

MINDSET OF THE JUST...SERIES 1

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men... Philippians 2:5

Have you ever heard some people talk fear, defeat, uncertainty or even death about themselves? They say all sorts of negative things about their lives, families, future, health, finances and how that they know things will only get worse; they have so much gotten accustomed to the pessimistic way of thinking that it reflects in all they do, then they begin to wonder why things seem to be upside down for them.

As humans, more also, as Christians, whether or not we get what we desire in life is largely determined by the way we think. Our thoughts are our seeds into the future. In the natural world, you don't plant a corn seed and then expect bags of rice at harvest time. What you sow is exactly what you get and the same goes for our thoughts. If you think negatively then your life will be such that reproduces or attracts negative things but if you think positively then, you will reap or attract likewise.

Thinking positive doesn't simply mean thinking about good things but it requires thinking on the word of God that you have received into your spirit. I would like you to know that it is impossible to achieve what your mind has not conceived. A person's state of mind is definitely determined by all that he/she hears, sees and comes in contact with. The Scriptures says in Proverbs 23:7 *"As a man thinks in his heart so is he"*. I'd like to stress the fact that it does not say as a man thinks in his heart so he *will be* rather, *so is he* meaning you are what you think.

As you study through the Scriptures, you would realise that God doesn't and can not work with anyone with a wrong mindset. He did this with Abraham when He took him out to count the stars (Genesis 15:5); Gideon, when the Angel appeared to him calling him mighty man of valour (Judges 6:11-16); Joshua had to see before he could defeat Jericho (Joshua 6:1-2).

The opening Scripture tells us to have the same kind of mindset as Jesus Christ. This mindset was not only seen in His humility before God the Father, but also, it was evident in His everyday life. Never did He talk fear or defeat during His three and the half years ministry as a human rather, He spoke faith filled words at all times.

This is exactly what God expects of you as His child. It will do you no good to have a wrong or negative mindset as a Christian because all it will result to is frustrations in all that you do. This is why we are encouraged through the Scriptures to renew our minds regularly because your experiences in life will be determined by the state of your mind.

I encourage you to focus on the word and His words alone and let this be the source of your seeds into your future.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because my mind is renewed daily as I study your words and I have the same mindset as your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Further Study: Proverbs 4:23; Philippians 4:8

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 24-26

MINDSET OF THE JUST...Series 2

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light...1 Peter 2:9

Have you ever asked yourself who a Christian really is? I know some people think of Christianity as just another form of religion which of course is not so, but how do you view Christianity personally? From study through the Scriptures, I have come to realise that there is more to being a Christian than religion even though there is a religious side to it.

James 1:27 says ***“pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world”***. This suggest that doing good to others and keeping oneself ‘holy’ is just a part of Christianity because there is more to it.

Christianity is a divinity embedded in the human life which comes as a result of a true relationship with the divine and an accurate understanding of this nature. This understanding comes as you avail yourself to the reality of who you are in Him.

The opening Scripture lets us understand that we are not a common people rather, a special people, chosen by God for His own use. The moment you gave your life to Christ i.e. became born again, the Bible declares that you no longer belong to yourself rather you belong to God. You are God’s property, God’s very own priceless possession bought with a price and not just any price; He paid with everything and the best He had. 1 Corinthians 7:23 says ***“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men”*** which suggests that you are valuable to Him and He bought you for a purpose.

Now the bible calls us ambassador of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20) meaning you are from a different kingdom and are here to represent your kingdom. Jesus Christ says in John 18:36 ***“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”*** Therefore as a follower of Christ, you represent a different and higher Kingdom and as such, you are funded by the Government of that kingdom.

This was exactly the mindset of David as he wrote in Psalm 23:1. He says “***The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want***”. As a citizen of God’s nation, it becomes impossible for you to lack in anyway or experience the things the people of the world experiences. This is the reason Job 22:29 tell us that “***when they cast you down, and you say, ‘Exaltation will come’***” in other words, there is a lifting up because your source of supply is different from the worlds.

This is the mindset of a Christian and this should be yours also. Never talk yourself down or out in any situation rather, speak according to the knowledge of who you are in Him. Don’t judge yourself or your future by what your earthly family name can or can not get, rather, recognise that you are His ambassador and walk in the consciousness of this mindset because it is the right mindset for you.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because I am functioning in the right mindset and I walking in the reality of it in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Psalm 23:1-6; 1 Corinthians 6:20

One Year Bible Plan: Job Chapters 17-18

MINDSET OF THE JUST...SERIES 3

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God...2 Corinthians 5:20

The office of an ambassador is one that is unique and worthy of consideration. An ambassador has a dual life, in other words, he lives in two worlds and therefore, answers to two names. The first is the name to which the ambassador was born into by reason of natural birth and the other is the name of the office or country the ambassador represents.

This individual functions in two separate capacities which are independent of each other. For instance, the fact that he/she does not have money or possess any material thing as Mr/ Mrs 'A'; or that he/she was born into a poor family has got nothing to do with being an ambassador. Such individual may just be like any other ordinary person in his/her family's name with no authority or influence but as soon as he/she acts or decides to function in the capacity or office of the ambassador of a country, the power and authority to act and represent the country becomes operational.

The person immediately begins to enjoy the quality of life that befits the office. This kind of life is not influenced in anyway by the economy of the host country the ambassador resides in, which means that even if the citizens of the host country are experiencing hardship in their economy or live in abject poverty, the ambassador is immune to such experience because the home country foots all the bills and ensures the ambassador lacks nothing. It doesn't matter the socio-economy situation of the host country, the ambassador lives as though he/she were in his/her home country.

The opening Scripture declares that when you became born again, you became an ambassador of God and as such, your quality of life away from your home country should not be different from your quality of life at home. Jesus Christ tells us in John 15:19 ***"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"*** suggesting that our country home isn't here on earth but a city so beautiful that the streets are paved with gold (Revelation 21:21). Hallelujah!

I want you to also realise that the ambassador does not go begging on the street for shelter or what to eat because that is the responsibility of the country he/she is representing and in your case, it's God's kingdom.

Guess what? Because the ambassador does not experience that lack and need as everyone else would, he/she would have a different mentality of the citizens of the host country and as such, the talking will be different. i.e. when others are saying there is shortage of supply, the ambassador would say there is an abundance because the source is God and He will supply all the need according to His riches in glory. Glory to God!

This should be your mentality as an ambassador of Christ. Don't settle for anything less or compromise to a lower life which does not befit your office as an ambassador. I urge you to have this mindset and let it control your thinking.

Prayer

I am an ambassador of Christ therefore I see the way God sees and talk in agreement with Him at all times in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Psalm 24:1-2; Matthew 6:25-34

One Year Bible Plan: Isaiah Chapters 45-50

IT IS WELL

When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out. Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back." So he said, "Why are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath." And she said, "It is well."...2 Kings 4:20-

23

Over the years I have learnt that the way of life of the world and that of a true Christian is not exactly the same. They may look or feel the same for a moment but with time, you will realize that they are like two parallel lines which can never meet and this is because the way of the world is such that leads to destruction but that of a Believer is one that leads to life eternal.

One of such is a popular belief that people are meant to say what they have or feel because that to them is reality. However, as you cross over to our own side of the line, you realize that reality in itself are those things which cannot be seen with the optical eyes or felt by the hands and this is because we operate from the spiritual into the physical.

The Bible lets us know of the way God operates in Romans 4:17. It says *"...God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did..."* which suggest that God operates by calling those things which do not exist yet in the physical as if they were already there. In other words, the things which already exist (what we see, feel, hear, smell or taste) in the 'now' are of less importance.

Someone rightly said that *'faith makes the unseen real and the seen of less importance'* and I completely concur. The world would encourage you to 'say what you have' i.e. to talk of the pain, shame, lack but faith tells us otherwise. It says for us as Christians to 'have what we say'. Hallelujah!

This means talking about the issue will not do you any good until you begin to declare what you want your experience to be in that situation.

This was the story of the woman whose son had died in the opening Scriptures. She told her husband as well as the servant of the man of God 'it is well' because she understood the law of faith and didn't want anything to 'deflate' her faith. However, as soon as she got to Elisha, she poured out her heart and received her miracle.

Don't get caught up in the happenings around or within you rather, go to God in prayers without changing your confession of faith and watch that test become a testimony.

Prayer

Dear Father, I call those things that are not as though they were in every thing that concerns me just as you would do in Jesus name.

Amen.

Further Study: John 11:1-44; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

One Year Bible Plan: Matthew Chapters 23-25

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS YOUR INTERCESSOR

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered...Romans 8:26

Have you ever heard some people complaining of how difficult or even how almost impossible it is for them to pray for a long period of time? Many would also argue that the reason for that is because they soon ‘run out of words’ anytime they pray and by this they mean they become short of what to say when they pray.

You may be going through the same phase or facing the same predicament such that even though you desire to pray and spend quality time in His presence, you suddenly run out of words and you may even find yourself repeating your words over and over again.

The truth of the matter is that this is the reality of the human nature. The human nature cannot commune with God for so long no matter how hard one tries or how great your desire is because we have a limited vocabulary with which we express ourselves in our understanding to Him.

Apostle Paul says from the opening Scriptures that the Holy Spirit helps us in our infirmity (weakness) and this is because there is so much we need to tell God yet so little ways of expressing them. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray just when we don’t know what to say anymore.

He is like that standby generator that comes on when there is a power outage. He can take over your prayer life just when your strength is about to fail you. However, He is willing to do even more than taking over when you are worn out; He wants to take charge of your prayer life if you will let Him.

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 says *“For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God”*

therefore the Holy Spirit knows best because He knows the very heart of the Father as well as the Father’s will concerning every situation.

Because He is aware of everything and can do all things, you can be rest assured that He will always lead you to pray the right and perfect will of God at all times.

I urge you to release yourself to the leading of the Holy Ghost as you communicate with the Father in prayer by praying in tongues as well as in your own understanding and then watch the tremendous changes you will experience in your life with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Dear Father, I yield myself to the leading of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to take charge of my prayer life in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study 1 Corinthians 14:14-15: Ephesians 6:18

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 36-38

BEHOLD, ALL THINGS ARE NEW

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...2 Corinthians 5:17

Nicodemus, a respected ruler of the Pharisee as we read in John 3:1-21, went to meet Jesus Christ in the night but it turned out to be the best and greatest meeting he would ever have. Jesus Christ seized the opportunity to explain to him the way to the Father. He said to Nicodemus *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* This means getting born again (being a new creation) is the first step into experiencing the kingdom of God.

Even though the opening Scriptures tells us that if anyone be in Christ (be born again), such individual becomes a new creature and as such, the old life is passed away, however, not so many people are experiencing this new life in Christ. This is because they still have the old thoughts they used to think about before they got born again; still go through the same challenges and pains as before and then, they begin to question the whole ‘process’, doubting whether this ‘born again’ thing is actually real.

The truth is, it is Real! The issue is that many people are yet to ‘come home’ with the full experience of the new life. The Bible lets us know that when you become born again, the old life is gone. This means you are no longer linked or connected with that former life. Hallelujah! The Bible then goes on to say that **“BEHOLD**, all things have become new”.

The word ‘behold’ means ‘see’. In other words, see all things are now new and it takes the eyes of faith to see this new life. This means that you need to see that the pain is gone; the disappointments are no more and that it is a new life of victory; prosperity and success all year long. Glory to God!!!

You need to begin to see the Word-way and make declarations in agreement with what you see in the Word. Refuse to talk your feelings rather; talk the Word! Remember Ecclesiastes 11:3 says *“if the clouds be full of water, they empty themselves on the earth as rain”*. This is means the more you declare what God has

said concerning you in His word and not what your senses or situation shows you, the more you become full of it and the more of it you become.

Therefore, I encourage you saturate yourself with the Word daily by studying and speaking it then watch your life move from one level of glory to another.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because I live in the reality of the new life in Christ Jesus. I choose to see the Word way every day of my life.

Amen.

Further Study: John 6:63; Ephesians 4:24

One Year Bible Plan: Ruth

THE THREE KINDS OF MAN...SERIES 1

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned...1 Corinthians 2:14

According to the Bible, man (male and female), which is the generic name for the species that was made in the image and likeness of God in Genesis 1:26-28 could be described in three separate categories. These are: the natural man, the canal man and the spiritual man. The natural man is that person whose spirit is dead towards the living God. This is a person who has not had his/her spirit regenerated into the likeness of God Almighty.

The natural man as described in the opening Scriptures is someone who is spiritually dead and therefore does not understand the things of God. He has not given his life to Christ and therefore, lives in darkness because the Light of this world, who is Jesus Christ, is not in him. Such individual has not accepted the Lordship of Christ and as such, cannot experience the benefits of salvation.

The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 ***“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them”*** which means that the natural man cannot see the Light of the gospel because his spiritual eyes are blinded by the devil.

The natural man is subject to the devil because he comes from the first Adam, who lost his authority to the devil in the Garden of Eden when he ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and as a result, could not function with the authority God gave him to dominate over everything.

As a result of the fall, the devil ruled over and still has dominion over everyone and everything that is connected to the first Adam. This is why it is normal for the natural man to experience failure, disease, sickness because these things are the experiences of anyone under the influence or control of the devil.

However, there is good news for the natural man because there is a way out. Glory to God! This way is the only way available to the natural man to escape from the wicked rule of the devil and this way is by accepting the new nature that Jesus Christ

gives by reason of being born again. 1 Corinthians 5:17 tells us of the things to expect from this new nature. It says “... *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new”.* This new nature is not subject to the devil or any of his attacks. It is the nature of God which Jesus Christ gives everyone who believes in Him.

I urge you to receive this nature if you haven't by confessing Jesus Christ as your Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the gift of salvation and I freely receive it in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: John 3:13-21; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 27-29

THE THREE KINDS OF MAN...SERIES 2

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God...Romans 8:6

Have you ever asked if there was anything like a carnal Christian? If you have asked but have not got an answer or are not sure then I would like to let you know that the answer is YES. The carnal Christian also referred to as the carnal man is the second kind of man as described in the Scriptures. The word 'carnal' is the same word that translates 'sensual' or 'worldly'. A carnal man is often mistaken for a natural man but in the true sense of it, they do not mean the same thing. While a natural man has not received the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the carnal man has and he has received the nature of God.

The carnal man is born again and has already experienced a recreation in his spirit. This experience is what the Bible describes in 2 Corinthians 5:17 ***“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”***. Therefore, according to the laws of the spirit, such individual is superior to the devil because he has received the nature of God.

This stage is where the old man 'dies' and then the new creation comes into life. For the carnal man, though all things have become new, whether or not he lives in the reality of the newness of this life will be dependent on the steps that he takes.

This is why Apostle Paul gives this warning from the opening Scriptures saying ***“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God”***. The carnal man, even though is born again, is still controlled by the dictates of his flesh and this is because when he got born again, it was his Spirit man that became alive to God not the flesh (body).

Therefore, he still thinks the way the natural man thinks, does the same things the natural man would do and consequently, gets the same result as the natural man. This kind of man cannot please God ***“because the carnal mind (to be ruled by the senses)***

is enmity against God: ...So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”

(Romans 8:7-8)

This was why Apostle Paul spoke to the Christians at Corinth 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 saying *“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal”* because there were issues like envy, strife and division among the believers

The carnal man is also referred to as a babe who feeds on milk not meat and as such, he's not skillful in the word of righteousness. He cannot grow in the things of God because he doesn't desire the word of God and as such, God is not able to entrust such individual with anything. Sadly, the devil has an influence over the affairs of the carnal man and would dominate over everything he does even though he has received the nature God.

I encourage you to always desire His Word so as to be built up into that perfect person God predestined you to be.

Prayer

**Heavenly Father, I desire your word and I am growing day by day in
Jesus name. Amen.**

Further Study: Hebrews 5:13; 1 Peter 2:2

One Year Bible Plan: Job Chapters 19-20

THE THREE KINDS OF MAN...SERIES 3

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil...Hebrews 5:14

In the last two articles, I explained the natural man and the carnal man. Today, I will be talking about the life of the third kind of man, the spiritual man. The spiritual man is that one, who has not only got born again but also, has come of age with the things of God and by this I do not mean how long he has been a Christian but how 'well'. This is that person who has been able to develop the ability to discern spiritual things not because he's been a Christian for many years but because he has acted upon the word of God. Such person is not controlled by his senses (flesh) rather; he follows the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us in Romans 8:13 ***“...as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”***. The spiritual man has grown from being a child who could easily be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14) and now become a son in the house. Glory to God! He has come of age where the Father trusts him enough to put the affairs of the kingdom into his hands.

He can exercise the authority of an heir to the throne and make things happen. The Bible speaks of such individual with the authority in Job 22:28 when it says ***“You will also declare a thing, and it will be established for you; so light will shine on your ways”***. This is a Christian who has received the kind of power Jesus Christ talked about in Luke 10:19 when He said ***“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you”***.

The opening Scripture says regarding the spiritual man, ***“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised (practice or habit) to discern both good and evil...”*** which means such individual has acted on the word of God so much so that it has now become an unconscious part of him.

He has become spiritually alive and alert to God and can easily pick up the 'fine' signals of God in the Spirit. He knows what's in the heart of the Father because he has the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

God is no longer 'mysterious' to Him because He has made Himself known unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:10 says ***“But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit search all things, even, the deep things of God”***.

I urge you to desire the word of God and study as well as yield yourself to the leading of the Spirit so that you not only attain but also, maintain this glorious level with God at all times.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I desire your word day and night and yield myself to the Holy Spirit at all times in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: John 1:12-13; Philippians 1:9-11

One Year Bible Plan: Isaiah Chapters 51-55

BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE...Series 1

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it...Luke 9:23-24

Many times as I read or hear the very words of Jesus Christ, I always say to myself, it could either be of two things; it's either Jesus Christ had authority over things and knew exactly what He said or He was simply a joker. This was because His words and His response in situations never 'made sense' and by this I mean the words did not appeal to the human senses and an example is seen in the opening Scriptures.

Jesus Christ was teaching His disciples what it meant to be a true disciple and He said *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it"*. The natural man would say that does not make any sense because how could you 'save' a life that you have already 'lost'? However, these were the very words of Jesus Christ concerning anyone who wanted to be His disciple.

A true disciple is anyone who has chosen to forsake his/her own ways for the ways of the leader. In other words, a true disciple is anyone who is committed to the ideas, beliefs or courses of the leader so much so that the dream of the leader becomes the reality of the disciple.

Jesus Christ clearly shows the steps to becoming a true disciple. Firstly, He says *'if anyone desires to come after me'* which suggest that there has to be a personal desire to be His disciple. This desire should however not be mistaken for what some refer to as our 'choice' to be a Christian because it was not of our own volition in the first place. Jesus Christ says in John 15:16 *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you"*.

The desire to follow Him comes when you make up your mind, since you have been chosen, to do His will and this means making His 'dream' a reality in your life. A true

disciple has to desire to always want to be with the master so as to receive all that the master is willing to teach.

This is why Jesus Christ said to Martha when He paid them a visit and she was more concerned about entertaining Him rather than being with Him. He said in Luke 10:41-42 *“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”*

I therefore urge you to make the desire to follow him your utmost priority.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray that my utmost desire will be to follow you at all times in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Psalm 27:4; 1 Peter 2:2

One Year Bible Plan: Matthew Chapters 26-28

BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE...Series 2

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules...2 Timothy 2:3-5

Over the years, I have come to learn from experience that one of the reasons some people struggle in their Christian walk is because they have not been able to master or rule over their flesh. For this reason, many have missed out on their calling and have found themselves living in shadow of God's plan for their lives.

The English word 'discipline' coined from the word 'disciple' suggest that before anyone can claim to be a disciple, such individual must have been through some forms of self discipline and by this I mean, such person would have been able, to a large extent, put the flesh and it's cravings under submission.

Jesus Christ tells us in Luke 9:23-24 ***"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it"***. This suggests that self-denial (ability to deny yourself) is yet another vital factor to being His true disciple. It figuratively means to 'die' or become uncontrolled by the desires of the flesh.

This is where you refuse to be moved or distracted by the things of the flesh. Apostle Paul, in his letter to Timothy educates him on how to be a true disciple. He says ***"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules"*** (2Timothy 2:3-5).

The reason self denial is very important is because being a disciple is all about following not leading. It is about knowing what the Shepherd wants and you, as a sheep, doing just that. It is not a place where you concern yourself with 'all of life's issues' rather, you are only concerned about what the Master desires. i.e. His desires becomes your desires.

Jesus Christ says that anyone who is not ready to deny himself or herself is not fit for the kingdom because the ideas and mode of operations of the kingdom is completely opposite to that of the world.

You deny yourself when He and His gospel becomes the most important thing in your life, which means you are totally sold out to Him and Him alone irrespective of who or what may want to stand in the way. When you do this, you will realize that being a disciple comes naturally.

I therefore urge you to consider yourself to know if you have gone through the process of self denial so that your discipleship in Him will be sure.

Prayer

Father, I thank you because your grace is sufficient for me as I deny myself daily for the sake of the kingdom. Amen.

Further Study: Matthew 16:26; 1 Corinthians 9:7

One Year Bible Plan: Genesis Chapters 40-43

BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE...Series 3

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me...Galatians 2:20

I have found out that some people view persecution wrongly. Persecution is not just all about name calling but could come in form of deprivation or harm against anyone or a group of people because of their faith and Jesus Christ tells us to expect it as Christians.

In John 15:20-21, He said to them ***“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.”***

This could have been a follow up on His initial discussion with them in Luke 9:23-24 where He said ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”***

To fully understand what Jesus Christ was saying, we need to know if He had a cross, what the cross was and what He did on and to His cross. The word ‘cross’ here does not mean the pieces of wooden bars which were given to Jesus Christ to carry on His way to Golgotha rather, it refers to knowing what is the will of the Father for Him at that moment.

In Matthew 26:36-46, Jesus Christ prayed to the Father regarding His ‘cross’ in the Garden of Gethsemane and then said ***“O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done”***. This suggests He was ready to do the will of the Father and in doing this will, He died on His ‘cross’ in other words, He was committed to doing God’s will no matter the cost.

Therefore, ‘*take up his cross daily*’ would mean knowing what is in the mind of the Father concerning you at all times and committing to doing just that no matter the cost. It is only when you have this attitude that following Him will become easy.

However, the problem is that a lot of times we are quick to reconsider whether or not to continue carrying our cross when it gets uncomfortable but Apostle Paul was not like that rather he said *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20).

I urge you today to take up your own cross as He has given and then follow Him to the end.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the strength that enables me to take up my cross and follow you at all times. Amen.

Further Study: Romans 14:8; Philippians 1:19-26

One Year Bible Plan: 1 Samuel Chapters 1-5

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch...Acts 11:26

There has been a lot of debate as to who a Christian really is. Some people believe a Christian is any 'religious' individual who attends a church regularly or someone who was born into a Christian family. Many even believe that a Christian is someone that has been baptized or 'confirmed' at some points of their lives. However, the truth is that even though these views could be said to have some elements of truths in them, they are not absolutely true.

Some people even go as far as having some 'extreme views' in that they 'believe' if a Christian is not a member of their church or their assembly, then such person is not a true Christian. This is so sad because there is only one Christ and one Church as the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4:5 ***“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake”*** which means when we as Christians begin to despise fellow Believers of Christ simply because they do not believe exactly what we believe or belong to our assembly then we lose out on the true meaning of Christianity.

The Holy Spirit told me two things some time ago which I would never forget. He said ***“Christianity is not centred around or about a church rather, it is about Him (Jesus Christ) and His Church but when we lose the true meaning of Christianity, what we get is nothing but a religious club”***. This means that it doesn't really have to do with the assembly you belong to for as long as you are a member of His Church which is the body of Christ.

Being a member of His Church means you have accepted the Lordship of Jesus Christ over your life and believe that He was raised from the dead. This is the first step to being a Christian and anyone, no matter what assembly they may belong to, as long as they have satisfied these steps are qualified to be called Christians.

Secondly, He said ***“Many have been so indoctrinated to the extent that they would rather follow after ‘their man of God’ even if they saw Jesus Christ standing in human form”***. It may sound impossible but this is simply the reality. With due

respect to Pastors and church heads for the wonderful office of a shepherd that they occupy, Christianity is not about a person.

John the Baptist showed us a very good example in John 1:33-35. The bible says *“Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus...”* Because John the Baptist knew that his responsibility was to lead others to Christ not to himself, he was not offended when two of his disciples left him for Jesus Christ.

Being a Christian means getting to know Jesus Christ not the pastor and this knowledge would only come when you build a good relationship with Him alone through the Holy Spirit and His word.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray that you will show me ways of knowing you more daily in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Galatians 1:6-10; Galatians 2:11-14

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 30-32

HOW TO ASK TO RECEIVE

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us...1 John 5:15

Have you ever said a prayer but deep inside of you, you knew it would not be answered? I mean, saying a prayer just for the sake of praying? Some people however pray with expectation, believing that God will answer their prayers yet do not receive the answers to their request and then they somehow conclude that it's either they didn't have enough faith to receive what they have asked for or it's wasn't the will of God for them.

Sadly, this is where a lot of people are in their prayer life, trying to find out whether it is their fault or that of God's for not having what they prayed about. However, a study through the Bible shows otherwise because the Bible is clear as to what faith is and what God's will is at any point in time because they both work together.

Romans 10:17 says ***“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”***. This suggests that you receive and grow (develop) your faith through hearing and a continuous hearing of God's word. It is also important at this stage for you to realize that the will of God is the same as His word; therefore if you need to know His will concerning anything in life, you will have to look into the word of God.

Hebrews 11:1 further tells us that ***‘...Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence (proof) of unseen realities’***. I have also described it as *‘the vehicle that brings into physical what exists in the spiritual’*.

People have said to me on several occasions *‘...but Pastor, I had faith, prayed but did not get the answer to my prayers’* and my reply to them has always been *‘I may not know why you didn't get what you requested for, but one thing is certain, what you had was not faith because faith never fails’*. 1 Corinthians 13: 13 says ***“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love”***

You could then ask what if I had faith but it wasn't God's will? The truth of the matter is this, it is not possible for you to have faith and it isn't the God's will because you cannot separate God's will and faith. This is because faith comes by the word and

the word of God is His will. To ask according to His will means to ask in accordance; agreement or in line with His word which brings faith in the first place.

If you will give time to studying His word, aside from having faith built within you, you will also become aware of God's will concerning that situation and because you know His will through His word, you will ask rightly. For example, you will know whether to pray and demand for something or whether to praise and worship Him instead; whether it is the due time for you to receive something or there's no need to pray about it because it's not in His will for you.

I therefore encourage you today not to give up on your faith but continue to study His word and let it guide you in asking in line with His mind, after all, we have the mind of Christ.

Prayer

Dear Father, I thank you that as I study your word, your will becomes clearer to me and the Holy Spirit will cause me to ask in agreement with your will in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 2:16; 1 John 3:22-23

One Year Bible Plan: Job Chapters 21-22

GET INFORMATION...SERIES 1

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit”...Matthew 12:33

I consider this statement as one of those practical illustrations given to us by Jesus Christ in the Bible. Here, Jesus Christ explains to us that one sure way of getting a good fruit from a tree is when you make the tree good. This means to get a good fruit, you need to put the right things in place for example, planting the seed in the right environment; pruning it regularly, adding fertilizer to enhance its growth as well as proper irrigation e.t.c.

He however adds that if you do not do these required things for the tree, the tree will definitely produce bad fruits. This applies to us as human beings in the sense that our mind is like a computer which only processes and gives back whatever information it receives. Proverbs 23:7 says *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he”* which suggest that you are what you think and what you think is a product of the information you received which could either be a conscious or an unconscious effort.

One very important thing I would like to emphasize today is for *“you to be careful of the information you get because it could either make or mare you”*. In other words, you have to ensure you filter the information that you feed your mind with because these are the raw materials with which your thoughts are formed.

You are today a result of the information you received yesterday and what you will become tomorrow will definitely be dependent on the kind of information you receive today. Hosea 4:6 says *“my people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge”*. This means their pains, sufferings and setbacks were not necessarily a consequence of their physical actions rather, it had a lot to do with the kind of information they had or lacked.

If it is your desire to experience good fruits in all that you do, you need to begin to reconsider the kind of environment your thoughts are coming from. You need to examine the source of your thoughts so as to determine the kind of results you will get. Make up your mind to get information but even more importantly, the right information so that you can make your tree (life) a good one. As you go for the right

information concerning your health; academics; finances; relationships, people will see yours fruits and it will bring glory to God. Amen.

Prayer

Father I thank you because my steps are ordered in the right direction to receive the required information for my life in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Isaiah 5:13; Matthew 7:16-18

One Year Bible Plan: Isaiah Chapters 56-61

GET INFORMATION...Series 2

Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him....Luke 8:18

I am always amazed at the words of Jesus Christ and a good example is the opening Scripture. It is important to note that Jesus Christ said ***“take heed therefore ‘how’ you hear”*** and not ***“take heed therefore ‘what’ you hear”***. The first thing that should strike us about this statement is the fact that Jesus Christ said 'take heed' meaning He expects us to be careful; sensitive or vigilant regarding the things we hear. This means that we have a responsibility in filtering the information we allow into us because they have the power of influencing us either positively or negatively.

The second thing to note from the Scripture is that Jesus Christ says 'how you hear' not 'what you hear'. This therefore means that it isn't really so much of what we have heard that matters but it is more of the way, manner; our attitude or our response to the things that we hear. Many times we believe God for something and we even know deep down inside of us that we have received answers to our request but then, soon as we listen to someone or something, it contaminates our faith and this then affects the way we speak regarding that situation.

A very good example is seen in Numbers Chapter 14. Moses had instructed twelve men to go and check out the land that God already promised the Children of Israel and they had come back with two different reports. Prior to the return of these men, the Children of Israel were filled with excitement and great expectations regarding the land but it suddenly changed when the some of the men arrived.

Ten of the men came back with bad information while the remaining two came with the right news. It is worthy of note here that though the people had believed God and were confident of the promises of God concerning their lives, they immediately changed their confession regarding the promise and as a result, none except for Joshua and Caleb who came back with the right information entered the Promised Land.

Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:37 ***“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”***. This means that your words are what determine whether you stand justified or otherwise and in this case, because

they listened to the wrong information and responded in unbelief based on what they heard, the will of God for their life was altered.

This is why Jesus Christ admonishes us from the opening Scriptures to be careful or mindful of how we hear what we hear.

I urge you today to be sensitive not only to what you hear but also how you hear what you hear so that you can remain stayed on His promise and in His will for your life at all times.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray that I am rooted in your will for my life as I yield myself to listen to your truths in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Numbers 13 &14; James 1:22-25

One Year Bible Plan: Mark Chapters 1-2

MAKE THE VISION PLAIN

And the LORD answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it...Habakkuk 2:2

There is a popular saying that *'no one fails because they planned to fail but because they failed to plan'* which simply suggests that one of the reasons people fail in anything they do is because of lack of adequate planning. It saddens the heart to see people do the same thing, the same way with the same attitude and then expect a different result.

Until one; some or all the factors of the 'equation' are altered, the result will still be the same and the first way to start out is to have a vision or goal and then set out plans or ways to achieve your vision.

Time and time again, especially every new year, people set their minds to achieve one thing or the other but soon realize that they have not achieved what they set out for themselves to achieve. It could be a goal to move up their career ladder, get married, start out a new life or even, turning a new leaf but whatever the goal is, there has to be a plan for it to be successful.

You could then ask *'but I had a plan but I still struggled to keep up with these goals or was not able to achieve them at all?'* The likely reason for not achieving the goal will be that fact that they are not plain yet. In other words, you have not written them down in 'black and white' so that you may see it every time and then run with it

You may further ask *'what has writing down my goals got to do with achieving them?'* The truth is whatever you focus your eyes on, you will think and whatever you think, you become as Proverbs 23:7 says ***"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he"***. The opening Scriptures reveal that God Almighty instructed the prophet Habakkuk to write out the vision he had seen and to make it plain (clear) enough for those who read it to run with it.

Genesis 11:6 also tells us of how God had to change the language of the people because they imagined (saw) to do something; were of one language (focus, no distractions) and began to do (committed). Isn't it remarkable to know that God said in the latter part of the verse ***"...and now nothing will be restrained from them, which***

they have imagined to do?" (Genesis 11:6). This means that if you have the ability to imagine a vision or goal; can commit yourself to the vision and remain focus then the only one who has the power to stop you is YOU!

I urge you today not to stop at conceiving a vision but to go a step further in writing out or making plain your vision and then, commit yourself into ensuring that you remain focused as you run. Write those goals and vision clearly, make it plain so that as you see them, you will run with them.

Prayer

**Father I am determined to make plain my goals and vision so that I
may read and run with them in Jesus name. Amen.**

Further Study: Genesis 11:1-9; Habakkuk 2:1-4

One Year Bible Plan: Genesis Chapters 44-47

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE

But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus Christ said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work...John 4:32-34

A lot of people have passed through life without having a clue as to what their purpose in life is. Some even think that they are living on earth only to 'balance the ecosystem' and so, they pass away without fulfilling the purpose in life. Have you asked yourself questions like why am I here? What am I here to accomplish? What is life all about for me? These are indeed some thoughts provoking questions that can help you understand your purpose in life.

I strongly believe that the very first step into answering these questions so that you would know your purpose in life is by answering the 'who am I' question. It is true that if the purpose of a thing is unknown then abuse becomes inevitable, inversely, if the purpose of that thing is known, then at least, one may use such thing to fulfil its purpose.

For example, if the purpose of a loud speaker is not known, it could be used as a chair instead of using it to fulfil its purpose of amplifying sound, so also, if we don't know who we are then abuse of our purpose becomes unavoidable.

Jesus Christ said to the disciples that His meat (what brings strength, keeps him going, source of motivation) is to do the will of God and not only doing it, but finishing it. He knew His purpose because He had a clear understanding of who He was. He said ***"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."***

As believers, we need to locate ourselves in the Word of God so that we are able to know what we have been called to do. Make no mistakes about it, not everyone can stand behind the pulpit to preach but we could do it in many other ways.

We could do it in our relationships with others, ensuring the propagation of the gospel by supporting it in all areas and also, letting our light shine so that others may see and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

I encourage you today to let His Light shine in all you do. Let it shine in your family, your business, academics, health and relationships with others so that in doing, you will be fulfilling your God-given purpose in life.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because as you make known my purpose to me, I am walking in the light of it daily and fulfilling it in all I do in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: John 15:16; John 19:30

One Year Bible Plan: 1 Samuel Chapters 6-10

JOY COMES IN THE MORNING

For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning...Psalm 30:5

Are you in a state where you are about to give up on yourself? Does it feel like there is no point holding on to what you believe anymore? Are you groaning under what could only be best described as the ‘weight of life’ and you feel you cannot hold on anymore? I have news for you today, there is succour coming your way.

Maybe you are facing what seems to be an insurmountable challenge and you have given it your best but it looks as if your best isn’t just good enough, don’t despair because God has a word for you and I would like for you to look away from the situation and focus on His words.

The Bible tells us in 1 John 2:20 ***“For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.”*** Therefore even when your mind tells you it is over or things will only get worse, God is greater than your heart and He knows all things.

Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8:28 ***“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”***

This means that no matter what you are faced in life, whether favourable or unfavourable; challenging or otherwise, Paul says you should know that because you love God, they are working out for your good.

This means that you may not have an answer to why things are the way they are at the moment but you definitely know how it will end; it’s going to be in your favour.

This is why the opening Scriptures tell us that ***“...weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning”***. This implies that there is an expiry date for that weeping. The time of weeping (trial) is only for the night and it has not been given the license to remain longer than that.

If you would hold on till the morning, you will realize your joy, not just happiness which only lasts for a while but joy, a state; a place; a position comes in the morning. This is God’s plan and desires for you in that situation therefore count it for joy because you already know the outcome in the end.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for making me know that the challenges I see are but for a moment and that as I hold on to your word, I will experience your everlasting joy. Amen.

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; James 1:2-8

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 33-35

IT IS BEAUTIFUL IN GOD'S TIME

Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure... Isaiah 46:10

Was there a time in your life where God was not aware of something about you or a situation until you told Him? How you ever asked yourself what more you need to tell the One who knows everything? Definitely, there is nothing mysterious or hidden about your past, today or tomorrow to the One who has not only got the information about everything but also, has already been through everything even before ever or will ever experience it.

Many times in our lives we think it is our duty to remind God, who lives in a place where time does not exist, how that time is not on our side and we need Him to hurriedly grant those desires of ours in our own time and at our own pace.

The Bible tells us in Numbers 23:19 that ***“God is not man that He should lie...”*** therefore we need to always remind ourselves that He is not controlled by those several ‘defining’ factors or situations that we are subjected to as humans.

Good enough, Jesus Christ told us in Luke 11:9-12 to ask and we will receive but a lot of times we fail to recognize that sometimes there could be a ‘period’ or a waiting time in between our asking and our receiving. This ‘period’ in our own world is measured by time but we forget that God defines what time is because there is not ‘time’ with Him.

It is at these ‘times’ that God wants us to allow ‘patience’, one of the effects of the fruit of the Spirit as we read in Galatians 5:25 grow and manifest itself in us. It is left for us to either stunt its growth with doubts and unbelief or allow it to fully grow in us through faith and thanksgiving.

By complaining or grumbling, we could delay or even miss out completely in His blessings concerning us because these things will destroy our faith and without faith it becomes impossible to please God no matter how hard we try.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that ***“He has made everything beautiful in its time”*** suggesting that God is aware of the best time for that heart desire of ours. Don’t forget that He is not wicked as some think nor too busy to hear but what we see as a ‘delay’

comes because He see the beautiful end which we may not see as yet and also, wants us to learn and graduate in flying colours from the 'school of Patience'.

Therefore, I urge you to know, understand and allow God's timing prevail in all you do because all things are beautiful in His time.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because my eyes are opened to see your plans for me and I am walking in it by the help of the Holy Spirit in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 13:12

One Year Bible Plan: Job Chapters 23-24

GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS...SEREIS 1

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life... Galatians 6:7-8

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 reveals that man (male and female) has a dual personality consisting of the spirit man and the physical man. The spirit man was made in the image and likeness of God while the physical man was made from the dust of the ground. Though the physical man is visible to the optical eyes, the spirit man can not be seen with the naked eyes and this explains the reason why we sometimes pay more attention to the needs and wants of the physical man at the expense of the spirit man who is really the more important of the two.

The reason the spirit man is more important than the physical man is because God is Spirit (John 4:24) and communicates with the spirit man. Unfortunately, a lot of people give more attention to the physical man (flesh) and as such, they miss out on the things of God even though they may receive the results of their efforts to the flesh. For example, many people devotedly engage themselves in a lot of physical exercises like going to the gym; choosing what and when to eat. All these are good for the body because we have to take proper care of our God-given asset (body) so that we could function rightly here on earth.

However, the bible tells us from the opening Scriptures that ***“he that sows to the flesh will reap corruption (death)”*** which suggests that no matter how good you take care of your body, it will never result in everlasting life. Nevertheless, if you sow to the Spirit, the Scripture says you ***“shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life”***. *Glory to God!* You need to realize that as a Christian, you are a Spirit; you have a soul and live in a body and as such, you need to spend more time enriching your spirit by sowing it. One of the many ways to sow into the Spirit is through prayers and fasting.

1 Timothy 4:8 says ***“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come”***. This suggests that bodily exercise will not achieve for you what you will get through godliness (spiritual exercise). This also corrects the wrong impression that some people have regarding being ‘too spiritual’. The truth is there is no such thing as that.

You can't be 'too human' simply because you are making conscious effort to stay healthy.

You don't lose anything by being spiritual rather you gain all things. I therefore urge you today to cultivate the habit of doing more of godly exercises (praying; fasting and studying the Word) so as to gain everlasting results.

Prayer

Dear Father, I thank you because I am sowing more into the Spirit and as I do, I am reaping everlasting harvest in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Matthew 4:4; 1 Corinthians 8:8

One Year Bible Plan: Mark Chapters 3-4

GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS...SEREIS 2

And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."...Mark 9:28-29.

Several books and journals have been written concerning the issue of fasting over the years and the various authors have been divided in their opinions or views. While some proponents argue that it is not necessary for Christians to fast anymore others believe fasting is still an integral aspect of our Christian life.

Those who support the view that it isn't necessary to fast anymore often back their position with Mark 2:19 where Jesus Christ says "***Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.***" Firstly, it is important that we understand what Jesus Christ was saying here to the Pharisees who had come to complain that they as well as the John the Baptist's disciples fasted but Jesus' disciples did not.

Jesus Christ was explaining to them at that time in question, that there was no need for His disciples to fast because He was with them but that there will come a time when they will have to fast because He would have left them physically. I would like you to remember an occurrence in the Bible where a man brought his demon possessed son to Jesus Christ to be healed because the disciples could not cast out the demon.

Mark 9:14- 29 shows us that Jesus Christ healed the boy and later said to His disciples "***This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting***". This means that there are some levels of authority in the realm of the spirit which you may not enjoy until you begin to fast and pray.

I would like you to know that fasting not only helps us to deny or subdue the flesh (body) but also, it positions us in the right place of authority in the realm of the spirit where we become more alert to God and easily receive those 'fine' or sensitive signals of the Spirit and there, we are able to exercise authority over all things.

When we take out time to fast and pray, we receive clearly signals from God's Spirit regarding what He would have us do at every point in time. A good example is in 1 Kings 19:1-18, Elijah the prophet acted in his senses by running for his life because

Jezebel wanted to kill him for killing all her prophet. However, it was after he had fasted that he was able to hear God's word regarding the situation and then, he received clear instructions concerning what the will of God was in that situation.

I urge you to cultivate the habit to fast regularly so that you will always be in tune with Him in all you do.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray and thank you because as I make up my mind to fast, your Spirit grants me the ability to do so in Jesus name.

Amen.

Further Study: 1 Kings 19:1-18; 2 Chronicles 20:1-3

One Year Bible Plan: 1 Corinthians Chapters 7-8

THE GOSPEL IS NOT COMPLICATED

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation...2 Corinthians 5:18-19

As simple as the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is, a lot of people have made it complicated over the years and this has made the Christian life a struggle for many and sadly, a deterrent for the unsaved who are truly seeking salvation.

The gospel, which is also referred to as good news, is gradually becoming difficult to understand by the unsaved and this is not as a result of what it says but because of what it hasn't said but has been said by people.

For example, with regards to salvation, the Bible is so clear that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father and He alone died for our sins and was raised back to life for our justification. However, some people are of a different opinion because they believe that until you confess all the sins you have ever committed publicly, you are not saved. Romans 10:9-10 clearly shows the God's way, the only way to salvation. It says ***"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"***.

This means that true salvation, which originates from a repentant heart, does not consist in you confessing all the sins you ever committed (He was aware of them all and that's the reason He chose to die) but to confess His Lordship with your mouth and also, believing that He rose from the dead.

This gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ is a total package. In it you will find healing; deliverance; righteousness; peace; joy and every other good thing that God has made available to us through His Son's death. It is not a gospel of condemnation like some put it. No! Rather, the gospel to the sinner is that you can become God's very own righteousness through Jesus Christ; to the sick, you should live in good health because by every stripe He received, you are healed; to the poor, Jesus Christ became poor that you may become rich.

These and many more as found in the Scriptures is the gospel and they are yours by virtue of your birth in Jesus Christ.

Don't allow any foreign doctrine that seeks to enslave you in anyway but always study the Scriptures to know what's rightly yours in the gospel.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I am walking and living in the reality of what I have received through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ every day of my life in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Romans 5: 6-11; Romans 8:1-39

One Year Bible Plan: Isaiah Chapters 62-66

WHAT IS YOUR IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST?

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!...2 Corinthians 11:4

Today, I would like to challenge one of the ‘traditional’ beliefs or assumptions among Christians. This assumption or false belief has been passed down from generations to generations and sadly, it has now taken its roots in churches and gradually becoming one of the facts of Christianity.

A lot of Christians have come to think and believe that the real image of Jesus Christ is that of Robert Powell, an English actor who played Jesus Christ in the series Jesus of Nazareth in 1977. Many have since then had his image as that of the Jesus Christ and some even have his image in the cars, homes and even, place of worship.

My question to you today is what kind of image of Jesus Christ do you have? It is that of an actor hanging on the cross; someone in the grave or that of the true Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father? Have you come to that place where you now relate with Jesus Christ through the object that you see physically?

Remember the very words of Jesus Christ to Thomas who would not believe when the disciples told him the Master had risen. Jesus Christ said to him in John 20:29 ***“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”***. This means if your beliefs in the person and personality of Jesus Christ are founded on what you see then your foundation is shaky and it won’t stand the test of time.

Apostle Paul warns in His letter to the Church at Corinth as we read from the opening Scriptures not to be deceived as Eve was deceived by the serpent (devil) and not to receive any other gospel or anyone who came to them claiming to be Jesus Christ.

Aside the fact that it is wrong to do that, it will also limit your relationship as well as your fellowship with the one and only Christ who is our risen Saviour; who is seated on the right hand (place of authority) of the Father far above any principality and power.

I therefore urge you never to get carried away by what the world portrays as the image of Christ but know that He is Spirit and does not have anything to do with any graven image whatsoever, and this truth cannot be influenced by what the world believes.

Remember, the Bible says in John 4:24 *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

Prayer

Dear Father, I thank you because my eyes are now opened to know the truth and I will always worship the true Christ in Spirit and in Truth. Amen.

Further Study: Exodus 20:4; 2 Corinthians 3:17

One Year Bible Plan: 1 Samuel Chapters 11-15

DAY 25

STAND STRONG IN HIS DOMINION

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...Ephesians 6:10-11

The opening Scripture, in my opinion, is more of a command than just an advice and I shall explain why. To view the Scripture as an advice would suggest that you have the option to either adhere to it or not. However, to view it as a command or an instruction would mean you are obliged or compelled to do whatever has been said and as Apostle Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus, he instructs them to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might for a reason.

Don't forget that He, Paul, had come a short but long way in His experience with God and the things of God that He felt it necessary to instruct fellow believers in the things of God. He further explains that the reason for his instruction to them is that they may be able to stand; withstand; prevail over or overcome the wiles; gimmicks or tricks of the devil.

The opening Scripture is unambiguous and also gives a clear picture of how far the enemy, the devil, can go. Apostle Paul's tells us as Christians that the devil has no power whatsoever and this is contrary to some beliefs. Some people think that the devil still has some power to do some damage in their lives but Jesus Christ tells us in Matthew 28:18, "***All authority (power) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...***" not some powers but all powers, glory to God! This therefore means that what the devil has is nothing but tricks which he uses to deceive people into thinking he is powerful.

Another point worthy of note as you study the opening Scripture is that you are responsible for the way you stand in the Lord. The truth is that some people are actually standing strong while others are not. To stand strong in God means exercising your faith and this comes from hearing His word and also by saying the same thing in agreement with Him.

A lot of people had faith but were quick to change their confession due to the nature of their situation, so rather than speaking to the mountain, they began to talk about the mountain i.e. how big the problem or challenge was and this action gradually drowned up their faith in God.

God told Joshua after the death of Moses in Joshua 1:6 to *“be strong and of a good courage...”* and this was because the human mind could easily be distracted by the unfolding events of life and forgets who they are and what they have.

You have to make up your mind regarding every situation in life to be steadfast in what God has said about you and never allow yourself to bow down or give in to whatever gimmick the devil throws at you.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because I have the grace to stand strong in the dominion of your might at all times in Jesus name.

Amen.

Further Study: Romans 10:17; Ephesians 6:10-20

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 36-38

MOVE OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."...Genesis 3:12

Have you ever wondered why many people miss out on God's plan for their lives? Or why it seems that the more some people try to succeed in what they do, the more difficult it becomes for them? Some have even become used to this feeling of losing that to them, it is now a way of life.

So many things could be said to be the reasons for their experiences and one of such is excuses. A lot of people have been robbed of their blessings just because they accepted to stay either consciously or unconsciously in the 'comfort' zone of giving excuses. For them, it is the easiest way out therefore, they are quick to give excuses for their failures and as a result, they have drifted away from their goals or targets.

One of the points I would want you to note is that 'excuses never exist', in other words, excuses are not natural rather, they are man-made. This is because whatever excuse given for any form of failure was not there in the beginning when the goal was set; they only surfaced or were created when it was not achieved.

A very good example is found in Genesis 3:12 when God asked Adam if he had eaten the fruit He told him not to eat. Adam said *'That woman, the one you gave me, gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it'*. Adam knew he had fallen short of the glory by disobeying God and instead of admitting his fault; he decided to take the fast-lane to failure, he chose the 'easiest' way out of the situation and shifted the blame back to God through the woman.

People who give excuses point at every other person or thing except themselves and the more they do this, the more they fail to learn from their mistakes. At this point, I would love to stress that the greatest mistake in life is not making a 'mistake' but failing to learn from your mistake.

I like you to note that in the case of Adam, the excuse did not exist up until he sinned and because he chose to *'travel on the path of excuse'*, he immediately became irresponsible i.e. he couldn't take responsibility for his actions and ended up missing out on God's plan for his life.

I encourage you today to do away with all forms of excuse no matter how 'convenient' they may be and make up your mind to go all out to ensure that your goal or target is achieved.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you because I am not giving in to any form of excuse in all I do in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Exodus 4:1-17; Jeremiah 1: 4-12

One Year Bible Plan: Job Chapters 25-26

YOU ARE A CITIZEN OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...Ephesians 2:19

Being a citizen of a country means you were either born in that country or have been naturalised by one way or the other. A citizen has the right to live and move freely within the country without any interference from anyone as long as such activities are not in breach of the laws governing the country. Such person also enjoys any form of benefits that may come as a result of its association with the state.

The same thing applies to you as a Christian only that you have another citizenship because you belong to another kingdom. Jesus Christ said to Pilate in John 18:36 ***“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”*** This means that though He was living in an earthly environment, He belonged to another kingdom which had its own rules as well as its entitlements for its citizens.

The opening Scriptures declares that you are no longer a stranger or foreigner in God's kingdom but a fellow citizen and you became a citizen by virtue of getting born again. This means that just like you have your rights and privileges with your earthly citizenship, you also have rights and privileges with your heavenly citizenship. Hallelujah!

This citizenship is not yours because of how long you have lived in the kingdom; rather, it became yours by virtue of what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross of Calvary and the fact that you accepted Him as your Lord and Saviour.

There is a way of life or a culture for the citizens of this kingdom and one of such is that those that live in the kingdom do not fall sick. Isaiah 33:24 says that ***“And the inhabitant will not say, “I am sick”; the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity”***.

Also, Romans 14:17 says ***“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”***, therefore, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is ours because we are citizens of God's kingdom.

Never let the devil tell you otherwise regarding who you are concerning your health, righteousness, peace and joy. Always remind yourself that you are from a higher and

greater kingdom and let your experiences be such that tallies with the experience in the kingdom.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, my eyes and mind is opened to know and accept that I am a citizen of heaven and I am walking in this consciousness in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: John 17:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9

One Year Bible Plan: Jeremiah Chapters 1-6

PERSONALIZE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR LIFE

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life... 1 John 1:1

One of the common mistakes some Christians make while studying their Bible is to think or presume that some of the things they read does not really apply to them. Some even read the Scriptures as a novel, thinking it does not really have any 'relevance' to their everyday lives and because they have done this over the years, they have been able to distant their inner man from the word which in turn prevents their minds from understanding and receiving all that God has in store for them in His word.

The Bible tells us in Hosea 4:6, it says ***"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"***. I will like you to note that God did not say the unbeliever rather; His own people and also, that the destruction or suffering does not come as a result of sins or wrong doings as it is commonly believe but it comes because of the lack of knowledge. This means that the 'perishing' of God's people is a direct consequence of their ignorance to His word.

You may say *'Pastor, I don't think this applies to me because I read the Bible daily'*. The truth is this that you read the Bible daily does not guarantee you will live in the promises. You have to take a step further in personalizing the word that you have read into your life and this is where you bring home what the word says concerning you and refuse to be moved by happenings around you.

You personalize the word of God in your life when you choose to believe God's words and nothing but His word irrespective of what the doctor has said; what your account balance looks like; what your family background is and just act like Abraham in Romans 4:18 ***"...who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken..."***.

The opening Scriptures tell us how to do it. It says you need to move from the simply hearing God's word into the realm of visualizing the words and then handle, in other words, make the word applicable in your life or make it personal to yourself or the situation.

The question then is what has God said about you or that situation? Look into the His word and personalized it concerning your health; family, business; job; academics or

any challenge you may face, refuse to compromise in any way and as you do, you will experience all glory that His word talks about.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I personalize your word of promises concerning my life today in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: John 1:1-14; 2 Corinthians 4:13

One Year Bible Plan: Mark Chapters 5-6

DAY 29

HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK

For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.... 2 Thessalonians 3:10

Work could be said to be any activity, physical or mental that one undertakes in so as to achieve a goal. It could be voluntary, paid for or simply a form of duty and where the work is a paid activity, the reward could come in monetary or some other forms.

Almost everyone with the exception of babies would have experienced what or how it feels to work at some points in their lives and so today, I would like to discuss work but from God's point of view.

The only way to understand God's position on work is to search through the Scriptures so that we may know whether He encouraged us to work or not to work and what our attitude should be towards work. After searching the Scriptures, I realized that a lot of God's children have the wrong attitude towards work.

Proverbs 6:10-11 shows God's position towards work. It says ***"A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man"*** which suggests that God does not tolerate laziness and as such would want us to work.

Also, Genesis Chapter 2 further illustrates God's position on work. Before God formed the man from the dust of the ground, He had already provided everything that man would ever need yet, He put the man in the Garden to work in it. Genesis 2:15 ***"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it"*** which suggest that God did not create man to lazy about rather, He wanted man to work and be productive.

Therefore, work in itself isn't an issue but our attitude towards it. Some people work seven days a week not because they need to do it but simply because they want to. They are of the opinion that the more hours they work, the more money they get but the Bible tells us in Proverbs 23: 4-5 ***"Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven"*** which means that it is of no benefit to overwork.

There are many signs to let us know if we are overworking ourselves but the easiest is when your work keeps you away from God. By this I mean when the demands from

the work requires that you no longer have time to spend with God in His presence. Remember that you were not created for work but to have a relationship with God and if this purpose is not fulfilled then it really doesn't matter what other purpose you are fulfilling, it won't be your primary one.

I urge you today to have the right attitude (approach, stance or mind-set) towards work and let God be the first in all you do.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I choose above every other work that has taken or may want to take your position in my life in Jesus name. Amen.

Further Study: Proverbs 6:6-11; Haggai 1:2-11

One Year Bible Plan: Exodus Chapters 1-4

EXERCISE PATIENCE

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises...Hebrews 6:11-12

Have you ever felt offended because it seemed as though your prayers were not answered. Many people have actually forsaken the faith because of what they refer to as series of 'unanswered prayers' and one reason for this is because we now live in a very fast era (Jet-age) where everything moves on the fast lane and at a fast speed.

We travel in super-fast airplanes, cars, trains as part of our everyday lives and because of this, many are misguided to think that God has to be 'fast' in His approach toward things especially their prayers. However, this is not exactly true because God doesn't always do things according to our timing. We need to know God's way of doing things. Psalm 103:7 tells us that *"He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel"*. This suggests that as believers, we shouldn't only concentrate on knowing the acts (miracles) of God but also, we should endeavor to learn by way of strong relationship with Him, His ways (patterns). When we do this, we will be able to recognize God's timing for all our heart desires.

The opening Scripture admonishes us to imitate or take after those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It is worthy of note that it does not only say faith, but faith and patience which means patience is also a required element for receiving the promises. A read through the Bible reveals that faith is a vital component necessary to receive anything from God.

In Matthew 17: 20, Jesus Christ explained to His disciples when they asked Him the reason they could not cast out a demon from a child, He said *"Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you"* to mean that they could not receive what they wanted for lack of faith.

However, the question comes when we 'exercise our faith' but do not receive that which we prayed for. Many times we have come to God with faith-filled prayers, confessing His words back to Him and expecting to receive favorable answers but get

frustrated when we don't. The reason for this is not because of our lack of faith but our understanding of His timing and this is where patience comes to play.

Patience helps to persevere even when it seems like the answer isn't forth coming. It guides us to praise and worship Him rather than praying over and over again till we lose our faith. It keeps us in line with His will for our lives in and examples of people who exercised patience are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David.

They obtained the promise of the Father with faith and PATIENCE (the key word). They knew that beyond faith, they needed to be patient to go through the training of waiting for God's time.

May be you have been praying regarding one thing or the other and you are almost giving up, don't give up! Hold on to what you believe in and let your faith through patience get you your heart desires.

Prayer

**Father I thank you because I am exercising patience with my faith in
Jesus name. Amen.**

Further Study: Genesis 21:1-7; James 1:2-8

One Year Bible Plan: 1 Samuel Chapters 16-20

THE DEVIL IS A LIAR BY NATURE

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it...John 8:44

One major reason people are still experiencing the influence and rule of the devil over their lives and over all that concerns them are because they are yet to understand the way the devil operates and by this I mean the devil's way of life.

Many are yet to understand that the devil, by nature, has been programmed to act in a certain way and that way alone, will he act. The devil cannot act in any other way contrary because the devil is just 'being natural'; he is only being true to his nature.

No one knew the devil like Jesus Christ did because He, Jesus Christ, pre-existed the beginning. The Bible tells us in John 1:1 ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God"*** and suggest that He was with God the Father in the beginning.

Therefore, in the opening Scriptures, Jesus Christ explains the nature of the devil in His conversation with Pharisees, He tells them that the reason the devil does not stand in the truth is because there is none in him and as such, all that would ever come out of the devil by nature will be lies.

Just like it is a known fact that the devil, even in his 'madness', cannot stand the Word of God so also, we must realise that devil is compelled to talk and behave in certain ways. For example, Jesus Christ says in John 10:10 that ***'The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy....'*** meaning, the devil will always do any or all of these things anywhere and anytime he shows up, so also, he CAN NOT tell the truth because he has been programmed to speak lies at all times and it is important we understand this.

From the opening Scriptures, Jesus Christ tells us that by nature, the devil lies. Therefore, we will be correct to say the devil will always mean the opposite of what he says. For example, if he says you will die, I want to realise he means you will live; if he says poverty regarding your life, he means prosperity. Don't forget, he cannot say the truth because there's no truth in him.

I will like you to realize this basic truth today and begin to put the devil where he belongs in your life. Refuse to allow fear in you or debate or argue with the devil over any issue rather, recognise he is a liar with regards to your health, wealth, family, academics and your future and put him where he belongs.....under your feet!
Hallelujah

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank because I know the devil is a liar and I put him exactly where he belongs in every area of my life in Jesus name.

Amen.

Further Study: Ephesians 6:11; 1 John 3:8-10

One Year Bible Plan: Psalm Chapters 39-41