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CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

Ayobami Salami (Ph.D)



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Ayobami Salami

September, 2014

FOREWORD

Professor Ayobami Salami is qualified to write this book for the youths as he has been working with young people for not less than three decades in the University, in the church and in the community. He has a large heart for young people.

In this book, every reader will find direction and godly wisdom for success, honour and happiness in life. The challenges discussed are timely warnings which if heeded will deliver anyone from the many dangerous traps in the great journey of life. The youths are more prone as he said, to fall into these traps and have their destiny truncated. He did not stop at pointing out these traps, he explicitly showed us how to avoid them.

"Truth is bitter" says an adage of the *Yorubas* of Southwest, Nigeria. This book all the same contains the truth that both young and old people all over the world need to hear and embrace for their own good. I would like to salute Professor

Salami for the courage he demonstrated to put together a treatise like this, at a time when many pastors and preachers all over the world are just exciting the souls of young people in their churches in a bid to keep them.

Youth works fall into three main categories based on purpose viz: for entertainment; for information; and for spiritual formation and renewal. This book falls into the third category. Rooted deeply in the bible, the book contains infallible secrets of mental, emotional, moral and spiritual intelligence; and strength that are needed for total success, true greatness and happiness.

Blessed are the souls of the young people in your church who listen to teachings like this regularly. Blessed are the youths in your circle of influence. All of us, who work on young people to help them be the best that God wants them to be, must thank you for writing this book. Though the book was written with the young people in mind, I strongly recommend it for all.

Pastor Odun Orioke,
General Overseer,
Christ Way Ministries Int'l

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

A world without the youths would be a world without a future. It would be a world without excitement, drive or passion. No one in that kind of world would be interested in living there. Youths are the evidence of our productive past, the excitement of our present and the hope of our future. A nation without youths in its population will eventually become less vibrant and ultimately incapacitated.

Several examples in the scriptures, spanning from the Old to the New Testament, narrate instances that show that the very choice of God are the youths. Before Moses was 40 years of age, he must have been sensing the call of God upon his life; that he would be the one who was going to liberate God's people held under the captivity of Pharaoh. Joseph, David, Samuel, Daniel and his colleagues were young people who became committed to God at a very young age and their

impact was phenomenal. Other young people in the Old Testament who achieved great feats for God include Gideon and Solomon.

In the New Testament, God the Father redeemed us through the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, who came to the earth in human form and started His ministry at the age of 30. As a matter of fact, the Lord Jesus Christ first had a sense of destiny at the age of 12. John the Baptist, the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ and several people God used one way or the other in the early Church were mostly young people that God sought out to fulfill specific mandate. Even in contemporary times, the great generals of God accepted 'the yoke' at an early age. This emphasizes the importance of the youth in the plan and purpose of God.

In the world system, the youths are also given great priority. In Germany, for example, policies have been modified to address the skewed population distribution with respect to age, in order to favour the growth of the youth population relative to the elderly. Similar actions have been taken by the Chinese government to encourage the growth of the youth population through modification of the strict birth control measures which were once imposed on families. Even in Europe and America, there has been a paradigm shift and the mantle of power is currently being held by the youths and young adults. Those nations must have taken such steps because they recognize that the youth population of any nation determines its economic buoyancy, social dynamism,

military power and international competitiveness and relevance.

WHO IS A YOUTH?

Who is a youth has always been a contentious question depending on the intent and context. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. The general usage of *youth* connotes young age, strength, adventurism and lack of experience or maturity. However, the word 'youth' can be defined in many ways including the following:

- i. a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence, and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community;
- ii. the time of life when one is young, but often means the time between **childhood** and **adulthood** (or maturity);
- iii. the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit, etc characteristic of one who is young; and
- iv. the inner strength not to stagnate or grow resistant to change but to stay open to new possibilities. It is the power of the spirit that refuses to succumb to complacency and strives ever forward.

Some other people have also argued that the real meaning of youth has nothing to do with the chronological age, but a consistency in the ability to maintain an open, flexible and tolerant mind. Hope is said to produce a youthful spirit. Thus, as long as one has hope, one can remain eternally young. It can be said that nothing is irredeemable in youth.

Rather, the worst mistake you can make when you are young is to give up on yourself and not to challenge yourself for fear of failure.

According to Proverbs Chapter 20 Verse 29, “*The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head*”. So, the youths 'drive' things because they have strength, passion and energy. Therefore, some unique opportunities are at their disposal but these generally come with some enormous *challenges*. Often times, the youths focus more on the opportunities without deep consideration of the challenges.

THE CHALLENGES?

Yes, the challenges confronting the youths are enormous but sometimes subtle. These challenges require a lot of skill, training, teaching, energy and determination to deal with. Except the youths are able to cope with these challenges, they will not be able to properly harness their energy for the productive means which was planned by God.

Seven challenges have been identified for discussion in this book even though many more could have been considered. This choice is purposive rather than arbitrary. The number '7' is very significant beyond being one of the **numbers** in the world of Mathematics. For example, there are 7 days in a week, 7 notes on the musical scale and 7 directions (left, right, up, down, forward, back and center). Furthermore, in the

Bible, numbers have spiritual significance. At creation, God rested from His work on the seventh day. Of all the numbers in the scriptures, seven is the most familiar and symbolic which appears about 600 times.

- Seven denotes spiritual perfection.
- It means divine fullness, completeness and totality.
- It comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to be full,” “to be satisfied,” and “to have enough”.

Many times, seven is important as a symbol rather than as an actual number. Whenever you read seven, it does not always literally mean seven things or seven occurrences. It is symbolic of the whole or the completion of the ideal situation or the perfect picture of things. Therefore, as we discuss the seven challenges in this book, we are metaphorically referring to the entire gamut of challenges that confront our youths, not just the seven listed. Seven, indeed, constitutes a complete cycle. Any youth that can therefore, successfully deal with the seven challenges highlighted in this book must have indeed gone through the circle of completeness. These seven challenges are: impatience; ambition; peer pressure; disobedience; search for fame; ignorance; and self-discipline.

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Chapter Two

CHALLENGE #1:

IMPATIENCE

One major challenge of the youth today is **Impatience**. In Proverbs chapter 20:29, we are told that the glory of the youth is their strength. The unique energy which the youths possess makes them to always have tendencies to be in a hurry. They are usually in a haste to act, achieve, move forward or acquire. For instance, as a young teenager, I was eager to grow beard so that I could boast to others about my maturity. The moment I grew a few strands on my chin, I began on my journey of intimidating others. Now that I am older and more mature, the ordeal of having to shave every day is now a burden on me. I now realize that the beard I was longing to have as a symbol of maturity, is actually an enormous responsibility which I could do without! As a matter of fact, the average youth exerts a lot of energy, due to impatience, to get what he or she desires only

to discover that such things are not as important as he or she thought.

THE IMPATIENT YOUNG MOSES

The story of Moses is probably a good starting point for our consideration. No list of achievers in the ancient time can be complete without Moses. The Lord proposed that Moses, a young man, would lead the people of Israel to the Promised Land but he was very impatient like most young people. This is narrated in Exodus 2: 11-15

“Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, 'Why are you striking your companion?' Then he said, 'Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' So Moses feared and said, 'Surely this thing is known!' When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well”.

Moses had a passion and burden for his people; as a matter of fact, he had been ordained by God to be the one who would lead the Israelites out of captivity. However, he was impatient;

obviously because he was ignorant of God's processes and timing. He could not bear injustice, a passion that made him believe that he was capable of delivering his people from the Egyptian bondage. At a point in time when he went out and saw an Egyptian beating one of his brethren, he was angry and quick in making himself **the redeemer**. He went ahead to commit a heinous crime by killing the Egyptian in a fury of anger. He had to hurriedly albeit, discreetly, bury the poor lad. He thought he had a secret well kept. Many youths also make this mistake today. They venture into what they are not ripe for and are then forced to conceal their deeds in secrecy. Some engage in illicit relationships with the opposite sex, while others engage in activities to make quick money through internet scam and other forms of fraud.

Are there some things you are doing now that you are ashamed to bring to the public glare? Unfortunately, nothing is secret before God. Even with men, you can only keep such secrets for a short while before the bubble bursts. In the case of Moses, his people did not appreciate his impatient *gesture* to kill the Egyptian in order to defend Israel. This was confirmed the following day when he saw two of his brethren fighting and **the redeemer's** tendency in him played out again. As he tried to resolve the dispute, he got a response which he did not bargain for. The person in the wrong accused him thus: '*Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?*' Moses, at this point, could not defend his mission because he never waited to be commissioned. Consequently, he became a

fugitive in a self-exile. If you compare this scenario with the period after he was commissioned and had to face Pharaoh, then, you will understand the benefit of waiting for the right time (rather than jumping into action out of impatience). So, it was just the grace and mercy of God that did not allow Pharaoh to succeed in getting hold of him; otherwise Moses would have aborted his destiny due to premature launching out. And whose fault would that have been? It would not have been the fault of God but that of Moses. Many people today, (out of impatience), are engaged in things that are capable of terminating their destiny.

You must realize that passion without direction may end in frustration and termination of destiny

Many young people do things in a hurry which takes them out of the way, will and purpose of God for their lives; yet they blame God for how their lives have turned out. There is no doubt that young people have an abundance of passion; however as a youth, you must realize that passion without direction may end in frustration and termination of destiny. As at the time Moses decided to take it upon himself to fight for his people, he had not heard the voice of God; he was neither prepared nor did he seek guidance about what he was sensing within himself. Although, he had a strong drive and acted on his passion, there was no directive from God or guidance from any counselor. Don't always submit to your prompting or passion

without the approval of the Spirit of the living God (or adequate counsel from those who can guide you). For every man that God has called to fulfill a divine purpose, there will be a period during which he/she will have to wait, especially under tutelage, until the appointed time.

AHIMAAZ, THE SELF-CONFIDENT YOUNG MAN

There is no way I can consider the vice called **impatience** without remembering the skillful, but impulsive young man called Ahimaaz. In the book of 2 Sam 18: 19-33, we read the story of Ahimaaz who was passionate but impatient. This is an unfortunate story of a youth that was full of drive but without divine direction. He was indeed a child of destiny blessed with a 'tiding', but he gave no thought to the timing. Eventually, he messed up his life and missed out on purpose.

“Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, ‘Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies.’ And Joab said to him, ‘You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king’s son is dead.’ Then Joab said to the Cushite, ‘Go, tell the king what you have seen.’ So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran. And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, ‘But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite.’ So Joab said, ‘Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?’ But whatever happens, he said, ‘Let me run.’ So he said to him, ‘run.’ Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite. Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the

gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, 'If he is alone, there is news in his mouth.' And he came rapidly and drew near. Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, there is another man, running alone!' And the king said, 'He also brings news.' So the watchman said, 'I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.' And the king said, 'He is a good man, and comes with good news.' So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, 'All is well!' Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, 'Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!' The king said, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' Ahimaaz answered, 'When Joab sent the king's servant and me your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was about.' And the king said, 'Turn aside and stand here.' So he turned aside and stood still. Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, 'There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.' And the king said to the Cushite, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' So the Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!' Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: 'O my son Absalom – my son, my son Absalom – if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!' (2 Samuel 18: 19-33)

Upon receiving some breaking news that had to be relayed to

the king urgently despite the lack of cable network, Cushie was mandated to undertake the assignment of running and conveying the news to the king as fast as possible. However; Ahimaaz, who was not yet experienced in this kind of news delivery, chose on his own account to be the news bearer as he was passionate and a fast runner. He did not recognize the role of a mentor (Joab in this case) in such an endeavor, but put premium only on his ability (and skill) as a fast runner.

“Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies. And Joab said to him, you shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead.”

Joab told him: **“Young man, you are bound to run; indeed God has purposed it for you to run someday, but today is not the day for you to run. This is simply not your race my son!”** Joab was like every other mentor assigned by God to aid people in actualizing their God-ordained potentials. Therefore, based on Joab's instruction, Ahimaaz was expected to relax or be patient and wait for the day that his mentor knew was best for him to 'run'. Ahimaaz would have none of that; he defied the instructions of Joab, went ahead to be the self-appointed news bearer but never pondered on how and what he would say to King David. What were important to him were his passion and ability as a fast runner, and he thought he could use that as an edge over Cushie. “Follow your passion” is a common saying. Yes, that is

true, but care must be taken.

Of course, Ahimaaz was qualified being the son of Zadok, the high priest in the land, and being a fast runner was an added advantage. So, he had everything going for him to take up this assignment- he had the stamina, the strategy and the speed. He was however presumptuous, thinking that his expertise as a fast runner would be the only credential required for the delivery of the message. He actually outran Cushie because that was his turf and was well known in the land for his talent and reputation as the reigning marathon gold medalist. Trust me; he was a lot better than all the folks at the Boston marathon!

Due to his ability to run faster than most people in the land, he believed that it was he but not any other person that should go ahead and deliver the tidings. It never occurred to him in the iron-fenced prison of his mind, that God does not always look for the most qualified; that He is the God that qualifies the unqualified. Besides, who was Cushie?

How many people today are running like Ahimaaz, with an immature vision on the permissive lane of life?

He was just a young man, a servant to Joab who was patient, teachable, humble and also had endurance. Although he could not run fast, he was highly reliable and dependable. Joab told Cushie to run that day and decided that Ahimaaz would run another day. While Cushie was running, Ahimaaz got on his feet despite the counsel of

Joab, overtook Cushie and got there before him. Finally, Ahimaaz was embarrassed in the presence of the king when it unfolded that he was unfit to deliver the message. First, it requires wisdom to break bad news which he obviously didn't have by reason of age and experience. Second, except he had run so fast to overtake the Cushite, he had no news ready as he would have to deliver stale news (vs. 22). He was a perfect example of "all heat but no light". *And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready".* What a pity! He was running with a vision without a focus. How many people today are running like Ahimaaz, with an immature vision on the permissive lane of life?

People who 'run' in contradiction to the guiding instruction about when to 'run' will eventually get entangled with the issues they are not ripe for or refused to be trained for and thereby end in great shame. Breakthrough, in your area of calling comes when you do what you are asked to do by God and not when you do what you have the ability to do. You must realize that you can only have honour, glory, joy, results, etc when you do what you should do, but not what you have the ability to do. Ahimaaz had the ability to run but

Breakthrough, in your area of calling comes when you do what you are asked to do by God and not when you do what you have the ability to do

he forced his way into 'running' when he was not due to 'run'. Youths today are energetic and want to achieve success, glamour and power without having to wait to go through a training process.

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF IMPATIENCE AMONG THE YOUTHS

Many young people are in a hurry to get the good things of life without following through with the process. Examples are the so-called *yahoo-yahoo* boys, e-rats, cultists, *runs-girls*, armed robbers, just to mention a few. In life, any success gained without the corresponding experience will unlikely last long. For instance, the prodigal son, in the parable of the Lord Jesus Christ, lost all his share of his father's inheritance just because he obtained it on a platter of gold without following through with the required process to obtain such level of wealth. It is actually those who patiently endure the pain of the process before they achieve success that will likely have it for a long time.

For example, a lot of young people hurriedly get involved in the pleasure of sex without understanding that sex is a God-ordained pleasure that is not made to be exclusive, but has attached to it important consequences (such as pregnancy, intimacy, bonding, etc.). This is because it is meant to be enjoyed in the particular context of marriage by people who are fully ready to bear the responsibility of the consequences. Such young people, who hurriedly get involved in the pleasure of sex when they are not fully prepared for the

consequences, may eventually truncate their journey to sustainable satisfaction. Some in the process may eventually get exposed to various forms of deadly diseases, emotional scars, rejection, spiritual entanglements, shame, perversion, medical complications due to abortion and many other terrible consequences.

Even in good and noble things like having a call into the ministry, some young people hurriedly go ahead to set up a church or ministry. There are cases of young people with bright future who prematurely launched out into the ministry but ended up causing themselves much sorrow and pain. Some parents, through their actions, have destroyed the future of their children by buying them needless expensive gifts like sophisticated phones, exotic cars and other luxury items without exposing them to the principle of delayed gratification. Several youths that were prematurely exposed to some level of luxury or extravagance by their parents, eventually get involved in fraud and illegitimate forms of businesses to sustain that lifestyle when they become independent. This particular group of youths usually ends up with psychological problems and maladjusted lifestyles because of the vanity that does not give deep satisfaction. Reality usually dawns on them, after leaving school, when the time to live an independent life arrives. The 'cool' money that might have been flowing into their account suddenly ceases to flow and they are forced to make a living on their own.

Why are you in a hurry? Why don't you follow through with

God's process? This was what Joab was trying to tell Ahimaaz. It is true that youths may have the ability to raise money gradually, over the course of time, but they are barely ever willing to wait for the right time. You may have the ability, like the young man Ahimaaz had, to run faster than any other; you may even be better qualified, but it may not yet be the time for you to 'run' because you may not be fit yet to face the challenges of launching out. Wait, be calm and grow until you are certified fit, at least by a mentor. Ahimaaz, like most youths, would not just listen but instead went ahead to do what he felt like doing. Someone once said: **'the impatient disregards divine timing'**. Nicholas Parks also counseled: *"Youth offers a promise of happiness but life offers realities of grief"*.

A champion
forfeits a perfect
present for a
perfect future
while a loser
forfeits a perfect
future for a
perfect present

Impatience and lack of self-control are also the vices that cause teenagers to launch prematurely into relationships that lead to marriage before being ready emotionally for that degree of commitment with the opposite sex. Such relationships usually leave the parties involved heart-broken and both end in grief. Mike Murdock once said that "A champion forfeits a perfect present for a perfect future while a loser forfeits a perfect future for a perfect present". A champion concentrates on the future, therefore no matter the circumstances, the opportunities that the present offers; he forfeits them because of his hope for a bright future. A loser,

on the other hand, takes immediate enticing opportunities without carefully thinking about them, and this may have disastrous consequences. A champion will forfeit a perfect present for a perfect future but a loser will forfeit a perfect future just because of a seemingly perfect present.

At this juncture, the question you should ask yourself is this “Am I concentrating on the present or looking at the future?” There is a time process that God has ordained for everything. When things are not done at the appropriate time, you are bound to make a fool of yourself as in the case of Ahimaaz. The devil and the flesh work through us to always desire to be in a hurry. We are tempted to reject godly counsel, do things our own way and dictate our own appointed time. We work against already established rules and regulations and do things the way we want or how we want.

Reflecting on the story of Ahimaaz, we see that he pressurized Joab until he gave in to his suggestions. God frequently permits the impatient to have their own way after trying to teach them for a while. The Spirit of God never ceases to caution, but the moment God sees that you are not ready to listen, He leaves you to have it your own way. Note that Cushii did not run until he was told to do so and he kept his focus even after Ahimaaz outran him. He did not have a competitive spirit. One of the reasons youths are always in a hurry is because many give in to the spirit of competition. I am not unmindful of the fact that we are in a competitive world. But we should not be obsessed with comparing

ourselves and our possessions with others. When Cushi finally arrived at his destination, his impact was felt. Your impact would be felt after proper training and preparation by a mentor. Tarry for God's own appointed time; do not run ahead of your time! Some people may seem to outrun you now but don't worry, wait and depend on God. Remember that for everything, under the heaven, there is an appointed time. Your appointed time is near.

TIME AND GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS CHILDREN

God is particularly concerned about appointed times as narrated in Genesis 17:21

“But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year”.

Even though Isaac was to be born, God set a particular time for his birth and this time was according to His plan. Your set time refers to a divine arrangement, a divine program, a divine plan that God has ordained for you. There is a time for everything and there is no genuine child of God that He has not arranged a set time for.

“You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, has come” (Psalm 102:13).

From this passage, we can see that there is a **set time** for the manifestation of your expectations and that which you are pursuing. You need to wait for that set time! The waiting

process is however not what many of us are ready to bear. The process of waiting for the **set time** requires a lot of endurance, and there is so much that goes along with it which many youths find frustrating. Many therefore result to some self-help because they cannot bear to wait for long. Unfortunately, many of such self-help methods lead to regret.

Sometimes ago, I was invited to a local church around Ile-Ife, to preach on a Sunday morning. In the course of the message, the Lord told me there was a young man in the congregation who had planned with a friend to enter into a covenant that week. He was warned to desist and come out for prayers. Nobody came out and I returned to Ile-Ife after the service. I was surprised when the pastor of the church came looking for me the following week. He said a brother in his church came to him that morning shivering. The brother confessed that he had planned with a friend to meet an herbalist to help them through a ritual, to get rich quick because, many of his friends were getting rich and he couldn't wait any longer. He was too ashamed to come out when I spoke in the church on Sunday, but went home to discuss with his friend that they should halt the process based on the word of knowledge. His friend disagreed, and told him that preachers could say anything. Eventually he withdrew, but his friend went ahead to keep the appointment with the herbalist the following day. Unfortunately, his friend died that week during the ritual and that made him to run to his pastor to make confession. Thank God the young man responded to the word of God. His

friend also had a chance to escape the death but he refused to listen. That is a classical case of what impatience can do.

WAITING COULD BE CHALLENGING

There are a few things which might be experienced during the waiting process. These include the following:

1. LONELINESS: While waiting for the **set time**, loneliness is a major and common challenge which may be experienced. Loneliness is when no one wants to understand issues with you; when they always disagree with your opinion. Your colleagues appear to be making progress and your friends seem to have arrived at their destinations, but no one can simply figure out where you are; not even you! Here is a common saying many have heard before: **“Success has many fathers but failure is an orphan”**. This statement played out in the history of two football clubs in Nigeria. In the early 2000s, the Enyimba Football Club of Aba won the CAF Champions Cup for the very first time, thus making them the first Nigerian clubside to win the African Champions Cup (now called CAF Champions League). On the same day, another club in Lagos called the Stationary Stores of Lagos played the finals of West African Football Union (WAFU) Cup but lost. On that day, I can still recollect that the 9 'O' clock Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Network News read in part: **“Today, the Enyimba Football Club of Nigeria won the African Champions Cup but the Stationary Stores of Lagos lost in the final**

of the WAFU Cup.” Enyimba Football Club of Aba (a town in Abia State of Nigeria) was ceremoniously announced as Enyimba of Nigeria while Stationary Stores of Lagos still retained its name in the announcement (it belonged to Lagos - not Nigeria!). The semantic implication was that Lagos lost but Nigeria won! It may seem that you are on your own in the lonely moments when you are shedding silent tears, wishing people could understand; when you are hoping for a miracle from heaven or just anywhere but nothing happens. While you are waiting, remember that God is looking at you and He is arranging the process of time to bring you to your set time. He says in Psalm 102:13 **“Yes, the set time, has come”**. Your set time will come speedily in Jesus' name.

2. DISAPPOINTMENT: The second thing you could experience when waiting is disappointment. Trusted people and friends will abandon you while some that you expect to defend you will expose you instead. Derogatory statements that will break your heart would be made but hold your peace because your set time will definitely and surely come!

3. INSECURITY OR FEAR: Insecurity or fear brings about questions like: “Would I experience any miracle in my life time? Is God not going to pass me by? Am I still going to share this particular testimony? Will God yet do it?” During the waiting period, the enemy bombards people's mind with a lot of fear. This happened to King Saul when Prophet Samuel told him to wait until he comes back at an appointed time to perform a particular sacrifice but Samuel did not show up in

time. Saul was disappointed when Samuel tarried for long because it was not yet God's appointed time for him to come. Samuel's initial word was his not God's, but later God intervened on his arrival time. This was not known to Saul and he subsequently became lonely and insecure. Unfortunately, he resulted to self-help by performing the sacrifice. It was a tragic mistake with irredeemable consequences, and he had himself to blame at the end of the day. For a child of God, no matter what you are passing through, I can assure you that God is busy with a lot of things behind the scene on your behalf. So you need to trust Him even when you can't feel His touch.

4. OPPOSITION: The fourth thing one may experience while waiting is opposition. At the time Saul was waiting, the Philistines were advancing to crush him. In the waiting period, nobody wants to either support or fight your course because you are regarded and treated as nobody. Yet, God has not abandoned you as the enemy may want you to believe. The delay will not end up as denial. Just stay firm and contend for your faith.

5. INABILITY TO MEASURE UP: The fifth thing that may be experienced while waiting is the feeling of not 'measuring up' in the eye of the public. It will appear as if one is the only odd person out, among your colleagues or contemporaries. Hence, it is likely that somebody develops inferiority complex. But this is just a trick of the devil. Once you can measure up to God's expectation, you don't have a

problem; you only need to wait. Don't go for self-help. Once you can help yourself, God will withhold His help. It is not what people say or think that matters most, but what God thinks about you.

KEYS TO OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE OF WAITING

- **Have Strong Faith in God**

When you are faced with all these challenges, you are confronted with mounting pressure; making you to be worried and anxious. This eventually leads people to hurriedly take steps which are mostly outside God's will. However, when one has strong faith in God, there is the solid assurance that He will manifest Himself at the appointed time. Strong faith means you are *fully persuaded* that God does not fail His children or that whatever He promised; He is also *able* to do. Whenever you are under intense pressure, think and meditate on the ability and faithfulness of God. Listen more to testimonies. Ultimately, be careful not to work out your own solution because 'shortcuts' are bound to result in misery.

- **Don't lose your Motivation**

While you are waiting, preserve your godly virtues because when you are facing turbulent times and waiting for the **set time**, there is this tendency to lose your motivation. An example is illustrated in the life of Moses.

“Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And

they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, 'How is it that you have come so soon today?' And they said, 'An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock.' So he said to his daughters, 'And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.' Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses" (Exodus 2: 16-21).

Moses had just left his people for fear of being executed by the furious Pharaoh. He was already on his own when he was sitting by the well after he ran away from Egypt. He already had enough trouble to deal with. He had enough personal concerns to engage him, but when he saw that there were some young helpless ladies who were being intimidated by some cruel shepherds, he rose to help them. The passion to help his brethren, which he still had, led him to where he was, but he was not discouraged; he still kept on with that virtue. What the enemy wants to do is to make sure that you flee from God, lose your passion for godly things and focus only on your problems.

- **Don't concentrate on the Problem**

The issue sometimes is that people concentrate on their problems rather than concentrating on God. If Moses had focused on his problem, he wouldn't have gotten to where God eventually took him. But rather than concentrating on

his problem, he concentrated on his passion and virtue. In Joseph's case, he was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, but still, he did not lose his passion. The enemy wants you to actually lose your passion and love for God. Irrespective of what your experiences might be while waiting, you should keep it in mind that you must not lose your passion and love for God.

- **Be Patient**

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: for yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:36-37).

The bridge between the promise and your destiny is **PATIENCE**. There is a **set time** and your **set time** will surely come. God has not forgotten you, don't be in a hurry. There is a process of time and when your time comes, people will get to see the doing of the Lord and it will be marvelous in their sight.

Remember that Joseph waited for 13 years, Moses waited for 40 years, Abraham waited for 25 years, while Jesus waited for 30 years. If God is making you wait, then, you are in a good company!

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

Chapter Three

CHALLENGE # 2:

AMBITION

The seven challenges under focus are not faced by the youths alone but also by everyone. Youths are however more susceptible to these challenges than others. The second of the challenges is **Ambition**. Every human being has at least an ambition, a goal, an aspiration; otherwise, life will not be exciting. The entire race of life is an ambitious project, and anybody that does not have ambition can neither fulfill the purpose of God nor move far in life. What you have or show passion for could be regarded as your ambition. Some people show no passion towards anything in life; such people in Nigeria are popularly described as N.F.A – No Future Ambition. God did not create you with the mind set that you should be without any ambition.

Anybody that is not ambitious is actually wasting his/her life and destiny. Ambition is needed to fulfill the purpose of God

for our lives and possess our divine inheritance. It is therefore an essential requirement for any promising young man or woman. In fact, some achievements are more glorious if you could have them early in life. Any youth that is not ambitious then needs to be cautioned, tutored and encouraged. But youths, being energetic, have the propensity to be over-ambitious.

I must hasten to add at this juncture, that we should not confuse ambition with vision. Ambition benefits you while vision benefits others. It is vision that primes our work for God while ambition primes our personal goals. For example, it takes vision to start an evangelistic ministry to reach the world for Christ; it however, takes ambition to aspire to become the most popular man of God around. Often times, vision can become ambition if care is not taken.

The truth however, is that ambition may be positive or negative. Unfortunately, ambition alone (no matter how positive) does not necessarily bring satisfaction in life. Solomon was once an ambitious young man. He declared in Ecclesiastes 1:12-14:

“I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind”.

Solomon said: “I am the preacher, I have spiritual authority, I have spiritual knowledge, I am also a king, meaning I have political authority, spiritual authority and I have wealth; these are all the things that control this world, hence, I have everything. I even have wisdom that cannot be compared to any other man's. But of everything I have gotten, one major discovery I have made is that everything is VANITY”. The truth is that ambition is not really bad, but may need to be tamed to avoid the attendant pitfalls.

SOME PITFALLS OF PERSONAL AMBITION

i. It makes you Vulnerable

When you are over-ambitious, you become more vulnerable to the devil's tactics. For example, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are the three principal weapons that the devil uses to get at us. But ambition makes us to be more vulnerable and thereby become an easy prey in the hands of the devil. May you not become one!

“Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. (Asphalt used in road construction actually started in that generation; thus, it is not a new technology). And they said, come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name

for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:1-4).

The people were on the surface of the earth but they were predominantly hunters and rural dwellers. However, a time came when they decided to have a new ambition of moving on; to step up from the level of being hunters and villagers to being urbanized and civilized people; they wanted to build a city for themselves. Getting civilized and making progress was not bad for the people. In fact, God had no problem with them building a tower but the only problem with them was that they said **“Let us make a name for ourselves.”** Young men that are over-ambitious tend to take the glory for themselves and are more desirous of making a name for themselves. Anytime you desire to make a name for yourself, you have fallen into an error.

God would have allowed them to actualize their dream, but the moment they decided that their ambition was to make a name for themselves, God knew that they would be competing with His glory. The purpose of God for any man is not for self-aggrandizement, personal glory or self-adoration because only God deserves the glory. The moment a man begins to think that he needs to make a name for himself, he has derailed and this is one of the dangers of being over-ambitious. Even nations are brought to their knees when a few people with selfish ambition rule. Such nations suffer because the driving force behind those in authority is personal ambition and not national glory or collective interest of the populace.

We find two major manifestations of inordinate ambition in chapter 11 of Genesis. First, the people gathered together saying “let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered”. They thought that if they did not make a name for themselves and they lived under the purpose of God, they would be scattered which was a lie of the devil. The enemy will bring to your attention what you will lose, suffer and what would be your misfortune, if you don't make a name for yourself. Of course, he knows that you will eventually lose out if you actually try to make a name for yourself.

Even today, many are more interested in working to build an empire rather the Kingdom. In an empire, someone (or at most a few) get the credit but in the Kingdom, only God receives the trophy

Second, they had the ambition to annul the demographic program of God for the planet earth. God commanded Adam and Eve to fill the whole earth but Nimrod wanted to reverse that by keeping just one empire. Even today, many are more interested in working to build an empire rather the Kingdom. In an empire, someone (or at most a few) get the credit but in the Kingdom, only God receives the trophy. Eventually, God sent confusion into the midst of the people building the tower of Babel by making them misunderstand one another, and they were thus scattered. Their unity and oneness was against

God, and that was why they were confused and scattered abroad. That was the origin of the different languages spoken throughout the world today.

Do you have an ambition which is making you compete with God for the glory due to Him? You need to 'cut yourself back to your size'. Remember that there is no human being that has achieved anything in this world without the permission of God. Every time we are under pressure to do things based on our desires as ambitious people, we should remember Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart”.

ii. It causes Blindness to the main Issues of Life

The second pitfall of ambition is that it blindfolds us to see the main issues of life. It does not allow us to focus on what the main issues are. When Jesus Christ chose the twelve disciples, they debated amongst themselves about who would actually be the first in the Kingdom of God. Two among them, James and John, went to their mother who came to raise the issue before Jesus, desiring that her children would be at the top of the ladder. The rest of the disciples were not happy about the development which led to a contention among them.

“Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest”
(Luke 22:24).

The other ten disciples, who were criticizing the two, also had

their own personal ambition but the only difference between the two groups of disciples was that one group vocalized what their intentions were, while the other did not. The opportunity of having power, money and authority unveils the true color of a man. It is very easy to be holy and humble when you are poor, but what do you turn into when you are tested with riches and power? The ten disciples castigated the sons of Zebedee

That is what ambition does to us; rather than building our lives, we want to build our career; rather than building our faith, we want to build our empire; rather than holding unto the Lord, we want to pursue the things of this world

but now the Bible says that there was a dispute (strife) among them. A dispute implies there was a serious contention among them. There were conflicts of interest rooted in selfish ambition. While this was being done, series of events were going on in the spirit realm.

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:31-32).

We are made to understand that the devil had his own agenda of destruction which he executed by making them oblivious of the more important issues of the Kingdom. While they were contending over who would have the lion share of the

riches of the Kingdom, the devil had his own plans of how he would prevent them from reaching the Kingdom, not to talk of enjoying its riches and blessings. That is what ambition does to us; rather than building our lives, we want to build our career; rather than building our faith, we want to build our empire; rather than holding unto the Lord, we want to pursue the things of this world and at the end of the day it becomes a means, or a plan of the devil to get us out of our inheritance. The Lord Jesus Christ eventually made the disciples to understand that greatness is not in the 'seat you occupy' but in the service(s) you render.

Ambition is good, proper and necessary but care has to be taken that it is pursued within the perimeters of faith. Ambition blindfolds us to the main issues of life; it makes people to chase the shadows while they leave the substance. This was what the Apostles were doing; the twelve disciples were busy thinking about greatness from a wrong perspective. Are your pursuits controlled by the tried and tested principles of God's word?

iii. **It Turns your Focus from Purpose to Materialism**

Ambition has the capability to turn your focus from purpose to materialism.

“For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica – Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia” (2Timothy 4:10).

Demas decided to forsake Paul the Apostle for one singular reason - his love for this present world (symbolized by Thessalonica). Demas was not a new convert or an ordinary worker in the Church, but a leader in the Church. To further confirm this, in one of Paul's epistles, he was referred to as a 'fellow laborer'. The two of them had suffered, labored and worked together; they also served God together. However, at a point in time, Demas developed a different ambition, his focus swerved from the purpose of his life to materialism. There is a difference between purpose and pursuit. Your pursuit is supposed to help you fulfill your purpose; but sometimes when you give yourself to personal ambition, you may forget about purpose and run after a pursuit that is not consistent with your purpose.

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Demas' purpose was to actually be an Apostle of the Lord, bringing blessings unto people and being a blessing himself. But rather than being a blessing, he started looking for blessings and seeking for ways to be blessed in Thessalonica. A thorough study of the map of the Old Roman Empire helps

throw some light on the strategic importance of its geographic location as well as its economic advantage. It shows that Thessalonica was located at the major strategic junction linking Rome to other parts of the region. It was also the most populous city of Macedonia and thirdly, it was a booming place of commerce; thus, it had a lot of attraction for the Jews. It was the economic melting point, the financial hub and commercial nerve centre of the region. In a nutshell, it was a land of opportunity for all and sundry. Thessalonica offered a lot of other tempting opportunities too; so Demas was distracted by worldly pleasures and thereby left the faith. Thessalonica was a land the devil used to draw Demas out of the only way, to a path that leads only to a pursuit of shadow. What is the hook for you, if there is any? It has been said that **'the worth of a man is not greater than the worth of his ambition'**. If everything you are thinking about is money,

The one-million-dollar question is this: What is the worth of your life?

You can answer that question by looking at the things that dominate your ambition or thoughts

then that is your worth; if everything you are thinking about is position, then that is your worth.

The one-million-dollar question is this: What is the worth of your life? You can answer that question by looking at the things that dominate your ambition or thoughts. What are the main things you are seeing as your pursuits? Demas refocused his

gaze from the divine purpose to the material, ephemeral and mundane things of this world. Do you know that the pressure to refocus comes in subtle ways? A friend of mine, during the difficult and struggling phase of his life, used to tell me that he wanted God to bless him so that he could fund the gospel. We were then both young and were prayer partners. He was always raising the prayer point of blessing so that he could be a major financier of the Kingdom. I really thought he loved the Lord, and that all his ambition was to have money so that he could give it unto the Lord. At least, so he made me to believe. Eventually, he went to a Bible College and became a Reverend. At a point in time, he travelled abroad and later became very comfortable. Amazingly, his focus changed and he was no longer interested in funding the gospel but made himself and his family enjoy his wealth. This was a man who said that his purpose as well as his mind, and his ambition was just to get money and use it to serve the Lord, but when the time of comfort came, funding the Kingdom projects became a distraction to his projections, if not an outright nuisance!

Beware of the dangers of sitting in the comfort zone! What is your purpose in life? When you have money, God has a purpose for giving you the money. He is not giving you money so that you can spend it on your natural desires alone. When you have position, God has a purpose for putting you in that position. It is not just for your personal glory or self-aggrandizement. It is for you to administer justice, fairness and positively touch peoples' lives.

Sometimes ago, I had an opportunity of meeting with somebody who was a top federal official in this country. He told us in a small gathering that he was left with 7 million naira in his account after serving the government meritoriously. He further said that he had the opportunity of embezzling a lot of money while in government service, but he chose not to do so because he knew his purpose in Christ. He understood that the essence of his position and power was to touch lives but not to steal tax payers' money. Many people thought he was stupid, however, he told himself that the aim of his position was not to accumulate wealth for himself but to affect lives positively. When he left the office, his colleagues parted with lots of embezzled funds while he did not. He then had to face life after office. He desired to venture into a business line afterwards, but this required 15 million US dollars! Of course, he did not have such a colossal amount. Thereafter, he shared his dreams and aspirations with people and soon enough, people whose lives he had touched while in office, helped to raise the fund and he did not need to borrow from banks. He raised the money in an honorable way and became very comfortable afterwards. The people he helped while in power chose to identify with him when he was already out of power and raised 15 million US dollar for him! This is a man that recognized and understood divine purpose. He was not carried away by personal ambition and self- aggrandizement, not trying to secure a future for himself and his family alone.

iv. It Leads to Idolatry

When we are over-ambitious, we are surely on the fastest lane

to idolatry. The only thing some people worship is their ambition; God is not even allowed to tamper with that. For such people, ambition takes precedence over God. There was a man who came to Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:16-22:

“Now behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to Him, 'Which ones?' Jesus said, 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The young man said to Him, 'All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions”.

The man came to Jesus and said “Master, how can I have eternal life?” Jesus said “honour your father, honour your mother”. The man answered and said “all these things are elementary; I'm used to doing them. In fact, I have been doing them since I was young”. And Jesus looked at him and said “go and sell everything that you have and give to the poor” and his reaction is written in Matthew 19:22

“But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions”.

We should not misunderstand this passage as a condemnation of wealth. The man's problem was not in his possession but in that every ambition of his life was focused on having more and more possession. Hence, possession had become an idol to him. Jesus Christ was not against the man having possessions, but He knew that the only thing competing with God in his life was his possessions. He clearly understood that until he disposed off those possessions, there was no way he could focus on God because they had taken total control of his heart. "I honour my father, my mother..." were just vain talk because his heart was far from God; it was always to get more and more. When you are too ambitious, you can never get satisfied. God might even be seen as another means of getting more, if not just another possession!

v. It Guarantees no Peace

Ambition cannot in anyway guarantee peace of mind because you will always want to have more achievements. You can never have enough of success until you decide to find and get satisfaction in God. Every achievement you make, after some time, will not bring any sense of accomplishment. Let me share a personal example. When I started writing proposals as a young academic staff in the University, I prayed to God and He started opening doors. I was so happy with the very first major grant I obtained as a researcher. From the grant, I was allowed to purchase research vehicles and ICT facilities, equip my laboratory, employ a team of project staff, and earn a regular modest allowance for my efforts. Then, I never bothered again whether my salary was paid on time or not. I

said “Yes, God I thank you, this is even enough for me”. The research was to run for three or four years; but by the time I was in the third year, I realized that the research funding would soon come to an end and that I would

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afterwards. The thought of delays in salary payment and worst still, its insufficiency got me apprehensive; therefore, I told myself that I must devote more time to writing more and more proposals for research grants.

So, every achievement you make will always push you to look for more. You can never have enough of success and that is why the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 5:10-11:

“He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?”

Therefore, until you decide to follow what the Lord says that **godliness with contentment is a great gain**, every achievement will leave you with some emptiness or hollowness unless you decide to find satisfaction in the Lord. A newly married couple may desire a car and get one. After a while, the man will see the need to get an additional car due to the differences in their daily schedules. He purchases another car; he is relieved and gives God the glory thereafter. Soon,

When you struggle to become what God expects you to be, then you will have everything you need to have. But when you are just striving to have, you may lose out... and not become what He wants you to be

the family size begins to increase and again he thinks that they will need an additional car due to new responsibilities and growing demands of the family. ***He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.*** That is why the Bible says **vanity upon vanity, all is vanity.**

Little wonder, someone argued that when ambition ends then happiness begins. We must curtail our ambition; we have to differentiate between striving to be and striving to have. Many people struggle to have and not to be. When you struggle to become what God expects you to be, then you will have everything you need to have. But when you are just striving to have, you may lose out on God's purpose for your life and; you may not become what He wants you to be. You cannot become what God wants you to be and lack anything that you need to have. It is absolutely impossible! However, when you struggle to have and not to be, you will miss the track. That is why the Bible says ***“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you.”***

PROPER WAY TO HANDLE AMBITION

How do we orientate ourselves correctly with respect to ambition and what kind of ambition does God intend that we should have?

“Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37: 4-5).

Desire in the context of the above passage is synonymous with the word 'ambition'. All your aspirations and pursuits should be placed in the hands of the Lord. Delight yourself in the Lord, that is, let your affection be first in the Lord and not in your ambition. This implies you make every of your ambition to be scrutinized in the light of your affection for the Lord. Then you must also jettison any thought of you being capable of achieving anything on your own. So, the above portion of the scriptures is reassuring us of the fact that we need to have ambition but it should be in the Lord. We should pursue our ambition within the perimeters the Lord has set because ambition always wants to drive us faster than we should move ordinarily. Ambition wants every one of us to move on the fast lane of life.

When you are driving on the fast lane, there is the tendency to perceive the man ahead of you as being too slow; you would naturally want to overtake him at the shortest possible time. At this time, what is important to you is how to increase your speed without giving due attention to the possible danger of accelerated speed. A man that is overly ambitious cannot

tolerate delay or accept denial. The Bible says *delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass*. As Christians, it is easy to say we delight in the Lord but the problem is that trust is lacking on many occasions. Man usually resolves to do things in his own way when the trust in God is lacking. God wants us to know that He is able to give us our hearts' desires but we are susceptible to a lot of pitfalls when we do not realize this.

IMPORTANT PRIMARY AMBITION EVERY YOUTH SHOULD HAVE

There are three major things that youths should primarily focus their ambition on. These are summarized below:

a. Build a Solid Relationship with God: In your youth, your primary ambition and focus should be to build a solid relationship with God because that is what can make you to become what you need to be. As I stated earlier on, when you become what you need to be, you will have what you need to have. Don't build a career at the expense of building relationship with God; don't build wealth at the expense of building your life. Build a solid relationship with God! The Bible says: *"If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do"*. Let God lay the foundation of your life for you, be a friend of God; be a son of God that can interact and have contact with Him. Unfortunately, many youths will claim to be too busy for church services and commitment. Your primary assignment, as a youth, is to build a vibrant

relationship with God.

b. Discover Your Purpose: The second thing that should be your ambition, as a young person, is to discover your purpose. After building a good relationship with God, you should then discover your purpose. **“When purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable”** – Myles Munroe. What is the purpose of God for your life? I mean what is your purpose? Because when you don't recognize what your purpose is, you will think that you are here just like every other person; you are just here to get this, to get that; to do this and to do that.

One thing about purpose is that it is customized. Just like a cooking pot is not meant for drinking and likewise a spoon is not made for writing. My purpose is fit for me, it is not fit for you; your purpose is fit for you, it is not fit for me. Thus, purpose is tailor-made and that is why everybody needs to discover his or her own. It is not something you just look around and say (which course is in vogue), “which one is the hot cake and most marketable now?” and then jump at it.

For example, a young lady, seeking to gain admission into a University, insisted on studying Medicine. She subsequently gained admission to study Medicine but after about three years of studying Medicine, she was withdrawn from the course on the ground of poor performance. She was however, permitted to transfer to Sociology. She eventually graduated with a First Class degree in Sociology and subsequently obtained a scholarship to go for a Masters and PhD at the Harvard University. Later on, she became a Consultant to

World Health Organization (W.H.O). The Medical Doctors, who were once her colleagues in school, now seek invitation from her to attend symposia and meetings organized by W.H.O. She almost missed out on divine purpose by trying to study Medicine like most of her friends. Purpose is tailor-made; you need to discover your own purpose in God, at least, this should be the uppermost in your mind as a youth. This should be your ambition: to build a healthy relationship with God and to discover your purpose so that you will know the way to go.

**Your potentials
are like the
ingredients that
prepare the meal
of your
tomorrow**

c. **Develop Your Potentials:** Finally, the third thing is that you need to develop your potentials. Spend quality time on how to develop your potentials because your potentials are like the ingredients that prepare the meal of your tomorrow. God has deposited in you certain gifts, talents and innate abilities. Hence, having discovered God's purpose for your life, develop your potentials!

These are the three things that should occupy your mind as a young man/lady. Remember what I said, ambition is good, ambition is essential but there are pitfalls which every one of us must avoid.

Chapter Four

CHALLENGE # 3: PEER PRESSURE

We all know that none of us can survive in this world by living or walking alone. Even, God Himself did not create life for anybody to live, walk, or do things alone. When God created man, He said it is not good that man should be alone because loneliness is not good; isolation is a very serious problem which can kill. I was told that when a hardened criminal is arrested but refuses to confess and they don't want to torture him, what they do is to put him in solitary confinement so as to first break down his will. It implies that as human beings, God has created us to have friends and companions, but we have to be very careful of the kind of friends we keep. Your friends or peers may influence you in a way that may not be good for your future. Whether you like it or not, no matter how strong you are, no matter how independent you are, no matter who you are,

your friends have a way of influencing you. **Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are.**

Friends will definitely, in one way or the other, impact your life; this is an absolute truth. It is either they help you to fulfill your purpose or they help you to abort your destiny

You must have a projection! Where do you see yourself in the next 10 or 15 years? Before you answer that question, ask yourself this simple one: “who are my friends?” The kind of friends you have will determine whether your projection for 10 or 15 years will be a reality or a mirage. Friends will definitely, in one way or the other, impact your life; this is an absolute truth. It is either they help you to fulfill your

purpose or they help you to abort your destiny. In what ways are your friends influencing you right now? If you take a census or an inventory of the friends surrounding you, ask yourself: “are they people that can help me fulfill the purpose of God for my life or are they those that will only help me destroy my life?”

At least 60-70% of the mistakes that you make, as a youth, can be traced or attributed to the influence of your friends. If you are middle-aged or elderly, reflect on the mistakes you made as a young person; a great number of the mistakes made can either be traced to peer pressure or the influence of your friends. Reflecting on my life as a young man, I can rightly

now trace most of the mistakes I made early in my life to affiliation with friends.

REHOBAM AND PEER PRESSURE

“Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.' So he said to them, 'Come back to me after three days.' And the people departed. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, 'How do you advise me to answer these people?' And they spoke to him, saying, 'If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever.' But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, 'What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?' Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, 'Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us' – thus you shall say to them: 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges! So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the

king had directed, saying, 'Come back to me the third day.' Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, 'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!' So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: 'What shares have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, O David!' So all Israel departed to their tents (2 Chronicles 10:3-16).

The above quoted scripture relays the story of a young man called Rehoboam who became a king at the age of 17. He succeeded his father Solomon as the king. Solomon was a very wise man and one of the things about Solomon was that he listened to counsel a lot. When some people, who had run to Egypt because they felt oppressed by Solomon, heard that Solomon died; they were led back by Jeroboam. They came to Rehoboam, and told him that **“now that your father is dead, we have come on our own accord, ready to serve you for life”**. They voluntarily offered themselves to be servants to Rehoboam for life. They even indirectly mortgaged the future of their children to Rehoboam, but on the condition that he would show them a **little kindness**.

They did not even request for the yoke to be taken away but asked him to just reduce it. Rehoboam went to the elders who advised him to be kind to the people and lighten their burdens. The young men whom he went to thereafter gave him a contrary advice. He forsook the advice of the elders, he chose to hearken to his contemporaries, and opted to listen to his peers.

The same thing is happening today, peer influence is so strong that the young people are more likely to listen to their peers than to elders because they desire a sense of belonging. Young men take to alcohol today not necessarily because they like to drink but because they desire to be accepted among their peers, the same goes with the issue of dressing.

Peer influence is so strong that the young people are more likely to listen to their peers than to elders because they desire a sense of belonging

Rehoboam thought that if he should refuse to hearken to the advice of his colleagues and peers, he would not belong again, he would not fit in, and he would not be part of the circus again. This is how young people get caught up in satan's web of deceit. Anything in the world, any change, any advancement can never be brought about by conformism. There cannot be any progress brought about by conformists, it is only those who stand out of the crowd that bring about a change.

Anybody who conforms to the *status quo* can never bring about a change; rather they would be lost in the crowd. Youths want to belong; they want to be liked; they want to be admired; they want to be celebrated by their peers, and that was the problem of Rehoboam. His friends, rather than helping him fulfill his purpose, assisted in aborting his destiny. Who are your friends? Your peers influence you in so many ways. Your style (haircut, pattern of dressing and use of slangs in conversations etc) usually would be found within the context of the style of the friends that surround you.

VALUES, PASSION AND FRIENDSHIP

What you are passionate about is based on the kind of values you have. If your value is about God, your passion will be for God but if your values are for the things of the world, your passion will also be for the things of the world. There are two types of youths and people: those who are value-driven and those who are frivolity-driven. As a young man/lady, are you value-driven or frivolity-driven? The world today is rapidly sliding into the world of frivolity and these are the things that occupy the minds of many people, especially the youths. What are these frivolities? They

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are excessive fans of Sports, Music, Films, as well as Sex, Drugs, World of Entertainment, etc. For example, many young people are die-hard fans of reality shows. In the previous generation, what the media used to project for the youths in Nigeria were mostly quiz competitions, debates, and intellectually-challenging programs.

Nowadays, the reigning programs in the media are X-factor, American Idol, Nigerian Idol, Project Fame, Big Brother, Dance Competitions, just to mention a few. Some of these programs often sow negative seeds and encourage youths to be frivolity-driven rather than being value-driven. In a bid to conform, I once bought a pair of high-heeled shoes which was what was in vogue when I was in the secondary school. I was not comfortable with the shoes but I

There is a difference between being useable and being useful. Church workers that have their hearts longing for frivolities are not useful to God but may be useable by church leaders. Check yourself-where do you belong?

wore it anyway, until I slipped one day and sprained my ankle. I was not able to walk well for about two weeks thereafter. Ask yourself again: “am I value driven or frivolity-driven?” Due to the scourge of frivolities in today's world, we now have a lot of youths in the Church that are useable but not useful. There is a difference between being useable and being useful. Church

workers that have their hearts longing for frivolities are not useful to God but may be useable by church leaders. Check yourself-where do you belong? So many people are useable but are not useful.

Paul in his letters written to mentor young Timothy and Titus commanded them to *shun* anything that is vain (frivolous) but concentrate on things that would profit or increase them in the positive direction (1Timothy 1:4; Titus 3:9). So, you need to be consciously committed to identifying things that will build you up like specific trainings, diligent readings, involvement in clubs that are into intellectually challenging programs etc. You also need to be committed to understanding the values that guide the life of our fathers and great names in the Lord. May God make you useful in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

HOW TO HANDLE PEER PRESSURE

1. Carefully, Prayerfully and Painstakingly Select Your Friends: As a value-driven child of God, care must be taken in your selection of friends. Make up your mind on which values you choose to be driven by. If you choose to be value-driven, you have to deliberately choose your circle of friends. If you have friends that are not value-driven, minimize your interaction with them and make them acquaintances rather than friends. Friends are different from acquaintances; the fact that you are not in friendship with some people does not

necessarily mean that you have some negative feelings towards them. Your friends will influence you in one way or the other. Youths are curious and inquisitive people who like to experiment on every bit of information. If you have friends who do not share the same values with you, they will influence you in a direction contrary to your values. Curiosity may cause you to experiment and take action on their suggestions.

Friends can either make or mar your destiny!

When I became a Christian, I had to let go of some of my friends whom I relegated to acquaintances; I then subsequently made new friends who are value-driven Christians. An unbeliever can be a professional colleague, co-worker and great person around you, but do not make intimate friendship with them. Care has to be taken in the selection and choice of friends. Friends can either make or mar your destiny!

2. Learn to Say NO: The second thing you need to do in handling peer pressure is that you must learn how to say **NO**. In fact, you must never be afraid of saying NO. Youths, as stated earlier, desire a sense of belonging but it has to be clearly understood that there is a difference between being good and being nice. Be good but do not be necessarily nice all the time. Do not be afraid to be accused of being nasty when you have to say NO. You need to say NO when you need to say it.

I was once out of the country for a conference with an academic colleague sometime ago. My colleague, who is a Christian, was conducting a research on prostitutes and thought a night club would be a good research field to meet with the category of people he desired to study. He pleaded with me to accompany him to a night club located at the basement of the hotel where we lodged in order to interview the target population of his research. I reluctantly went with him when I should have stood my ground with an emphatic

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NO. On getting to the night club, which I had never been before even as an unbeliever, we were both flanked by prostitutes who dressed provocatively and ready to seduce both of us. I managed to find my way out of the spot by excusing myself into the toilet. When I got back to my hotel room, I thanked God for granting the wisdom to escape from the fangs of the ravenous wolves (the prostitutes). My colleague also smartly found a way of

getting himself out of the club without compromising. I could have fallen into sin just because I was pressurized to go to a place my spirit was not convinced of. I had the chance to say NO but I went ahead just because I wanted to please my friend. Thank God for providing an escape route for us.

Be ready to say NO when the need arises and remember that you do not always have to give the reason why you are saying

NO. When you give reasons, you may step into debate sessions which may leave you confused as to what to do and you may finally change your mind. You may sound rigid or stubborn but maintain your stand. They may say, 'Why can't you just take a glass of beer? There is nothing in it; red wine will help your heart; why are you being so rigid?' You don't need to answer why you have to say NO on the basis of your values, just keep your lips sealed. Sometimes you may have to explain but this is not always necessary.

3. Have Bitter-Truth-Telling Friends: The third thing is that you should prefer friends who will tell you the bitter truth to those who will be flattering you. Many times, we want to go to friends who will tell us the things we like and those are the friends who can destroy us. Don't always think or assume that friends who will tell you the things you like are good friends. A friend who will look at you in the face and tell you the truth whether you like it or not is your real friend, not someone who will not want to hurt your feelings and say “well, this is what my friend wants; what else can I do?”

One day, Plato said to Aristotle: **“you are my friend but truth is my greater friend”**. Remember that both of them were great Philosophers. Who or what is that truth? Jesus said **'I am the way, the truth and life.'** Somebody may be your friend but truth is your greater friend. Jesus Christ is that truth! Thus, no matter who your friend is, be rest assured that Jesus Christ is your greater friend. If saying yes to your friend will hurt your greater friend, that is, Jesus Christ, it is better to

say an emphatic NO without blinking an eyelid.

4. Take Counsel from Parents or Elders: Another thing that should be discussed is about confiding in parents or elders. The main problem of the youths is that they don't want to open up to anybody; they are too secretive! It is better you decide to open up to your parents or to some elderly persons because there is nothing you are passing through in life that they have not passed through before. No young person is passing through a situation that no elderly person has passed through before. Don't behave like Rehoboam who decided to take only the advice of his contemporaries. An unbeliever once advised me not to always take counsel only from friends because of the ill feelings some of them may have towards me. He further went on to say that I should always verify, from the elders, all counsel given by friends. He may not be totally right, but I could not throw away his advice. Youths find it difficult to open up to their parents, and that is a fundamental problem. If you have godly parents or trusted elders, confide in them; do not just make decisions on your own without taking wise counsel.

5. Develop Inner Strength and Self-Confidence: You need inner strength and self-confidence that is based on the word of God. How do you get this inner strength and self-confidence? It is from the word of God. For example, Acts 20:32 assures us that the word of God is able to build us up. So, you need to be like the man described in Psalm 1:3 and Joshua 1:8 who is committed to studying God's word day and

night.

Another guiding principle is stated in 2 Corinthians 6:14

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”

As a youth, you should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers because you do not share the same faith. Do not seek for their advice as they cannot be a model for you. You need to strengthen yourself with the word of God. Even when a Christian comes to offer you any advice, you should weigh the counsel given by such a person with the word of God. As a young man/woman, you must be well armed with the word of God. Study the word so that you will know the right from the wrong. In Heaven, you are not going to be judged on the basis of consensus; you go before your maker as an individual. Your destiny is not based on consensus, your purpose in life is not based on consensus, it is tailor-made. Your purpose is personalized or customized and therefore, you cannot take decisions that will affect your destiny on the basis of consensus. Hence, you must have that inner strength and self-confidence to be able to stand.

6. Don't Compare Yourself: Finally, don't compare yourself with others because in comparing yourself, you make a lot of mistakes. In 2 Corinthians 10:12, Paul the Apostle wrote that those who measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves among themselves are

not wise. Look at the child Samuel in 1 Samuel 2:12-18:

“Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD. And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, 'Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw.' And if the man said to him, 'They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires,' he would then answer him, 'No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force.' Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. But Samuel ministered before the LORD, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod.”

If Samuel wanted to compare himself with the people around him, do you know he would have missed his destiny? Who were the people around Samuel then? They were Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of the prophet. Eli was the only prophet in the land; he was the spiritual leader but his own children did not turn out well. There was a young boy, Samuel, who was growing in their midst. If Samuel would actually follow a model, he could have followed the footsteps of the sons of Eli since they were the sons of the great prophet,

Eli. But Samuel decided to be different and that was why God's prophecy about him came to pass. Don't begin to compare yourself with anybody either in terms of what they have or who they are. Young ladies put themselves under a lot of pressure to conform when they are fascinated by material things of this world owned by their friends like dresses, shoes, phones and other electronics as well as other luxury items.

If you can, by the grace of God, do the aforementioned; you will see that you will be able to handle peer pressure and fulfill your destiny.

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

Chapter Five

CHALLENGE # 4: DISOBEDIENCE

“My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent” (Proverbs 1:8-10).

Here Solomon was saying: **my son, hear the instruction of your father.** Father, in this context, does not necessarily indicate one's biological father but a father figure, an authority figure, an elder, a leader or somebody placed over you. **My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; for they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck.** What are ornaments? Ornaments are items used by women for beautification. Examples include bangles, necklace, earrings, beads, etc. This

portion of scripture implies that, hearing wise instructions and following them is what will bring the beauty out of your life. If you see a Christian whose life radiates the real beauty, that lady or young man must be following the instruction of the Lord. Moreover, ***“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent”*** (Proverbs 1:10).

It is clear from this verse in the book of Proverbs, that there are two forces working around a young man or lady. The first one is working for him or her while the other one is working against him or her. The first force (Proverbs 1:10b), expounded in Proverbs 1:8-9, is the voice of guidance which is internal; the voice of restraint, the voice of control and regulation which gives direction. The other force (Proverbs 1:10a) is external, and it is that of enticement. The force entices and ultimately distracts from following the given instruction. The two forces work against each other. The scripture says **my son, if sinners entice you, do not consent**. Everyone is faced with these two forces today, and you have to make a choice between the two. The first of the forces is fueled by the word of God: messages heard in the Church or from leaders, instructions from elders and spiritual guides. The other force consistently tries to get you to work against the first force.

The word
'Why?' is a
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Although it is expected of every young man or woman to take instruction, the mind of every young man or woman,

however, has a high propensity to query and question whatever he or she hears from the elders as instruction. The word 'Why?' is a constant question in the minds of youths and because of worldly enticement, if care is not taken, they might be lured to rebel against authority, against instruction, and against leading. The question 'Why' always comes up. Why must I do/not do this? Why must you ask me? Why must I follow that? Why? Why? and why?

Sometimes ago, I came across the report of a research done by some psychologists and anthropologists about the kind of generation that we have now. I was able to make a link between their findings and what the scripture says about the youth. Let us take a look at their findings so that we can understand why the minds of the young ones are always agitating and trying to reject or disobey authority.

The research categorized the world's population after the Second World War into 3 generations of people; those who were born from 1945-1964 are the **Baby Boomers**; that was when people were having 5 children, 7 children, 9 children per family. The second generation is called the **Generation X**; born between

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7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

1965 and 1976. Then the **Millennium Generation** is from 1977 till date. The outcome of the research (see the Table below), shows certain characteristics of the 3 generations which I want to use as illustration.

GENERATIONAL ISSUE

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	MILLENNIAL
Born	1945 - 1964	1965 - 76	1977 - 1998
Style	Idealistic	Independent, pragmatic, reactive	Self confidence, seeking relationship, optimistic, civic and reactive
Rules	Accept rules	Reject rules	Rewrite the rules
IT	Computer mainframe	Personal computer	INTERNET
Attitude to Technology	Seek to create tech	Use technology	Assume tech - own computer, cell phones, not as work tool but as communication tool
Academic problems	Stuck in it	Change of course of study	Nonchalance - poor spelling, poor grammar, not corporate

Those who belong to the Baby Boomers are idealistic but the Generation X are independent and pragmatic while the Millennium Generation are not only pragmatic, they are over-confident and optimistic about everything, even when it is clear to discerning minds that they are playing the fool! It is instructive to note that most vibrant churches (not only in Nigeria, but in the world today) are dominated by the Millennium Generation- those born after 1976. Christian leaders and pastors therefore need to understand their psychology in order to effectively minister to them.

The Baby Boomers accept rules but the Generation X rejects rules, while the Millennium Generation doesn't only reject rules but re-writes the rules to suit their whims and caprices. If the Millennium Generation is given 10 commandments, they will make it 11 by adding another one: thou shall act according to your heart. They query authority including the authority of the word of God. They want to scientifically or empirically prove and disprove the word of God and when something else does not seem to follow their line of thought, they deduce or invent some form of explanations as to suit what they are convinced of. They rebel against authority. Why is this so?

Attributes of the Millennium Generation

- **Thirst for Comfort and Pleasure:** The first thing that this generation always yearns for is their own comfort and pleasure.

“Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten Son of God (the rest of us are just adopted), learnt obedience by the things which He suffered. This present generation however, does not want to suffer for anything. When there are any instructions, in the word of God that will make them go through some discomfort, they begin to look for other alternatives; they begin to re-write the rules. When they are given instructions, they complain that they are being put under a regime of *dos* and *don'ts*; they blackmail easily so as to justify themselves.

The Bible says **hear the instruction of your father, forsake not the law of your mother because these are the ornaments that God has prepared to bring out your beauty, to bring out your glory, to usher you into your destiny** (paraphrased). Unfortunately, this generation wants only their comfort. One great man, John Rosky, said that **the greatest catastrophes are easily traceable to the love of pleasure**. Therefore, when something does not go in line with pleasure, this generation counts it as *dos* and *don'ts*. They talk of freedom as if it is synonymous with excuse from responsibility!

- **Strong-Headed:** The second thing is that, this generation only believes and wants to follow the promptings of their hearts. They don't want to know or accept the fact that the Bible says **there is a way that seems right unto man but the end thereof is destruction**. When they are given instructions, they only follow their heart promptings. They say “after all, why should anybody curtail my liberty; why should anybody dictate to me; why should anybody tell me the way to live my life? After all, I am no longer a kid; I am in the University for God's sake, don't I have my common sense?”

“Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her” (Genesis 34:1-2).

God gave Jacob a strong instruction that his children must not mingle with the children of the land, and Jacob passed the information to his children but Dinah would not listen. She decided to rebel against the instruction of her father, Jacob. I guess she must have said: “look, I have freedom of association; it is part of my inalienable fundamental human rights as guaranteed in the constitution of the land. Moreover, I am no longer a baby that you can lead by the nose; I can control myself, I know my friends and we love one another, they care so much. So, nobody should tell me where to go or where not to go”. True talk!

She decided to go against the instruction of her father and went to visit the daughters of the land. And when she got there, she thought that it was just a mere visit. Unfortunately, one cunning guy called Shechem, one of the sons of the land, had other plans to violate her and she was eventually raped, and consequently brought an abomination to the household of Jacob. This kind of scenario repeatedly happens in this generation where many youths today are hobnobbing with the 'daughters and sons of the land.' Girls willfully disobey their parents, they go to places they should not go and get raped. This generation wants to simply follow the promptings of their hearts. May the Lord help us.

- **Lawlessness:** Thirdly, youths see any form of authority as an affront to their liberty. When they are given instructions or guidance, they see it as affront to their freedom and they begin

to rebel, they think you want to curtail their rights, you want to cage them.

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

All things indeed may be lawful but not all things are expedient. When the Church, leaders, pastors, parents begin to tell you that there are certain things that are not right and you begin to say: “Pastor, show me where it is in the Bible. Where did the Bible condemn kissing?” You want everything to be inserted in the Bible. If everything has to be put in the Bible, how big do you think the Bible would be? Things may be lawful quite alright, but they may not be expedient. But when you tell the youths not to do some things, they say no, it is not written in the Bible.

For instance, people will ask you, “tell me where it is written in the Bible that you should not smoke, tell me in the Bible where it is written that one should not drink because the Holy Communion is even done with wine”. They will tell you that Jesus Christ, at the wedding held at Cana of Galilee, performed the first miracle of turning water to wine and the guests drank freely. “So, what are you talking about Pastor?” Instructions are seen by the youths as insult to their intelligence. What picture will the Church be painting of Christ, if the Pastor comes to church on Sunday after taking one bottle of Beer, a glass of Whisky plus a cup of Champagne and can't speak coherently while giving message?

What picture is the Church painting if a young lady, who is dressed provocatively, is asked to lead a praise/worship session in the church? Young ladies usually complain of being curtailed when they are advised to dress decently. To them, they must wear what is scintillating and in vogue, as some even claim that they dress to kill. Yes, of course, they 'kill' the spirit of many unsuspecting and innocent people as well as weak brethren. All things are lawful but not all things are expedient, therefore listen to the instruction of your father; forsake not the law of your mother. When you look at that verse, it did not say that *it shall be like* but that these are the ornaments, so if it says it is like, that means it is a similitude but God is saying this is what will bring the beauty in your life. When you follow godly instructions, the beauty of God will come upon your life.

Jude 3-5 says:

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.”

We need to contend for our faith because this is a generation through which the arch enemy, the devil, wants to pollute the Church. As a young man or woman in the church, are you a **contender** or a **pretender**?

These are the two types we have in the Church today. If you are not contending for the faith as stated in this passage, you are merely a pretender, not a serious child of God.

Submission is not a forfeiture of your freedom; it is the pathway to liberty. Your life is too big to be left in your own hands; submit it to God under the authority of spiritual leadership

The devil is attacking this generation, and by extension the Church, with what you can describe as the spirit of 'everything goes'. Youths typically revolt against counsels given from elderly experience, demanding for either scriptural or philosophical confirmation. The Bible says that we should earnestly contend for our faith. Hence, we all have a responsibility! It is preferable and better to have a church where there are just 100 members who are genuinely saved, faithfully serving the Lord and striving daily to make heaven rather than having 1,000 membership that only amounts to merely boosting the Pastor's ego that he has a big church, but with not up to 10 of them being candidates for heaven. It is not about preaching the dos and don'ts, but it is about doing things that will take you to your eternal home. There is no point telling you what you will like but which cannot get you

to heaven. Contend for the faith because so many things are going wrong in the present generation.

“But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe” (Jude vs. 5).

The same God that took them out of the land of Egypt was the same God that destroyed them when they refused to follow instruction. How many people in that generation made it to the Promised Land? Only two of them! He is still the same God. So, it is not enough to say “well I am already born again, I am Spirit-filled, I speak in tongues, praise the Lord”. NO! The same God who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, who followed them with the pillars of cloud, who parted the Red Sea, who gave them water from the rock, who dropped manna from heaven, was still the same God that killed them when they would not listen to His instructions. That will not be your portion in Jesus' name (Amen). Hear the instruction of your father and follow the law of your mother, for these shall be ornaments to your neck!

- **Over-Confidence:** The fourth reason why youths rebel against authority is that they always think they are wise, resulting from being just over-confident!

“Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:21).

Do not think that you can be smarter than God. Do not look

for loopholes or escape route in counsel and in the word of God, regarding issues that you actually wanted to avoid. Don't act like lawyers looking for weak points and defensive walls in the discharge of their duties. Don't read the Bible the way lawyers read the constitution and look for lapses, technicalities or faults to argue their case. When you read the Bible or listen to messages, read or listen with an open mind of following but not with the mind of a critic. A situation similar to what is in focus is narrated in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).

“Then He said: A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his

neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."

The prodigal son thought that his father was denying him the good things of this world and controlling his life the way he so pleased. He asked his father to give him his own portion of inheritance and the father gave him after which he travelled to a far country. The young man wanted to be free because he was tired of being under any form of supervision or authority. He went to where the father would not be able to monitor his lifestyle of extravagance. After he squandered everything on riotous living, then reality dawned on him. He was in abject poverty that he even ate the food meant for the swine in the piggery where he worked. He initially thought that he was wise but finally realized he was not and the Bible then records his genuine repentance in Luke 15:18

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you."

The greatest decision the prodigal son made was to go back home having realized, in true remorsefulness, that he was wrong. Are you rebelling against authority figures giving you instructions? Are you revolting against the word of God,

thinking you can come to church and be identified but live your life the way that pleases you? Arise today and come back to the Father because the Father is still eagerly waiting for you with His open arms of warm embrace. What would the consequences be?

When this boy went away, few things could be seen as outcome of his rebellion:

a. **He became vulnerable to the enemy:** When you don't follow instructions, you make yourself vulnerable to the devil. The devil would do anything to derail you from your course. When you refuse to follow divine instructions, you give him an opportunity to distract you from the Most High God.

b. **His destiny was at risk of being destroyed or wasted:** So many destinies have been destroyed; many inheritances have been wasted just because people rebel against authority, and rebellion against authority always leads to regret. The prodigal son regretted the action he took. Initially, he thought he was wise and that his father had caged him; he believed the kind of life he needed to live was denied him but at the end of the day when he was left alone, he realized he had taken a wrong turn. There is nobody who is left alone in life and does not regret it. Submission is not a forfeiture of your freedom; it is the pathway to liberty. Your life is too big to be left in your own hands; submit it to God under the authority of spiritual leadership. To what extent are you submitting to the word of God? Do you even have somebody you submit to? To what

extent do you submit to the divine messages you listen to? It is not the number of messages you have heard that really matters but how much of it you are imbibing.

“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (James 1:23-24).

Does this portion of the scriptures depict your situation? The message is to give you a picture of your life, the word of God is to give you a mirror to look at your life, but if you turn away afterwards, you are like the man described in the above scriptural passage. If as an Executive Officer, I was to attend a meeting and I saw in the mirror that my hair was rough; the natural response would be to get it combed. When the word of God reveals some deficiencies in you, respond by fixing the situation and removing the deficiencies.

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

Chapter Six

CHALLENGE # 5: THE SEARCH FOR FAME

Fame? Yes, no doubt, we all desire it; one way or the other. Everybody wants to be noticed; everybody wants to make a mark; everybody wants to make a name. It is not a bad thing at all when you want to make a mark. For instance, all over the world, those in academia want to be known and cited in reputable journals. Every professional footballer wants to play in the World Cup finals. Every serious minded athlete wants to be an Olympic Gold Medalist. Every preacher with a sense of calling wants to impact a huge mass of people. The motivation of any scientist to aspire to become a Nobel Laureate is not about the money attached to the prize, but the name or fame that comes with it. When University students struggle to win prizes at the Departmental, Faculty or University levels, the motive is generally to be in the hall of fame. Every one of us wants to

make an impact; we want fame so that we can be recognized. There is really nothing bad about that. However, care has to be taken in our drive for the limelight.

JOSIAH AND HIS UNDUE PASSION FOR LIMELIGHT

I am going to use an example of a young man, Josiah, who was thrown into limelight at a very tender age. He hugged the limelight early in life and was always searching for more. He kept on moving from one level of progress to another; from one height to another. He had very good intentions; he was a man of God, he had a very good heart, but then, he was constantly in search of fame. It seemed he neither had enough of limelight nor could he do without it!

“Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images” (2 Chronicles 34:1-3).

This is the story of Josiah who became a king at the very young age of 8 and between the age of 8 and 16, he was under tutelage; but by the age of 16, he became independent. After his eighth year on the throne (at the age of 16), Josiah began to seek the God of his fathers. He pulled down all the idols

and commanded that every form of idol worship must stop. Under the rulership of Josiah, the temple of God was rebuilt and restored; during the process of which the Law of the Lord which had been lost was rediscovered.

Nobody, as at that time, knew about either the Book or the Law but when Josiah restored the temple, they discovered the Book of the Law and they brought it to Josiah. When Josiah read the Book (not by proxy), he found out what God wanted and what He didn't; he discovered that they had gone against the will of God. Thereafter, he tore his clothes into pieces and cried exclaiming that they had all gone astray and needed to find their way back to God. Josiah was a great man who kept doing well with very good intentions; he brought back the Feast of the Passover which had been forgotten and celebrated it in grand style. He worked in tandem with Jeremiah and synergized with him. Jeremiah was happy that he had a king who was actually and genuinely pursuing God.

The story of Josiah is the story of someone who was moving from one level of greatness to another, from one achievement to another but he was a man who, at a point in time, loved fame so much that he could not have enough of it. The desire for fame or limelight could be intoxicating. As earlier said, there is nothing bad in searching for limelight, there is nothing bad in wanting to be notable and to make a mark, but the first problem is that it could be intoxicating; that was what happened to Josiah. After he kept on moving from one

achievement to the other, he became intoxicated by the desire for fame.

“In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. But he sent messengers to him, saying, 'What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you.' Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, 'Take me away, for I am severely wounded.' His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments” (2 Chronicles 35:19-25).

After everything that Josiah had done, a time came that the king of Egypt called Necho came to make war with some people. Unfortunately, Josiah thought this was another

opportunity for him to make a name; that it was another opportunity for conquest, another occasion to showcase his military prowess and of course, divine backing. Funny enough, the war was neither against Judah nor his person. When he was set for the battle, Necho sent a message and said “Please O King of Judah, there is no quarrel at all between the two of us. I have not come to fight you at all but it is God that directed me to go and fight these people, I am not just coming on my own. It is God asking me to fight these people, do not oppose God so that He will not destroy you”. He was severally warned! God can use anybody to warn you of a wrong step or decision you are about taking. If God could use a donkey to speak to Balaam, He can even use unbelievers to speak to believers. Necho told Josiah that it was God who asked him to come and fight these people, so if Josiah was coming against him, it would amount to going against God (2 Chronicles 35:22-25).

Josiah ignored what Necho told him about the divine instruction. It was prestigious at that time for anybody to kill the king of Egypt, it was like a trophy he wanted to get and take back to the people of Judah. Josiah began very well and his progress was commendable if not unprecedented, but his end was tragic and lamentable. Imagine; even Jeremiah, the Prophet of God, lamented for Josiah. He became a king as a child at the age of 8; he sought the Lord with everything he had but died at the young age of 39! His was a case of the sun that was set at noon; a flower that was plucked before the bloom. What a tragedy! May yours never be like that in Jesus'

name. He could have lived longer, he could have stayed longer on the throne but he wanted to have honour which God did not ordain for him. He wanted to prove a point, to have fame, name, prestige and recognition that were not purposed by God just because he kept on having one success after the other. When you are desirous of ascending to a higher level, ask yourself if the

higher level is ordained by God and if it is the right time to ascend to the level. Do this so as not to hold on to things that are not ordained for you by God.

Success is what God wants us to have; it is what God has already determined or proposed for His people. But fame is something that we want to use sometimes to massage our ego, to boost our profile...

I was told of a man who got a job and was doing very well on the job. He saw an advert for another job, applied and got the job. Suddenly, when he got the job his life changed dramatically, he had money, he had everything and things began to work smoothly for him. He had hardly settled down on that job when he started looking for another one again. He got another opportunity to apply; he did not even bother to ask God whether it was His will for him. He applied again, left the former job and went for the new one. By the time he got the job, he was sacked while still trying to settle down, but couldn't go back to where he left.

It is important to separate success from the search for fame; they are two different things entirely. That is why the Bible talks about 'good success'. Success is what God wants us to have; it is what God has already determined or proposed for His people. But fame is something that we want to use sometimes to massage our ego, to boost our profile, to push ourselves before people, to get undue advantage and recognition in the community or society. The search for fame could be intoxicating, so we must be very careful about it.

THE CONSEQUENCES

During the search for fame, pride might come in and this really happened to David as we can see in 1 Chronicles 21:1-7.

"Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, 'Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring the number of them to me that I may know it.' And Joab answered, 'May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?' Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. All Israel had one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah had four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab. And God was

displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel.”

David was a warrior who was catapulted to his position of greatness because he killed Goliath, the warlord of the Philistine. Whenever he was fighting battle, he was not actually depending on men. But a time came when David desired to boast about how strong his army was by knowing their numerical strength. It was not the census that God was unhappy with but David's motive for carrying out the census. You might do something that is right at times but the motive might be wrong. So, it was not actually the census that God was against but the mind that David had behind the census. David wanted to use it to boost his ego and underscore his achievements. God then asked him, “How many were in the army under you when you were in the house of Jesse where you were sought out? What was the number of men in the army when you killed Goliath? As a young boy, you killed Goliath alone! What was your profile when you became the king?” David was not even recognized by his own father as somebody who could become a king as he had been abandoned in the wilderness for a very long time, and was not taken into reckoning when opportunity came for elevation. He was following animals when his father was asked to bring the potential king in his house, but God fished him out without any Curriculum Vitae. God then asked him: “Why are you now depending on your army?”

God was not happy with David. The essence of the census was to boost the ego of David. When you are searching for

fame, pride may creep into your heart. Everyone is susceptible to pride and that is why we have to be careful to be sure that what we long for, the position we strongly desire, the job we seek and that which we are praying to have are not in the bid to massage our ego. The aim should neither be to show off nor to boast. Friend, be careful that you are not susceptible to pride when you are searching for fame.

Another consequence is over-confidence. Over-confidence comes as a bye-product of pride. People may become so confident that they begin to trust in the arm of flesh, their talents and fast-growing networks. Businessmen usually start on a small scale, during which time they would trust God. However, when their businesses begin to grow and their networks begin to expand, they are tempted to stop trusting God as they did when they started. When they have influential contacts and know the buttons to press, they get to start trusting more in their networks than in the omnipotent God.

As at the time Titanic was built, it was the biggest ship ever in the world record. It was so big that it could carry over 3,000 passengers at a time, thus, it was the largest ship that was ever built in the 20th century. Titanic, according to those who manufactured it, was designed to be the last world for comfort and luxury. In the ship were swimming pools, libraries, first class restaurants, open-let cabins and efficient communication systems. When its construction was completed, the manufacturer confidently and boastfully

declared that the ship was too massive for anything, even God, to sink! They were highly elated as they had done what nobody had ever done as at that time. At least they had made a history of the millennium! The ship was now ready to make the very first voyage from Southampton in the United Kingdom to New York City, United States. The wealthy people in the world struggled to procure the limited tickets just to be on board; everybody wanted to be part of history not knowing that they were going to be history in a short while.

The richest people in the world struggled to be part of the voyage and they got on board. Not long after they left, the force of the water currents emanating from the Titanic's path nearly capsized two other smaller ships on the high sea. The captain was elated, the crew was jubilant and the passengers felt privileged. While on the journey, they received communication signals concerning icebergs along the path they were travelling and were advised to alter their course. The captain however ignored them believing nothing could ever sink the Titanic. How wrong he was! Suddenly, the Titanic struck an iceberg which subsequently created a hole through which water began to flow into the ship and ultimately causing it to sink. Over 1,500 people perished in that voyage while several valuables got drowned in the ocean. That was the sad story and tragic end of Titanic.

What happened? Over-confidence! The people believed that they had done something which nobody else had ever achieved and as such they were over-confident in themselves.

In the search for fame, you might become over-confident when you begin to succeed believing you have achieved the ultimate success. There is also the danger of becoming a captive of competitive spirit. While searching for fame, the spirit of competition will fight to have you under its grip. I must hasten to add, that I agree that this world is a competitive world. But the only thing is that you have to watch the motive behind every decision or step you take.

“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12).

The spirit of competition causes us to always desire to outdo others. We want to have the best of everything in comparison to others. We want the best of cars, highest of status or positions so that we could be seen as outshining others. In the light of all these things, what do we do? Can we still search for relevance and still stay within the perimeters of faith? How can we desire to make a mark and yet please God?

HOW TO PLEASE GOD IN THE LIMELIGHT

1. Recognize Humility as a Divine Demand

The first thing to do is that you must recognize humility as a divine demand because the Bible says in Proverbs 18:12:

**“Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty,
and before honor is humility.”**

Thus, it is a divine demand! You should know that God demands that we are humble as we run in pursuit of our God-given dreams and aspirations. It is important to note that humility is of the heart; it is not revealed on people's faces. Someone might prostrate before you and yet curse you deep in his heart; another might kneel before you and yet abuse you in her heart. You must know that in all of your achievements, you must return the glory back to God. When you are thrown into the limelight, handle it in a godly way and remain humble through it all. Give the glory to God at such times and always.

2. Put Your Trust in God

Never put your trust in the achievement or progress you are making, let your absolute trust be in God. It is so easy to place one's trust in one's abilities and achievements but we have to consciously, by the grace of God, disengage from this act.

3. Listen to the Words of Counsel

Always listen to the words of counsel. As you march on in search of progress, always listen to the words of counsel. If Josiah had listened to Necho, he would not have died before his time. If the captain of the Titanic had been humble enough to heed the warnings, the shipwreck would have been averted. When you think that your opinion is the only one that matters and you refuse to heed counsel, you are heading for destruction. In life, don't ever close your ears to the words of counsel. Don't think things must go your own way. Don't always have a rigid and fixed line of action. Listen to people! Listen to counsel! Listen to advice! There is no child of God

who would be doing the wrong thing without God sending him a word of caution. God will arrange circumstances and people; he can even send unbelievers. Summarily, God can use common people and ordinary situations to warn you of a particular wrong doing. A brother once told me about how God used a policeman, who was an unbeliever, to bring him back to the path of faith and righteousness. Therefore, listen to the words of counsel. You may be listening to a message and God is saying something to your heart, harden not your heart. It may be an elderly person who gives godly advice; listen to him or her! It may be in your place of work, it may be your parents, it may be some people around, always listen to the words of wise counsel.

4. Stay Focused

Do not be carried away by any special privilege you have in life, by the talent or gift you have. Don't be carried away by your talents, gifting, achievements, endowments or privilege.

“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 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. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven'” (Luke 10:17-20).

The word 'nevertheless' could indicate a word of caution. Is it not a good thing that the spirits submitted to them? It is a

thing of testimony, it is something they should be proud and happy about, but Jesus told them not to allow this to either be their focus or the source of their joy. Surprisingly, that is what we glory in even as Christians. We want to show off our talents along with the Lord's miracles. This becomes the source of our confidence and we begin to look down on others, thinking we are special people while others are not doing well because they have not been endowed like us. However, the Master said: "do not rejoice in this but rejoice that your name is written in the Book of Life". When you are blessed with talents, know that it is by the grace of God that you are talented; give the glory to God and ascribe none to yourself. As we learn to give glory to God for what we have, He begins to open more doors of blessings for us. Self-examination is constantly needed to review our motives for desiring blessings and our passionate pursuit of success.

5. See Your Life As An Unfolding Drama

Finally, see your life as an unfolding drama that is scripted by God. When a play writer prepares a script and recruits an actress to play the role of a prostitute and another actor for the role of a pastor; it does not make the actor/actress become the character in reality. Based on this reason, the actor playing the role of a pastor cannot sensibly accuse the person acting as a prostitute. As we get to see our lives as a drama scripted by God, we would not be carried away. When you step into the limelight of fame, you must know that God wrote the script. With this knowledge, you will not misappropriate the glory and honour but give it back to Him.

As you grow into seeing your life as a script written by God, you would be enabled to submit to His will and serve Him with joy knowing that the writer knows the end. He says **'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope'** (Jeremiah 29:11). With this assurance, you are convinced that your story will end well. No matter the situation you are going through now; always give the glory back to God.

I will conclude this chapter with this scriptural quotation that says:

“For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

The search for fame might lead to the pride of life which is not of the Father. Do you see your life as a drama that is scripted by God? As you re-orient yourself to adopt this picture; you will, as an actor, read your script and act out exactly as you are expected to. As long as the actor plays his part, as written in the script, it will end the way the writer purposes. God will not write the story of your life and make it to end in a tragedy. How do you picture your life? Do you picture yourself as one that is just to acquire or do you know that God has placed you here to make a name for Him?

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

Chapter Seven

CHALLENGE # 6:

IGNORANCE

The next challenge facing the youths is **Ignorance**. Unfortunately, so many of them are even ignorant of their ignorance, thereby making it more difficult for them to appreciate the importance of obtaining information or knowledge. Perhaps, the greatest tragedy in the world today is ignorance or lack of foresight, insight, foreknowledge and revelation; not only among the youths but even among the elderly. It is a serious problem in Christendom, as we are in a knowledge-driven world. Ignorance, in this context, is not that of educational knowledge or intellectual matters. What I am talking about is spiritual knowledge: divinely-inspired insight, foreknowledge and revelation. Unfortunately, many Christians lack this important knowledge in their lives. They desire to serve God but have no good knowledge of whom they serve. Also, many

Christians want to claim the promises of God while they stay in the premises without having the knowledge of God.

A lot of phrases have been picked up in the Church today, examples of which include: **I am born again, I am Spirit-filled, I am a blessed child, I am Holy Ghost-filled, I am a child of the promise.** Sloganeering has become the vogue. We sing many of the phrases in songs and thereby get carried away. Most times, people have little or no basis for what they say and sing. The youths nowadays, just want to listen to motivational speaking, expand their vocabularies and listen to sophisticated rhetoric that does not have any concrete substance. They feel elated using intimidating vocabulary without getting identified with faith. God cannot be served on the platform of ignorance! ***“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is”*** (Ephesians 5:17).

ENLIGHTENMENT, FOREKNOWLEDGE AND REVELATION

God made a promise unto Abraham and he believed God. Genesis 12:6-7:

“Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.”

God gave His word to Abraham but because He did not want him to be ignorant of the land of promise; He made him travel to the land. God made him to see that there were people who

were already occupying the land he was supposed to take over, thus preparing his mind. God made sure he expended some energy on acquiring knowledge about the land. The knowledge made him to be better prepared. God made him realize that he was not going to reach his destination easily. Come to think of it, God did not promise Abraham a smooth journey but He however promised him a safe landing! What has God promised you or what do you intend to achieve? What knowledge have you acquired about it? You need to make some concerted efforts to acquire the required knowledge. The required knowledge has both the physical and spiritual dimensions. Both require some efforts. You may need to read, consult, research, pray, fast and wait on the Lord. One thing is clear; you cannot stay in the premises and be claiming the promises.

**Insight is a divine
enlightenment;
foresight is a
product of
revelation**

Anybody who wants to go far in life and with God must have insight and foresight. Insight is a divine enlightenment; foresight is a product of revelation. As a young man/lady, you must know that you need divine insight and foresight for your life. Anybody without these two key things will just be beating about the bush, copying other people or running another person's race and not their own race.

Interestingly, many of us, even as born again Christians, behave like the Pharisees. How? The Pharisees, described in

the Bible, were teachers of the word of God; in fact, they were too familiar with the word. They knew that the Lord Jesus Christ would be born. They knew where and how He would be born. At the end of the day when Christ was born, none of the Pharisees could identify Him. To say the least, they were His major critics and opponents. Why? They were only of the 'letter' and not of the Spirit. They had physical knowledge but no spiritual understanding or revelation. In this age, we have people in the Church who proclaim to be children of God and claim the promises of God, but are generally ignorant of God's word not to talk of having revelational knowledge. Such people are the modern day Pharisees. The reason many people are not rooted in the Church today is that they do not have the understanding and knowledge about God. On the way to the Promised Land, Moses sent out spies, at a certain point in time, to survey the land they were going to possess. I mean its terrain, the landscape, the kind of people there, the strength of their security, etc. This was solely for the reason of having a foreknowledge of where they were going. God does not want you to confront your tomorrow with either empty mind or head.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”
(Ephesians 1:17-18).

Assuming Moses did not have this knowledge which was obtained from good communication and intimacy with God, he might have struggled trying to be somebody else and not achieve the fulfillment of his pursuit.

“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation” (Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus Christ was weeping over Jerusalem but the people were rejoicing, they were oblivious of what God was about to do. They did not know anything because they were in absolute 'darkness'! They were living in a fool's paradise. You need to know that for you to go ahead claiming the promises that God has given you and be what He expects you to be, you need divine knowledge. You need insight and foresight; otherwise, you will waste precious time and proceed in a direction that God did not propose for your life. Consequently, you will work in vain. May that not be your portion in Jesus' name. The people in Jerusalem did not recognize who they were; they did not recognize their time. Some people might even know who they are, have an understanding about their time but not know how to go about it.

Do you remember the sons of the prophets? They knew that Elijah was to be taken away but did not know how it was going to happen. They had the knowledge of what was happening but they did not have the foresight about what to do. When the Lord spoke about the sons of Issachar, He said that they were the people who had the knowledge of times and seasons and they understood what Israel ought to do. Do you know that your problems would be solved if you can relate with God to an extent that you have understanding of times and what you are supposed to do at any point in time? Even when you are passing through some difficulties, with your knowledge and understanding; you will not be moved. The enemy cannot deceive you; the enemy cannot derail you because God has given you the understanding of what you are in and what you are supposed to do at that particular time. You will not behave inappropriately as was done in Hosea 13:12-14.

“The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is stored up. The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him. He is an unwise son, for he should not stay long where children are born. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes”.

This is a parable that rather than going through suffering, the time arrived that Ephraim was supposed to come out but he did not know that was what he was supposed to do. Many people don't have the understanding of what they ought to do per time. May the Lord open our eyes of understanding in the

mighty name of Jesus (Amen).

Why You Should Not Be Ignorant

(i) The first reason you should not live in ignorance is that your relationship with God is not supposed to be by proxy. Why do you have to depend on somebody else for your life? What is the basis? The basis of every thriving relationship is your understanding of the person you are relating with. For instance, if I am relating with my wife, I must understand her and she also must understand me. Thus, if you say that God is your father, you cannot serve God by proxy. People can tell my son about me but my son must have some basic understanding of who I am. If my son now needs to depend on my wife or my boss or my colleagues to know who I am, then he is relating with me by proxy. Can such relationship be fruitful? No! Hence, the reason you need God to speak to you and to relate with you is because relationship can only operate squarely on the basis of understanding. We must understand that God has no grandchildren! He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; not God of Abraham, and grandfather of Isaac.

**We must
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grandfather of
Isaac**

(ii) Secondly, there can only be progress on the basis of knowledge of God. It has always been said that progress is not

about speed, it is about direction. But direction is based on divine knowledge. Therefore, progress in life does not come except there is understanding and revelation. When you desire to go to the next level but God has not spoken to you, how would you actualize your dream? Would you start looking at others who have moved to the next level and follow their footsteps? Would you want to follow what others are doing or the path that is charted for you by God?

If you want to follow the path charted for you by God, you must hear from God; you must have the knowledge of God; God must be speaking to you. Someone said that we all came to know the Lord through John 3:16;

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”.

One important thing I want you to know is that you come to know God by believing Him but your faith needs to be evident by your works, why?

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

It means that those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, while those who are not led by the Spirit of God are not the sons of God. Are you being led by the Spirit of God? It is not just a matter of who you claim you are but a function of being led by the Holy Spirit. Only those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, they are the

children of God. You have to be led by God's Spirit.

“I said, you are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High” (Psalm 82:6).

Consider this simple analogy: by the virtue of morphology and physiology, a baby lion is also a lion. God says being his child; then you are also a god. But if you have to be a god in this world, you must have certain knowledge about how God operates; you must have some attributes and characteristics of God. Therefore, why are you then satisfied by just going to church on Sundays, listening to the messages preached by the Pastor and yet God does not speak to your heart? People who come to church Sunday after Sunday and say “well, we are just satisfied” can only remain as babes, but those are not the kind of people that can move far with God. I challenge you, as you read this book, to recognize that you are a god as the Bible says.

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

Chapter Eight

CHALLENGE # 7: SELF-DISCIPLINE

The seventh challenge confronting the youth is **Self-Discipline**. Discipline is important in every facet of life. For example, if you are not disciplined, you cannot be patient. You cannot also pursue your goals in life within the perimeters of faith if you don't have self-discipline. In reference to peer pressure, you cannot run away successfully from peer pressure if you don't have self-discipline. You cannot fight against ignorance or cultivate relationship with God if you don't have self-discipline. This particular challenge we are considering in this chapter, is central to every other challenge we have discussed.

As a matter of reality, no one enjoys discipline including self-discipline. Thus, if you don't enjoy discipline, you cannot enjoy self-discipline. Nobody enjoys self-discipline! When you talk about discipline to study the word of God, discipline

to wake up very early in the morning and pray, discipline not to do what all others are doing, nobody enjoys it. Though, it is one of the most difficult things in life but it is the most rewarding. In fact, no matter how bright your future is, no matter how bright your tomorrow is, no matter how big the plans God has for you, you can never get there except you have self-discipline. Even if you get there, you cannot finish excellently except you are self-disciplined. I want to emphasize it again: though it is very difficult; it is the most rewarding.

THE PAINS OF LACK OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

The consequences of lack of self-discipline would be illustrated by the story of a famous man in the Bible who was favoured and thus enjoyed the grace of God. You will eventually observe that this man had strengths and weaknesses. The man is Solomon, the wisest man of all ages. As a matter of fact, an average knowledgeable young man will tell you that the name 'Solomon' is synonymous with wisdom. However, his life is an exposition of the foolishness of the wisest man. His foolishness was due to lack of self-discipline despite the fact that he had a bright future, and there were great prophecies about him.

“Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His

testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel." (1 Kings 2:1-4).

This was the charge of David, when he was old, to Solomon his last son. Solomon means the *Peaceful One*. David saw Solomon as somebody who would reincarnate every unfulfilled desire of his mind. David was a man of war; so he never had peace from the beginning of his life to the end, as he was always fighting one battle or the other. David fought so many battles until he was forbidden by his men not to fight again due to old age. Although he never had peace, he was always victorious in battle. David, before passing on, prayed a special prayer for Solomon (*The Peaceful One*) and also prophesied into his life.

A Psalm of Solomon reads thus:

"Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth. In His days the

righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight. And He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, and daily He shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, on the top of the mountains; its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; and those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended” (Psalm 72:1-20).

This Psalm was a confession of the prayer of David by Solomon, in addition to being a Messianic Psalm. Let us focus on vs. 7-10, 15 and 20 for the sake of emphasis.

“In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He

shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. And He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, and daily He shall be praised. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

Psalm 72, the last prayer of David, was a prayer devoted to Solomon by David who, in the course of praying, prophesied what would happen to Solomon. What Solomon achieved, in his lifetime, was not as a result of his effort but as a result of the covenant that God had already established with his father-David. Blessed are you if you have Christian parents who can enter into covenant relationship with God on your behalf. Favoured are you if you have the spiritual leaders who can stand in the gap for you by praying for your going out and coming in. The testimony is not going to be due to your efforts but as a result of the prayer sacrifice offered on your behalf. Solomon was a young man whose future was so bright that he ascended the throne at a very tender age. In fact, Solomon was proclaimed the king while David was still on the throne.

**If the plan of God
would come to
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if the purpose of
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big plans God has
for you would
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discipline**

That is to tell you how much the father loved him, how bright his future was, and how great the plan and purpose of God for his life were.

When he eventually ascended the throne after the death of David, God asked him to choose one out of three things: long life, riches and wisdom. He chose wisdom and God said to him: **'what you have asked I will give you, the other ones you have not asked I will also give you'**. This, however, came to pass partially but not fully. Why? This was because Solomon lacked self-discipline. If the plan of God would come to pass in your life, if the purpose of God would be established in your life, if the big plans God has for you would come to pass, you need self-discipline. What happened to Solomon?

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites – from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David” (1 Kings 11:1-4).

What a record! The first thing Solomon did when he ascended the throne was to marry the princess of the king of Egypt. He also conducted businesses with the heathens

There must
always be set
boundaries in life
issues, regardless
of what the cost is
going to be. The
fact that we want
to achieve or
move forward
does not justify
living without
boundaries set by
the word of God

The fourth thing about Solomon was that he wrote so much and knew so much about wisdom but surprisingly ended up as a fool. It is not what you know that really matters but what you do with the little you know. Many go to church and listen to several messages but do not apply what they have heard. Although, it is good to be spiritually informed, the fruit of your life is the most important. Solomon knew so much, but it was a classical case of knowledge without the will. Many people have so much knowledge but there is no will to put that knowledge into action.

Historians have reported that Solomon wrote over 1,000 songs. The book of the Songs of Solomon gives a reflection of his life as a youth and his knowledge of young men. He wrote over 3,000 proverbs and later in his life when reality dawned on him, he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. Songs of Solomon was written when he was young; the book of Proverbs when he became mature and finally the book of Ecclesiastes written in the latter part of his life when he realized he had played a fool in his early days. His writing, in the book of Ecclesiastes, reflects his regret for what he had done earlier on in life and he said **'At the end of the day, vanity upon vanity, all is vanity'**. He spent a lot of time with women, consequently he grew old quickly and he passed on at the age of 60. This was a man whom God promised riches, wisdom and long life; but because of his lack of self-discipline, he had riches and wisdom but did not have long life. It was really a sorry and pathetic case!

KEYS TO LIVING A DISCIPLINED LIFE

For you to consistently make progress in life, you must be self-disciplined. In every area of your life, self-discipline is very important. I want to charge you with this:

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.' I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

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with the little
you know**

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life is the most
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'Come out from them and be ye separate' says the Lord.

1. Bastards and rebellious children do not listen to their parents. As Christians, we should not emulate the unbelievers in what they say or do. Rather, we should use whatever is of

This was a man whom God promised riches, wisdom and long life; but because of his lack of self-discipline, he had riches and wisdom but did not have long life. It was really a sorry and pathetic case!

God to impact the traditions of the world. We have no business trying to look at what is happening with the unbelievers and making it our own reference point. Instead, we should be their reference and case study in all we do or say. We don't have to adopt the kind of language they use especially when it is profane.

Remember that there is no any agreement between light and darkness.

The Bible says that we are the light of the world and God does not father bastards. Know that you are a chosen generation, you are a royal priesthood, you are a holy nation and you are a peculiar people. The main reason for your existence is to show forth the glory of He who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. God has a lot of expectations from you because He has invested a lot of things in you. Therefore, you should not degrade yourself by comparing yourself with the traditions of the world.

2. There must be a dramatic contrast between your past and present if actually you are exercising self-discipline. At least, everybody has a past. God is not interested in your past but in your present and how you are moving into your future. If that would happen, there must be a dramatic contrast between the past and now. If your past and your present are still comparable, then nothing has changed, nothing has

happened and you cannot go far with God. You will go far with God in Jesus' name. Amen!

“That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

You need to renew your mind and your mind can only be renewed when you feed on the word of God and open yourself to the Holy Spirit. You cannot renew your mind if you don't know the word of God. There must be a change! We should not segregate the world in a bid to carry the light and shine forth, but nevertheless we must separate ourselves.

3. Thirdly, you must submit to only one Master. Jesus Christ cannot be just one of your masters. If you indeed want to be self-disciplined, Jesus cannot afford to be one of your masters; He has to be the only Master. The Bible says in Matthew 6:24:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”.

Many Christians take Jesus Christ to be one of their masters. When they are in the Church, He is their Master but in the office or at home, He is no longer. If you discipline yourself enough; Jesus Christ, who is your Master in the Church,

should be your Master in the office, at home and when you are with your colleagues. He should be the only Master to whom you always submit.

4. The fourth thing is that we must impose some restrictions on ourselves. Impose some restrictions, some cautions and some order on your life. **'All things are lawful but not all things are expedient'**. Paul was trying to place some restrictions on himself. It wasn't God making this statement. Some forms of dressing may not necessarily be sinful, but it may not be expedient for a believer to dress in some ways. Imposition of some restrictions may be needed for the sake of being an ambassador of Christ. Every child of God is an ambassador of Christ and therefore, there must be some restrictions which are not limited to only Pastors and Unit Leaders! If institutions put restrictions on themselves for quality control in the interest of the progress of the institutions, how much more should the household of God enforce restrictions? As I have stated earlier, it is not an issue of dos and don'ts, but it is a matter of pleasing the Lord.

Finally, the book of Ecclesiastes 11:9 states:

“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment”.

The choice is yours, be happy, have melody in your heart, be merry, do anything you want. However, know that for all

these things God will bring you to judgment. If we then know that for all these things God will bring us to judgment, then we should know there is a need for caution and discipline. God has big plans for every one of us and that is why He said '**I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, they are thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you a future and a hope.**' He has also promised that our expectation shall not be cut off. God has beautiful plans for you, just like he had for Solomon. David prayed for Solomon, he also prophesied over his life but due to lack of self-discipline, he did not co-operate with God to bring it to fulfillment.

The co-operation God needs from you is self-discipline. He is your Father and He cares for you more than your earthly father does. He wants you to make great exploits and do mighty things in your life. If you are ready to submit to Him today, He will father you in a way that nobody else can ever do.

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

EPILOGUE

Let me conclude this book with a poem published in the Magazine (*Evergreen*) of our Ministry- Cedar Generation Gospel Outreach in June 2014.

I AM A DREAM

I am

the dream of many generations
a seed, the future of many trees
don't eat me, plant me and allow me grow

I am

the dream of many generations
an egg, the future of many eggs
don't break me, give me time to hatch

I am

the dream of many generations
a treasure, the future of many expeditions
don't bother much, with time I will be unraveled

7 CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

I am

the dream of many generations
a vision, the gently unfolding morning rose
don't go blind, you shall surely see my beauty

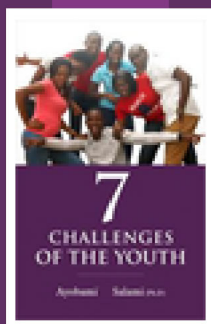
I am

the dream of many generations
an impact that would outlast time
don't look far, unfading steps telling my story

I am

a dream in the heart of my God
a story lost in His awesome history
don't even try, am waiting on Him to fulfill purpose

The divine plan, purpose and position of the youths cannot be over-emphasized; yet they are faced with myriads of challenges posing threats to the goal of fulfilling their destiny. Naturally, youths are full of life, excitement and fantasies, thus, they are easily driven and influenced by a number of things. This book- **7 Challenges of the Youth** identifies seven important pitfalls that youths must be wary of in order to achieve their goals, fulfill their purpose and avoid regret in life. If the youths could positively channel their natural endowments and resources (passion, vigor, intelligence, drive, etc.) into all their endeavors, they would definitely rule the world. The book provides a synopsis of Godly and time-tested means of dealing with these challenges. The onus is therefore on every young person to critically examine himself or herself, in the light of the identified challenges. This compendium is a must-read for all youths and even the elderly who desire divine accomplishment.



Ayobami Salami (Ph.D) is a product of grace with a very humble family background. His conversion into Christianity dates back to his undergraduate days in the University. The genuine passion he has for the youth drives him into investing his God-given resources into the lives of the young ones. He is a down-to-earth man of God who believes, teaches and practices the scriptures. He is the Set man of Cedar Generation Gospel Outreach and Presiding Pastor of the Abundant Life Chapel, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. In the world of Academia, Ayobami Salami has contributed immensely to the body of knowledge through teaching and research. To his credit, he has many scholarly publications in reputable local and foreign journals. He is a Professor in the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria where he had served as the Director, before his appointment as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), of the University. He is married to Prof. (Mrs.) Abiodun Olusola Salami and to the glory of God; the union is blessed with children.



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