will eventually collapse under the weight of uncertainty. Success requires preparation, discipline, and wise mobilisation of resources.

You cannot succeed without aligning yourself with the right people, the right opportunities, and the right resources. Mobilization is not optional. It is essential.

Purpose provides direction. Mindset shapes perception. Mobilization enables execution. However, even when people know their purpose, cultivate the right mindset, and mobilize effectively, there remains another critical requirement: the discipline to measure progress and remain accountable. That leads naturally to the fourth framework.

Framework Four: Measurement Discipline Makes the Difference

The fourth framework is Measurement, and at the heart of measurement is discipline. Discipline is one of the distinguishing characteristics of people who do more than achieve temporary success. It separates those who merely make an impact from those who leave a lasting legacy.

Every day, we are confronted with choices. Every day, we are tempted to follow paths that distract us from our purpose. Temptations surround us everywhere.

One of the greatest modern temptations is social media. It is one of the greatest thieves of time. You begin by intending to spend only a few minutes scrolling, but before long, valuable hours have disappeared. What have you really gained?

Very often, you have simply consumed other people's stories while your own life quietly continues to pass by. Meanwhile, your own time, like a burning candle, is gradually being consumed.

Measure Your Progress

Discipline requires measurement. Measurement means setting clear targets for your life and honestly evaluating whether you are making progress toward them. Ask yourself regularly: "Am I meeting the goals I have set? " If the answer is yes, then stretch yourself further. Set a higher goal.

Growth should never stop. As I progressed through life, I

established successive goals for myself. Initially, I wanted to earn one million. When I achieved that, I set a new goal of five million. Then ten million. Then twenty million.

I have continued stretching my goals ever since. I have never stopped growing. Today, by His grace, the evidence of God's faithfulness can be seen in my life. I stand before you as a living testimony that disciplined growth produces lasting success.

Discipline also affects the people you allow into your life. I do not allow my friends to choose me. I choose my friends. Likewise, I do not allow society to define who I am. I define myself according to the purpose God has given me.

Choosing Difficult Assignments

I work in one of the most challenging sectors in Nigeria, the power sector. Every day, people complain. *"Why is there no electricity?"* Yet I deliberately chose that environment because I believe that is where I can make the greatest impact. I remain convinced that, within my lifetime, Nigeria will experience uninterrupted electricity. We will not relent. Whatever sacrifice is required to help bring reliable power to this nation, we will continue making it.

Our commitment has always been simple: To make a difference. The greatest opportunities often exist where the greatest challenges remain unsolved. That is why we deliberately chose to serve in this sector. Whenever one problem is solved, I will gladly search for another difficult problem that appears impossible. Then, by God's grace, I will devote myself to solving that one as well. Who will join me in that race?

That commitment requires sacrifice. It also requires discipline over how we spend our time. Instead of allowing social media to dominate your attention, devote yourself to work that creates lasting value. Remember the words of Scripture: *"Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required..."* (Luke 12:48, ESV)

Likewise, the Parable of the Talents reminds us that God expects faithful stewardship of every opportunity He entrusts to us.

One request I want to make of you is this: Please do not envy your neighbour. Sometimes people look at successful individuals and pray, "*Lord, make my life exactly like his.* " That should not be your prayer. Your life was never designed to become a copy of someone else's.

In fact, my prayer is not that you become like me. My prayer is that you become better than I am. I want you to become greater than I am. I want you to achieve more than I have achieved. Nothing would give me greater joy.

I have never desired to remain the best. Never. The next generation must surpass the present generation. That is one of the greatest measures of true success. If those coming after us become greater than we are, then our own lives have been fruitful.

Measurement helps us evaluate progress. Discipline enables us to remain faithful to the journey. Yet there is one final principle that determines whether success becomes a lifelong legacy rather than a temporary achievement. That final framework is renewal.

Framework Five: Renewal Never Stop Renewing Yourself

The fifth and final framework is Renewal. No matter how much you have accomplished, never assume that you have arrived. The marketplace is constantly changing. Technology changes. Industries change. Leadership changes. Generations change. Therefore, if you stop learning, you will eventually stop leading.

One of the greatest blessings God has given us is the privilege of raising people who will accomplish even greater things than we have. That is one reason I derive great joy from watching young leaders such as Iyin Aboyeji and many others continue to make significant contributions in Nigeria and around the world.

Whenever I see young people succeeding, I do not feel threatened. Instead, I rejoice. Their success is evidence that the next generation is prepared to carry the baton forward. That is exactly how it should be.

A wise leader does not build an organisation that depends entirely on one individual. A wise leader builds people. The greatest legacy any of us can leave behind is not merely buildings, companies, or financial resources. It is people whose lives have been transformed and equipped to continue the assignment after we are gone.

The Cost of Becoming a Pace Setter

Permit me to say something that many people do not often mention. There is a price to becoming a pace setter. People celebrate the visible success. They applaud the achievements. They admire the awards and recognition. Very few people, however, see the hidden sacrifices.

There are days when you will work while others are resting. There are nights when you will remain awake while others are asleep. There are seasons when you will be misunderstood. There are moments when your closest friends may not understand the decisions you have made. That is part of the journey.

Leadership can sometimes be lonely. Not because people dislike you, but because responsibility often requires decisions that others neither see nor fully understand. If God has called you to lead, do not become discouraged by temporary loneliness. Remain faithful.

Do Not Measure Your Worth by Public Applause

Many people today measure success by the number of followers they have on social media. I measure success differently. The Bible says: *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever."* (Psalm 23:6, ESV). I would rather be followed by the goodness and mercy of God than by millions of people online without His favour.

Social media followers may celebrate you today and forget you tomorrow. The favour of God remains constant. Human applause is temporary. God's approval is eternal. Therefore, live for His approval above every other form of recognition.

Many people desire followers. However, those followers often do not truly know you, nor do they genuinely care about you. Some

people are consumed with the desire to gain more followers, but I ask, *what kind of followers are they pursuing?* Personally, I desire something far greater. I simply want **goodness and mercy** to follow me.

The Value of Constructive Criticism

Loneliness is one of the prices of leadership. Another cost is that you will experience constraints, and you will certainly face criticism. Trust me: if no one criticizes you, you are probably not doing anything significant.

If you decide to become a pace setter, prepare yourself for criticism. Not everyone will understand your vision. Not everyone will celebrate your progress. Some people will oppose you simply because you are moving forward. Do not allow that to discourage you.

When everyone constantly tells you that everything is fine, you should become concerned. That may be an indication that something is wrong. The Yoruba have a saying: "**Má jó lẹ, mo ñ wo èyìn rẹ** " ("*Keep dancing; I am watching your back.* ") In other words, people may appear to applaud you publicly while quietly working against you. For that reason, I value my critics more than my praise singers. The person I am today is the product of years of constructive criticism.

Interestingly, opposition often becomes confirmation that you are making progress. If nobody notices what you are doing, nobody will criticise it. Continue doing what God has called you to do. Remain focused. Remain faithful.

A Testimony of Resilience

I grew up in Shomolu. Many people from my background assumed that nothing significant could emerge from that environment. Yet God delights in changing such narratives. Your place of origin does not determine your destiny. God does.

My family and I were evicted from our home four times. On each occasion, our belongings were brought outside as we were forced to leave. As this was happening, people expected me to be discouraged. They would say, "Kola, you must be very sad. " I

would simply respond, "Why should I be sad? It will be well with me. Do not worry. I will be fine. Everything will be all right. " That confidence was not based on my circumstances but on my faith that God would bring me through.

The day I left Shomolu, where we had lived at 18 Oluwalogbon Street (now No. 20) after previously residing at 3 Okunbadejo Street, marked the beginning of a new chapter in my life. Eventually, I moved to Ikoyi. When some of my childhood friends came to visit my home, they looked around in amazement and asked, "Kola, how did we miss this? " I asked, "What do you mean? " They replied, "You kept telling us that you would become who you said you would become, even when you had nothing. Today, you have fulfilled your vision, while many of us are still living in Shomolu. "

It is never right to mock people who appear to be below you, regardless of the circumstances. I simply smiled and said to my friends, "Do you remember that television programme we used to watch years ago? " They replied, "Which one? " I answered, "**You Asked for It.** " Indeed, *you asked for it.*

That statement reminds me of an important truth: whatever you consistently ask God for is closely connected to the life you eventually live. In many ways, that is what prayer is about.

When people pray, they often ask God to destroy their enemies. However, the Bible teaches that God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies. Therefore, why should I desire my enemies to die?

I do not want my enemies to die. Instead, I want them to gather in amazement and ask, "*How is all this happening? Is it only you? Everywhere we turn, you are there. What is happening?* " When that happens, I know I am on the right path.

If no one notices what God is doing in your life, then perhaps you are not making the impact you were created to make. May your enemies gather, not for your destruction, but as witnesses to God's grace upon your life. May you continue to rise by His grace, in Jesus' name.

Never permit your environment to become an excuse for mediocrity. People may attempt to define you by your background. God defines you by your purpose. Always remember that difference.

Many people pray for favour. Many people pray for influence. Many people pray for leadership. However, very few people pray for the responsibilities that accompany those blessings.

When you ask God for greater influence, you are also asking for greater responsibility. When you ask for greater opportunities, you are asking for greater accountability. Do not become surprised when the answer to your prayer requires greater discipline, harder work, or deeper sacrifice. Very often, that is exactly how God answers. The blessing comes wrapped in great discipline.

One lesson I have learned over the years is that even opposition can become part of God's plan. Sometimes, the very people who intend to slow you down unintentionally create opportunities for your advancement. God has a remarkable way of turning adversity into advantage. Therefore, do not become consumed with your enemies. Remain focused on your assignment. God is fully able to defend His own purpose.

By God's grace, the poor boy from Shomolu now has friends who are presidents. Today, I have the privilege of speaking with presidents and receiving calls from leaders in positions of great influence. Whenever I find myself in those circles, I am reminded that God cannot be mocked. His promises are true.

The work was mine to do, but grace accompanied every effort. I am a child of grace. I was called by grace, lifted by grace, sustained by grace, brought here by grace, and graced to accomplish even greater things.

Final Charge

Do not merely participate in the marketplace. Become a transformer. Always look for solutions where everyone else is complaining. Continually redefine yourself. Do not shrink in

order to fit into the marketplace. Instead, establish a new standard for the marketplace. Set your own targets rather than allowing others to define them for you. The Bible asks: *"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men."*—**Proverbs 22:29 (ESV)**

As I conclude, allow me to leave you with one final challenge. Become a graced pace setter. Do not settle for mediocrity. Do not become a spectator. Become a solution provider. Become a transformational leader. Choose to improve every environment into which God sends you.

Remember the five frameworks:

1. **Meaning** — Know why God placed you where you are.
2. **Mindset** — Think like a solution provider.
3. **Mobilization** — Work effectively with people.
4. **Measurement** — Live with discipline and accountability.
5. **Renewal** — Never stop learning, growing, and preparing others.

If you faithfully practise these principles under the grace of God, your influence will extend far beyond your imagination. Thank you very much for the privilege and opportunity to share with you today.

Without any doubt, I believe that every person seated here, both young and old, will go forth and conquer. Your name will become associated with excellence. You will be distinguished by excellence. You will be lifted because of excellence. In every sphere of influence where God places you, you will excel. You will be first and not second.

Whatever has limited you up to this moment will no longer limit you after this service. May the Lord raise men and women in this generation who will become pace setters in every sphere of society. May He grant you wisdom beyond your years. May He enlarge your capacity. May He strengthen your hands for every good work. May He grant you favour before God and before people. May your life become a blessing to generations yet unborn.

When we leave here today, you will testify:

"The burden has been lifted. "

"The weight is gone. "

"The grace to become a pace setter has found me. "

You will finish your race faithfully. And when your earthly assignment is complete, may you hear the words: *"Well done, good and faithful servant. "* (Matthew 25:23, ESV), In the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Thank you very much.

Sermons From Switch 1.0-5.0.

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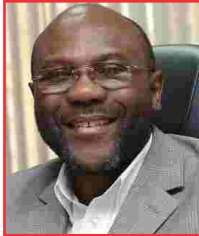
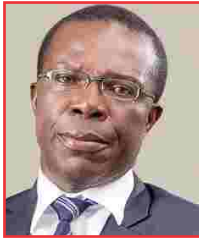
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Publications

sospublications@yahoo.com
www.sospublications.com.ng
+234 (0) 809-481-4575