



DYNAMICS OF  
**GROWTH**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**CHAPTER ONE : [UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GROWTH](#)**

**CHAPTER TWO: [THE LAW OF PRODUCTIVITY](#)**

**CHAPTER THREE : [EXPOSURE](#)**

**CHAPTER FOUR: [COMPETENCE](#)**

**CHAPTER FIVE: [LEVERAGING ON QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS](#)**

**CHAPTER SIX: [CAREER CHOICES AND TRANSITIONING FROM AN EMPLOYEE TO AN ENTREPRENEUR](#)**

# CHAPTER ONE

## UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

### GROWTH

Growth is consistent with life. Everything God designed was meant to go through a growth process.

When something is not growing, it becomes a concern. For instance, if you give birth to a child and the child is not growing, the parents would naturally be worried. If a wife gets pregnant and her belly is not protruding, and nothing seems to be happening, it raises concerns. You go to the doctor to confirm that the baby is still alive and developing. Sometimes the baby could be there but lifeless. You need to confirm because everything God designed is meant to grow.

Plants grow, animals grow, and humans grow. So, when growth is stunted, it becomes a serious issue. If your life is not progressing in any area, it should be addressed.

This is especially true when you observe people around you making progress, while your own life feels stagnant or even moving backward. You begin to wonder what is wrong because, by now, you feel things should be working as expected. This can be troubling and calls for finding a solution.

**In the growth process, there are two fundamentals:**

- **Learning**
- **Resilience**

Nobody grows outside the worldview of their learning curves. We learn to grow, develop, and advance. No one shuns learning and continues to grow. Learning is a fundamental reality that engenders growth. If you see someone who is not growing, examine their learning curves.

I am not saying you will not make mistakes. Mistakes are not barriers. They are for our learning.

**Romans 15:4**

**'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.'**

This includes the mistakes of the patriarchs. They were recorded so we don't follow the same footsteps or patterns. If a patriarch did something wrong, it is meant to serve as a learning curve for you, to recognize where they stumbled and avoid stumbling in the same place.

For instance, if your parents made certain mistakes, such as being polygamous, it is for you to learn and choose a different path. You must be challenged to rise out of obscurity and step into the spotlight. You must be challenged to receive light because it is light that drives your productivity and transformation.

Transformation is evolving into a superior version of yourself. It is about changing into someone better.

You must grow as a student. You will never see a first-class student living a casual life. I've seen first-class students, met with some, and observed their priorities and what they do consistently. For instance, a first-class student must read every day. It is a must. Even if it's just 30 minutes or an hour, they make daily reading a priority because their success hinges on it. You cannot beat the best without doing what it takes to surpass the best.

You can't rise higher in life without subscribing to the cultures and protocols that make the horizon. Sometimes, we expect life to unfold miraculously, as though things will just happen. But life doesn't work that way. There are deliberate efforts you must make to ensure life works in your favor.

For example, life itself doesn't come pre-programmed for you. You are the one who programs your destiny. Life isn't inherently designed to favor or disfavor anyone. There's no such thing as being destined to fail or live in poverty. God did not create anyone to be a failure. What you reap in life depends on what you sow. It is your investments, efforts and contributions that determine your harvest.

Therefore, you must learn to grow.

Everything grows with time. Growth is a process; you don't just bump into it. Growth happens gradually, and everything that must improve in life requires a process. You cannot skip the process. It is essential to your development.

For example, as a student, I don't expect you to be longing for a Ferrari. That's like trying to eat dinner at breakfast—it's out of place. Your current focus should be academic excellence, and perhaps alongside that, building economic value. You are developing your potential and building capacity in the spirit. But primarily, your pursuit should be academic prowess and excellence. This is different for someone who is married.

For someone who is married, academics is unlikely to be a primary focus, especially if they have children. In such a case, your primary responsibility becomes your family. You can extend care to others, but your family must come first. As you grow, your priorities will naturally shift and change.

Take advantage of your singlehood. There are many things you can achieve now that you may not accomplish or may achieve more slowly after marriage. In marriage, your attention becomes divided. You'll need to manage many responsibilities, like providing

for your family and addressing various needs. Without discipline, certain things may slip away, such as your spiritual life.

For example, if not for my wife's discipline, she might struggle to maintain her spiritual life. The stress of daily life can leave you mentally and physically exhausted. You'll need to make sacrifices. Some people may be advancing in their careers or other areas, and you might feel left behind. What does she do? She plans her day intentionally. She sets an alarm for 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. every day to wake up, tend to the family, and carry out her morning devotion and other activities.

What are the things you're giving your attention to?

Growth is consistent with life.

## KINDS OF GROWTH

1. Natural Growth
2. Spiritual Growth

## NATURAL GROWTH

This is often referred to as Human Growth and Development, and it captures different dimensions:

- **Physical Growth:** Changes in body size, height, weight, and muscle development.
- **Cognitive Growth:** Changes in thinking, reasoning, understanding, comprehension, and intellectual abilities, including problem-solving skills.
- **Emotional Growth:** Changes in the ability to regulate and express emotions.
- **Social Growth:** Changes in the ability to interact with others, form relationships, and develop social skills and communication abilities.

These four dimensions of growth are essential to the furtherance of life. If any of these areas are lacking, your life may feel out of alignment. Without the knowledge and soft skills required to navigate social interactions and communicate effectively, your life may lack meaning.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH

**Spiritual Growth** is the ability to train, grow, and develop yourself in the spirit, specifically with respect to the knowledge of Christ. What makes for your true growth is the particular knowledge you are exposed to. It's not just about any knowledge; there's a specific body of knowledge, a particular body of truth that you must be exposed to. In this case, it must be the knowledge of Christ. That's the way you can grow. If you listen

to every other thing apart from the knowledge of Christ, your growth is not in view. Your growth may be stunted. You might walk the path of darkness, thinking that you are in light. Your growth is consistent with the knowledge of Christ. Growth is developing spiritual muscles, masculinity, capacity, enablement, and energies.

But do you know that, as important as the dimensions of natural growth are, they are still subservient to your spiritual growth? They remain under the influence of your spiritual growth. This is the difference between those who are born of God and those who are born only naturally.

We have an advantage as spiritual people. Being born of God is the greatest and most profound privilege you can have. It is a powerful privilege. Those dimensions are still under the influence of your spiritual capacity. This is because you are a being of eternity, a being of light. You are born of God. You are not ordinary. That's why you should pity people who are not in Christ. That's the purpose of soulwinning—to save them, because we are aware that there is so much they are losing by not forming a league with Christ, by not being in alignment with Christ. They are losing a lot. They must be saved, as that is the only hope of eternal life. There's nothing you can do about it. It is only the believer who has eternal life. Unbelievers don't have eternal life.

### **John 17:3**

**'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'**

As you grow naturally, you must also grow spiritually, because God is not against your natural growth. God is not against you developing yourself intellectually or cognitively. It is very important that you develop in all of those areas. You must learn social skills. You must grow in wisdom.

Most of the time, your decision-making is not just logical or rational but spiritual. For instance, you might be offered two jobs—one with very good-paying remuneration, and the other with a lower offer. Yet, you go to God in prayer, and He reveals that His intention for you is the job with the lower offer..Logically speaking, that doesn't make sense. It isn't rational.

### **Jeremiah 29 : 11**

**'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD , thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. '**

That's why we must superimpose spirituality over naturality. This ensures that your decisions are not made in the flesh or simply based on the opportunities around you but are guided by God Himself, who is ordering your life.

## Psalm 37 : 23

**'The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD : And he delighteth in his way.'**

So, we are not merely beings of logic but of faith. It is faith that regulates our lives. We see through the eyes of faith, and we make decisions with the perspective of faith.

## Proverbs 14 : 12

**There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death.'**

God is the one who regulates our lives. This applies to our career paths, our choices, and everything we engage in—it must all be guided by light. We don't just dabble into things because they appear pleasing; without light, we are bound to make errors. We journey by light. **In this kingdom, we rise by light, not by luck.**

## Areas for Spiritual Growth

### 1. We grow in the knowledge of God.

#### 2 Peter 3:18

**'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.'**

I mentioned earlier that for you to grow spiritually, there is a body of truth—an exactitude of truth—that you must learn. That truth is the knowledge of Christ.

#### John 14 : 6

**'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'**

There is a specific body of truth that builds us into the stature of Christ that we desire.

#### Ephesians 4 : 13

**'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: '**

We grow into 'the Christ'. It is his knowledge that enforces our growth, advancement and stature.

## Colossians 1: 9 - 11

**'For this cause we also, since the day we heard it , do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; '**

The knowledge of God can increase. God is progressive, and you can grow in your understanding of Him. You can know and understand Him better. There were many things that many of us taught many years ago that we are now taking redress on because we taught them wrongly. God is not angry with us. It was our stature at that time. Now that we know better, He does not expect us to teach the same again. We must come out openly and let people know that what we taught was wrong. We have grown in the knowledge of God; we don't remain in our error. At that level, God still permitted it because He knew we were works in progress. But now that we have grown, we ought to come and establish people in the present truth.

## 2 Peter 1:12

**'Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them , and be established in the present truth. '**

### 2. We grow in our discernment.

## Hebrews 5:12-14

**'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.'**

The word "full of age" is the word "maturity," i.e., those who are mature. This brings me to the point where I have to say to us that there are spiritual senses.

The Bible says that we exercise our senses, not the natural senses. Just as we have natural senses, we also have spiritual senses by which we discern things. That's how you know which job to take and which one to avoid. That's how you know which interviews to welcome and which to decline. That's how you know the choice for your marital life. You know what to do because you have discernment. You're not just looking with optical eyes; you are seeing with the eyes of the Spirit. You know how to engage

the eyes of the Spirit to ensure that everything works to your pros / advantage. We don't just dabble into things.

## **The Sense of Sight (The Eyes of Your Understanding)**

### **Ephesians 1:18**

**'the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, '**

Every believer has this capacity. It is not just for seers or those who see visions. The sense of sight is activated through the word of God. The more you look into the word, the more your sense of sight comes alive. You don't have to see visions optically. You don't have to see in a seer dimension. There's what we call the **knowing of the knower**, where you just know. It's also a vision. It's also a sight. You are just aware. **Knowing is awareness.** You just know that this is wrong. This is a difficult decision that I don't need to rush into. You don't know how you know, but you know.

### **Ephesians 3:1-4**

**'For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) '**

So, it means that knowledge is a product of sight. Anything you don't have knowledge of, you're not open to the sight of it. The moment you have access to sight, knowledge becomes a direct offspring of sight.

## **The Sense of Perception**

'Perception', in the Greek, is 'Theoreo' (theory). which means to experience or to intensely know, to know intently and deeply, to see, to discern.

### **Acts 27:10**

**'and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. '**

He didn't say, 'I saw a vision' or 'I heard God.' He only said, 'I perceive.' That's 'Theoreo.' 'I don't know how I know, but as I'm going on this journey, I perceive that something is going to go wrong.'

I was traveling some years ago, and as I hopped onto a bus, I heard the voice of God like a perception telling me that this bus would have an accident on the road. The moment I heard that, my next step was to run out of the bus. As I was running, God said, 'Go back.' He told me, 'I want you to preserve the destiny of everyone on that bus. From the point of departure to arrival, ensure that you are praying.' So, I began praying in the Spirit. I was coming from Oshogbo. I prayed from that point until we passed Redemption Camp. Eventually, what God had said happened, but no one was hurt. Maybe something else could have happened, or people could have died, but God sought a man who would stand to intercede on their behalf, and that man aligned.

Maybe there have been many times when God has spoken to you like that, too, but you were caught up in the web of sleep. There are times when God comes to you and says, 'Rise up in the night and pray.' You don't know why you are praying, but it's to preserve destinies. And if you refuse, God goes to another person, or something else might happen to those people that you are not aware of. The summons of God comes to us often. He doesn't hide things from us; He hides things for us.

We are the custodians of the revelations of God. It is for us, to us, and to our children's children. It is to our advantage. There are many times that this comes to you, but you are slippery.

#### **John 4:19**

**'The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. '**

#### **2 Kings 4:9**

**'And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. '**

Perception is a spiritual asset that you must have. This is what helps you in decision-making. Sometimes, you don't have the time to go and pray; you have to make decisions on the spot.

There was a time some people were in a board meeting at an organization. They called me from there and said, "Pastor, we are in this board meeting, and people are listening to you. We need to take a decision now, and we want to know what God is saying." That's when it becomes evident that you hear God. As they were talking in that board meeting, I was already engaging. So, as we were in that meeting, I just said to them, "This is what God is saying." And they said, "Yes!"

Some people are asked, "Are you a prophet?" and when the answer is yes, they are then asked, "What do you do?" The reply often is, "I dream." But does that mean every time you need to give a revelation, you have to go to sleep first? You'd say, "Please let me sleep, and when I wake up, I'll give you the answer." But what if someone dies before you wake up?

One day, someone called me—a person of influence and wealth. He told me about an apartment he was considering securing and asked me to pray over it and let him know if it was a good choice. As I prayed, God showed me a two-bedroom apartment, but that vision didn't align with his status. I couldn't imagine him in a two-bedroom apartment—what would he do with it?

As I continued praying, I saw that vision and also some colors. So, I asked him, "Is that place a two-bedroom apartment?" He replied, "Yes. How do you know?" Then he said, "Pastor, you are looking at my status." I responded, "Yes." Sometimes, we judge things based on face value, not understanding the mind of God.

That's how some of you make decisions about whom to marry. You look and think, "This person doesn't have potential." You choose someone else simply because the first person you saw was wearing worn-out shoes and appeared untidy. You think, "This could never be God's choice for me. This is not what I prayed for."

However, brothers, do well to take care of yourself. You don't need to have the best, but make sure you present yourself in a way that's pleasing to the eye. Look smart. It might not be expensive, but do your best to look presentable. I may not know your circumstances, but in all things, strive to present yourself excellently. Women are not only moved by what they hear; they also want to see. They want to look before they leap.

We do not merchandise the gift of God. However, the truth is that many times, it is the gift of God that brings food to your table. That, however, is not the purpose of the gift. You use it in purity and righteousness, and as a result, people may rise to reward you. They may choose to favor you simply because you've provided a solution to their lives.

But you begin to cross a line when you start to merchandise it. That's the ministry of Balaam—using the gift for personal gain in exchange for money. That is what God is against. He does not want us to merchandise the gospel.

You pray for people freely when it's necessary. I've heard stories of people saying, "For me to pray for you, you have to pay this amount of money," and I wonder, "When did we get to this point?"

### **Matthew 10:8**

**Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.**

As believers, some of us are allowing ourselves to be influenced by the enemy. We give him access to our vocal cords, enabling him to use them for so many things. But that is not who you are. You cannot hate. You should not hate. You should not be jealous.

## The Sense of Hearing

### Revelation 1:10

**'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,** '

### Isaiah 30:21

**'and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.** '

God speaks to us, and we hear Him. Hearing with the ears is not literal. Some people have interacted with God so much that they become deeply acquainted with His voice. The only place we truly hear the voice of God is within us. However, due to the depth of your interaction with God, His voice can become so clear and distinct that it feels as though you heard it with your ears.

It's not that God speaks to your ears from the outside. Not to discredit those who say, "I heard it in my right ear"—they indeed heard from God. But what they heard came to their spirit. The mode of transportation for that hearing has become so familiar to them that it seems as if it comes directly to their ears.

### Romans 10:17

**'So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'**

### John 10:3-5

**'To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.'**

The voice of God should not be scarce to us as believers. Just as you easily recognize the voice of your parents, even when you are blindfolded at night, and your mom speaks, you know it's her because of the interaction and relationship you've shared. You've been so accustomed to each other, and you've grown together. Similarly, as you grow in the knowledge of God, His voice will not be scarce to you. You will recognize it. Even in the midst of noise, you will know it. Even if you are in a crowded marketplace, you will hear it. You will recognize the voice that speaks to you.

Sometimes, God will train us with His voice, and there may be no particular reason or immediate purpose for it. You might be on your way home and suddenly hear Him lead you down a different route. You may wonder if there is some danger ahead, and when you follow the route, there may be no apparent reason for the detour. But God isn't

concerned with an immediate danger; He is training you. He wants to familiarize you with His voice so that, in the days of adversity, you will recognize it. In the future, when you hear the same voice, you will know it is your Father speaking. So, there will be many occasions where He will train you with His voice, to help you know Him better.

### **1 Samuel 3:1-9**

**'And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.'**

That was the way God trained Samuel. He kept calling his name, and Samuel would rise, go to his spiritual father, and say, "Sir, you called me." Since it had been a while since Eli had been in fellowship with God, it took him some time to discern the signal in the Spirit. The lamp in the temple had gone out, and Eli's eyes were dim. It took three attempts for Eli to finally recognize that it was God speaking to Samuel. God had returned to them, and Samuel learned to recognize God's voice through consistency.

In the same way, when you engage with the Scriptures consistently, you become acquainted with the voice of God. To understand His voice, you must be well-acquainted with the Scriptures. The more you stay immersed in the Word, the more God's voice becomes amplified. You will begin to understand it clearly, distinctly, and transparently. That is how God works.

The Sense of Hearing is the ability to receive the Word in your spirit and decode it. The decoding is very important. You have to decode his voice.

## Essentials to Spiritual Growth

### 1. We Grow by the Word

#### Acts 20:32

**'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. '**

The Word of God is a building force. It has building components and the capacity to establish and strengthen you. If you want to gain stature and spiritual masculinity, you must give yourself to the Word consistently and continually.

Think about it—when you're not eating a balanced diet or you're not eating at all, what happens? It shows on your body. If you're not eating, you'll be drained of strength. Your energy will fail. In the same way, if you're not feeding yourself spiritually, you'll become lean in the spirit.

When you're in a position where you need to make decisions, your ability to discern correctly will be affected. You may even pick up the wrong signals because you haven't built the reality of God into your discernment corridor—your discernment vault.

We must be given to the Word. It is the Word that causes us to grow. Say to yourself: *I grow by the Word. I live by the Word. I journey by the Word. The Word defines me; I do not define the Word.*

We are not the one who give dictates to the word. The word dictates our lives. It defines who we are, and we live by the same experience. So we grow by the word.

#### 1 Peter 2:2

**'as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: '**

We can't grow without the Word. It is fundamental and foundational to your spiritual journey. You grow primarily through the Word.

### 2. We Grow by Prayer (Incense)

#### Jude 1:20

**'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, '**

You build yourself up by praying. Don't be casual with prayer. I've noticed that those who don't like to pray or seldom pray are often the ones who complain when others are

praying—especially if someone in the neighborhood, maybe next door, says, "Your prayers are too loud." My response? 'You too, pray.'

Now, I don't encourage disturbing the environment. In my house, we pray consistently, but we don't make noise. I'm not saying there aren't moments when prayer hits you so deeply that you scream, but it can't be all the time. If you make that a consistent lifestyle, you become like the Pharisees—the hypocrites.

### **Matthew 6: 5**

**And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**

I like to shout too, but when I'm in a controlled environment, I have to be controlled. You learn to pray. Every time the burden of God comes to you, rise up and pray—it's very important.

Give yourself to a life of prayer. Don't be casual with life because life itself is not casual. Don't just adopt the mindset of *Que Sera Sera*—"whatever will be, will be." That's a very flawed mantra. Whatever will be, will not just be. It is what you make to be that will be.

### **3. Not Forsaking the Assembly of the Saints**

This is so powerful. It's a very powerful building system. As we gather together, the intelligence of God ensures that each one of us supplies strength; that all joints supply. You may come weak, but your arrival brings strength. The moment you step into the gathering of saints and see people praying, a very serious energy grows in your spirit, and you also begin to pray. You probably couldn't pray the previous day, but the moment you arrive, something stirs within you. It's a system of God to ensure that we help ourselves grow.

Sometimes, when you see a brother growing and praying, you are moved. You say, "The same God helping this brother can also help me." So, you cannot sit down at home, boycotting the assembly of the saints, and expect to grow. God designed the body of Christ to be a building force and system. That's why you must gather regularly. Don't just attend meetings as a visitor or a first-timer. Ensure that you are willing to grow spiritually, to make your spirit come alive, and to rise in the spirit.

### **Hebrews 10:25**

**'not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. '**

## **Psalm 84:7**

**'They go from strength to strength, Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.'**

It is only those who come to Zion who garner strength. It is in Zion that we gather strength. Strength is supplied on the basis of our collocation, of our gathering. As we gather consistently, energies are passed, and strength is supplied. We are built up in the things of the Spirit because we are gathered together as the body of Christ. All joints supply.

Do you know that we are at various spiritual levels in the body of Christ? We are not all the same. Some individuals cannot pray for 30 minutes, while others might be able to manage just 15 minutes. Meanwhile, there are those who can travel in prayer for four hours nonstop. When such a person prays, they transfer energy through their vessel, and the reality of Christ on their prayer altar can spark up someone else's altar.

Have you ever been around someone like this, where every time you're with them, you feel compelled to pray? You sense an atmosphere shift and think, "I believe we need to pray." If some luminaries were to enter a place like this, we would immediately feel their influence based on their stature with God. The moment they step in, an atmosphere follows them. These things are real.

As a pastor, my altar should be able to carry everyone. That's why it's dangerous for a pastor not to have an altar—not just an erected altar, but a mobile altar. One where you touch down every day and collide with immortality. Where you fraternize with the Spirit of God. Where you speak and converse with Him as though He is a friend. Because, in fact, He is.

So, we learn to come into God's presence. As you come, what is happening is that there's a supply of strength, a supply of energy. Sometimes, you won't even notice it immediately, but once you step out, you will realize that since you participated in this gathering, your prayer life has changed. It is your situation that now reveals to you that something has happened to you. The same you who came is not the same you who went back, though the change may have occurred inwardly.

These things happen inside. If anyone dies from poison, it is because they ingested it. The poison is not outside; it's inside. However, its effect is seen outwardly. Likewise, when you take in God's word, when you receive the reality of God, there must necessarily be an aftermath effect on your life. When you gather with the saints, the energy you receive travels with you. That's the way God designed it.

## **Acts 2:46-47**

**'And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,**

**praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.'**

This is the apostolic community. Look at what they were doing daily. We don't even gather daily. We gather every first and last Saturday of the month and every Tuesday. But look at the apostolic community—look at their influence, look at what they were subscribing to: daily meetings. I'm not sure we can get to that point again, not even in Lagos. How does one become weak when meeting with God all the time? God is not weak. He is a God of strength.

### **Isaiah 40:31**

**'but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.'**

When you come before God, your weaknesses are exchanged for His strength.

### **2 Corinthians 12:9**

**'And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. '**

He welcomes you as a weak vessel, but you can't leave as one. There must be strength. There must be the energy of the Spirit. You came not knowing how to stay on the altar of prayer, but as you leave, something is energized within you. You rise beyond your previous limitations. God has added layer upon layer of strength, enabling you to rise and pray. Your appetite for the Word is stirred. This is why you gather. The last thing you should do is neglect God's presence.

### **Psalms 122:1**

**'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD . '**

It's a place of strength, a place of excitement, and a place where God feeds us.

### **Jeremiah 3:15**

**'and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. '**

That's why you come to church: to be fed and to learn of God

## 4. Fasting

One of the ways we consecrate ourselves is through fasting. Fasting does not give you power; it makes power available. The power of God is already within you through the Holy Ghost.

### Ephesians 3:20

**'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, '**

Power may not be made available unless you give yourself to a certain level of consecration. It may be uncommon to some, but if you walk closely with God, He will reveal this to you.

### 1 Corinthians 10:23

**'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. '**

**What happens when you fast?**

### Isaiah 58:6-8

**' Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. '**

Light breaks forth when you fast. Fasting opens you up for spiritual interaction. By depriving yourself of earthly food, you make space for heavenly nourishment, allowing access to a portal of spiritual connection. In this time, you become more sensitive, unlike the usual days when you're caught up in routine. There's nothing wrong with that, as fasting every day isn't feasible. But sometimes, setting aside time for separation enables you to seek His face, just to see Him as He is in His glory. As you do so, light breaks forth, and when light shines, you gain stature and capacity, you gain access to knowledge and begin to see things as they truly are.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE LAW OF PRODUCTIVITY

We are looking at how our entire lives can be exposed to growth. In this exploration, I will show you how we can grow in all facets of our lives. Some time ago, I taught about the value system and the importance of learning to add value to others. As I progressed in my study, I realized that you can be valuable and yet not be rewarded. There is a level beyond just value, and that level is **productivity**.

#### **Ecclesiastes 9:14-15**

**'there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city: yet no man remembered that same poor man.'**

A poor wise man? What kind of appellation is this? No one remembered this man. The same thing happened to Joseph. He had value, but it was not rewarded.

Value is just a potential. Value must be converted into productivity. Your value must produce. What do you have on the inside? Is it talent? Is it a gift? They can be there, but without being translated, transmitted, or migrated into productivity, nothing will happen.

In a capitalist system or society, there are three groups of people: **the producers, the distributors, and the consumers**.

#### **PRODUCERS**

The producers are those who make or create things that add sufficient value to people's lives. They are not just valuable; they make and create.

We enjoy a seamless travel system today because a group of people, known as the Wright brothers, invented air transportation, easing movement across great distances.

In 2019, I was invited to Lokoja for a seven-day meeting. I was supposed to preach for seven days. I got to the park, boarded a bus, and traveled by road. However, I didn't make it in time for the first day of the meeting. I arrived between 11 p.m. and 12 a.m., meaning I had to wait an extra day, making it an eight-day trip.

At the end of the meeting, a woman whom God had touched and healed—who was also a banker—asked how I planned to return to Lagos. I told her it would be the usual way (by road). She refused and insisted on paying for my flight.

I was taken to Abuja, where I boarded the plane. I remember calling my wife before takeoff. In just 45 minutes, I landed in Lagos. When I called to tell her I had arrived, she was shocked—it was as though I had never traveled at all.

From that year, I decided that poverty has no place in my life. You may choose to fraternize with it, but that's not my prayer for you. I had spent about 15–16 hours on the road, yet in just 45 minutes, I was in Lagos.

The producers produce. They are willing to create things. They do market research, asking, "*What are the things people need in this environment?*"

Some of you are students, and you can easily check. Even though something is already in place, there is always a way to do it better.

There are people who travel miles just to eat at a particular restaurant. On their way, they pass by many others, yet they prefer to go to that one place. Why? Because that's what fits them—the ambience, the service, everything that happens there is already appealing. They would rather travel far to patronize someone in a distant location while boycotting several restaurants nearby.

That is not just value; that is productivity. You are creating things that people want. You are making things happen.

I usually say this humorously—some people make cakes that look like cement. And yet, they expect customers to come back! You make a cake, and when we examine it, it's like the dissolution of cement—a composition of several things that resemble construction material rather than food.

Recently, my wife showed me a particular cake, and I was amazed—*Who did this?* These are the things that kings look for. Otherwise, you will remain in the service of ordinary people.

Kings are willing to pay for anything. It is not just about what you are making; it is about the value you place on it. You put value on your worth, especially for those who are worthy.

Producers answer people's questions. They go beyond just potential—they migrate to productivity. They make things happen.

Potential is still at a dormant level. It is just an ability, something that *could* happen but has not yet happened. You need to make it kinetic—moving from potential energy to kinetic energy. Let people see what you are worth.

One thing that God will do with us in this place is to raise producers in our midst. Pray for ideas. Myles Munroe said, "*Ideas rule the world.*" That man interacted with governmental authorities. The bigwigs of organizations were the people he engaged with.

As a pastor, he provided solutions to economic crises and addressed challenges in government parastatals. They sought him out because he carried intelligence that was useful in all spheres. We must begin to raise that kind of believer.

Yes, the pulpit raised someone like Archbishop Benson Idahosa, who traveled around the world at least 52 times as a pastor. That is not just value—that value became productive. People placed value on his intelligence, on what he knew in the Lord. So, if we have such people, we must also raise men of influence.

I know there are those who oppose these kinds of teachings. For what we are doing in this landscape, the church will have to rise. I know they say the church is not the solution. Even some Christians are saying that.

Do you know that if your boss at work wants to retrench people, the reason he probably won't retrench you is not just because you are a Christian, but because of your value system—what you are bringing to the table?

You can be a Christian and remain just a Christian without value and productivity. Even if you pray and pray, except by the mercy of God, that's the only way you might be retained.

Meanwhile, these things happen in organizations. One day, they can suddenly announce, *"Everyone who doesn't have a Master's degree, we are retrenching you."*

We've got to be productive. Take your time, sit down, and rack your brain around the things that make for productivity. Don't be casual with your life. I am not only referring to entrepreneurs—this applies to everyone.

Whether you have a job, are employed, unemployed, an artisan, a student, or whatever you are, you must learn what I am teaching you because this will be your bailout system in the days that are coming. You will be amazed at what's ahead.

Of course, things will change, but before they do, you'll be amazed. And it will be only those who have excused themselves from the impending challenges that will survive. There must be something you bring to the table that God blesses. God doesn't bless empty heads.

That's why you see people who aren't even Christians thriving—they are developing themselves. It's not just about calling yourself a Christian. If you refuse to develop yourself, you will see someone else promoted over you at your workplace. The only thing you'll be doing is praying, thinking you'll fix everything through prayer while remaining stagnant. You'll be a "dumbhead," with nothing in your brain.

When discussions happen in the office, you stay silent, yet you want to be recognized. It doesn't work that way.

What are the tangible solutions you can offer? Check your environment. *"How can I add to this?" "How can I do it better?"*

Someone might already be doing what comes to your heart, but there's always a way you can do it better and more excellently, in a way that people will welcome. This isn't just about prayer. There is a place for prayer—get it well.

For instance, I heard about the General Manager of Air Peace. What I heard is that there are intercessors who pray 24 hours a day while they're flying in the air. I also heard about the owner of Cos Charis. On a particular day of the week, he locks himself in a room, and the only thing he is doing is praying in tongues. He is the only person who owns the franchise for these luxurious cars in Nigeria—Lamborghini, Bentley, Ferrari, etc. Despite being a believer, he prays like never before. We heard that even if he gets a call, he won't take it.

So, we cannot diminish or marginalize the place of prayer. However, what I'm trying to say is that people who rise in life put a lot of effort into developing themselves—*self-development*. They are resilient, eager to learn, and committed to understanding how the system around them works. They look at things and are willing to offer solutions.

I can't tell you what many undergraduates are doing now. Gone are the days when you just go through the four walls of school and expect a job waiting for you somewhere. There may be jobs, but you must start learning to groom yourself and think beyond the box. In fact, one thing you must do regularly is to think. And thinking is different from worrying. The Bible advocates thinking.

### **Philippians 4:8**

**Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**

You have to think. Thinking is a meditative mood. You think. You reason. Even God says, "*Come, let us reason together.*" (**Isaiah 1:18**) God is not against reasoning. He is not against logic. But He doesn't want you to live your life by them alone. That is why He supplies faith. There are times when logic and reasoning fail, but faith cannot fail.

We must rise as producers. Some of you may be thinking, "*But I have a job.*" Let me ask you a question: God forbid, if you arrive at work on Monday and are handed a sack letter, what will you fall back on?

I heard the story of someone who collected salary for months, and suddenly, the job ended—but had little or nothing to fall back on.

### **DISTRIBUTORS**

Distributors are those who merge demand and supply. They bridge the gap.

## CONSUMERS

You must make an intentional effort to drive consumers out of your life. Any consumer you allow in will eventually drain you. Some people have a *consumer mentality*—a *consumer syndrome*—and if you're not careful, they will wreck you.

Consumers are those you would call the lower class—final users, end users. There are some wives who, if they do not drain their husbands completely, will not be satisfied—*Consumer Syndrome*.

That's one thing about people who are not of this color pigmentation—they always want to amplify anything that comes to them. They strive to be productive with it.

Some of you don't know how to use money. You just spend anyhow. If you live like that, you are not preserving yourself for both good and bad times. Because those times are here—they are not in heaven. Bad things happen to good people. There's nothing you can do about it. The *why?* is what we can now research—*Why do bad things happen to good people?*

May we not live our lives recklessly. This consumer mentality must die off in our lives. Learn to multiply things. When money comes into your hand, think: *What can I do?*

Someone sent you ₦100,000, and the next thing you did was go to the boutique. You don't even stop to ask, *How can I multiply this? What can I do?* Do you think that's how money will always come?

There are seasons when money will flow in, and you may think that's how every season will be. But there will be seasons when it will seem as if God does not exist anymore—you will wonder what's happening.

The reason for abundance in the days of plenty is to preserve for the days of scarcity. That was the vision God showed Pharaoh. That was the interpretation Joseph gave.

### Genesis 41:25-31

**'And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. '**

We have to learn this. Some people, when taken to an eatery, end up ordering more food than the person who invited them. Someone takes you out—observe what they are buying, even if they offer to treat you. Consumers! When you live that kind of life consistently, people will begin to avoid you. Some people don't even have their calls answered anymore because the person on the other end already knows what they are about to ask for. They have never taken the time to think, *Let me be a blessing to this person who usually gives to me*. Their role is nothing more than receiving. How long will that continue?

Meanwhile, if someone blesses you, you should also find a way to reciprocate. This is something wealthy people easily recognize about those in the middle or lower class. When you come around them, they observe you carefully. If they perceive that you are only looking for opportunities to take, at some point, they will cut you off. They know when a person is merely seeking to benefit without adding value.

We've got to learn to be productive. Let your paradigm shift. Let your orientation change. That is why this knowledge is coming to you—to recalibrate your thinking and help you evolve into a better version of yourself. You are beyond this. If you know how to pull your strings well, you will succeed in life. Nobody is designed to fail. When you can pull your strings strategically, you will not only survive but thrive.

Say to yourself, *"I choose to be productive."* Ensure you mean it from your spirit. Declare it again.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXPOSURE

Your worldview must change. Some of you lack exposure, probably because of where you grew up or your family background. But you must learn to develop your exposure. Don't be boxed into a cocoon of yesterday. The world is moving fast. Times and seasons are changing. The way things were 20 years ago—or even just five years ago—is not the way they are now. Things are evolving. There is a revolution happening, and you must learn to move with the tides, even as a believer.

Are you aware that, even though you are a believer, there are certain things in your workplace that, if you do not engage in, you will be disadvantaged? I am not referring to anything unrighteous. I mean things you would normally not want to do. For instance, an end-of-the-year party—you need to be there. You don't have to engage in everything happening there, but your presence matters because it is part of the unspoken rules of engagement. When you were given your offer letter, certain expectations were outlined. If you were not comfortable with them, you could have declined the offer. But the moment you accepted it, there are commitments that come with it.

Of course, you will not engage in the Babylonian system because you are from Zion. You know where to take a stand and where not to compromise. You know where to draw the line when it comes to anything fetish or anything that contradicts your faith. The children of Israel were in Babylon, especially the three Hebrew boys, but they remained set apart. You can be in a foreign land and still maintain your consecration—just as they did.

#### **Daniel 1:8**

**'But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. '**

We are in this world, but we are not of the world. You are not in heaven yet—literally. You are still here. Think about some of the clothes you wear. If you were to take things to the extreme, you wouldn't wear them at all, because many were made by unbelievers—people who don't know Jesus. Some of the designers are even atheists, yet you wear their brands. You are still here. You don't just interact with the world's systems—you exist in the world, though you are not of it.

#### **John 17:14**

**'I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. '**

The world cannot control you. They cannot dictate what you must do. It is Christ who dictates your life. You don't engage in anything that goes against the Scriptures.

Exposure is crucial. Step away from the mindset of yesterday. One of the ways we grow is through mindset—through exposure.

**Proverbs 23:7**

**'For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; But his heart is not with thee. '**

The world cannot control you. They cannot dictate what you must do. It is Christ who dictates your life. You don't engage in anything that goes against the Scriptures.

Exposure is crucial. Step away from the mindset of yesterday. One of the ways we grow is through mindset—through exposure.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COMPETENCE

This is where many believers are lagging behind. We use prayers as a cover-up. We use fasting as a cover-up. Many of us want miracles—we just want God to show up—but we are not willing to be dexterous. There is something called dexterity, being skillful. How did the miracle of the money in the mouth of the fish happen?

#### Matthew 17:27

**'Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.'**

Jesus identified a man who was skilled. “*Cast a hook*” implies that Peter was proficient in his craft. He couldn’t have called just anyone; He chose Peter because fishing was his expertise. Peter knew what to do and how to catch a fish. The miracle didn’t happen just because God is powerful—it also happened because a man was skillful.

How did David lead Israel?

#### Psalm 78:72

**'So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.'**

David didn’t lead solely by the anointing but also by the skillfulness of his hands. Do you think you can rise beyond your level of skill? Do you believe everything happens just by the anointing? We must change. We must become skillful.

As a pastor, the reason people will sit and learn from me is because, in the Word of God, we are skilled—at least to a measure.

#### 2 Timothy 2:15

**'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. '**

Even when we stand before kings, they will still want to listen to us. It is not pride; it is the result of what you have built yourself with. You understand it.

When I was on campus, people would wait for me to do their defense. Any group I was in, they would say, “*Let Pastor represent us.*” This was because they knew I had the grace for public speaking—that when lecturers listened to me, their hearts would melt. I

can't stand fidgeting, even before kings, because I have something to deliver. It is the product of training, the product of learning.

We have developed and are still developing this skill. I have a goal of reading 100 books this year. And you think we are the same? You must become so confident in what you do that if you are a caterer, even with your eyes closed, you can feed 5,000 people. There is no way people won't call you.

But now, what you are doing is "asawo." They eat your food and wonder what's wrong. You are into pastries—you make chinchin, and it is presentable, well-branded. Don't just do things haphazardly. Do things with competence. Let people be willing to come back over and over again, saying, "*Who did this? I am willing to patronize this person again.*"

There are people here who are consistently sending goods abroad. They are so confident in their brand. There are people who will never drink any other water apart from *Eva Water*, no matter the name you give another brand. The moment they see that it is not *Eva Water*, they refuse to take it. The brand has been built to a level where people are convinced—beyond a reasonable doubt—that it is the best, and they are willing to pay anything for it. That is competence!

You might not have all the resources now, but prepare for that future. Think it. See it. You may not have all the capital, but start preparing. Envision it. See where you want to be in the next five years.

Some of you, the moment you get money, the first thought in your heart is to squander it on things like jewelry. Your house is filled, but there is nothing in your brain.

Just recently, my wife was searching the house and still brought out a lot of books.

### **Proverbs 23:23**

**'Buy the truth, and sell it not; Also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. '**

It is what is in your brain that will determine your life, not what you are wearing. **Clothes are rags without intelligence.** That is why if a madman wears a beautiful outfit, it will still become a rag—because he lacks the mindset to maintain it.

You've got to be competent. You must be the go-to person—the one people recommend when they are looking for excellence. Let your name be mentioned because you have built yourself to that level.

You must be creative.

### **Exodus 31:2-3**

**'See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, '**

This is creativity. People involved in graphic design and similar fields operate by the creative power of God. It is not merely human intelligence; it is intelligence powered by God—creativity.

There are sculptors whose work reflects divine inspiration. When you observe their creations, you can see God in them. The things that are made testify to the existence of a mastermind behind their beauty and excellence.

### **Romans 1:20**

**'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: '**

When you walk down your street and see a beautiful edifice, you don't assume the house just appeared there. The first thing that comes to mind is that there is someone who owns it. This is the statement God wants to make with the earth—that when you see the earth, the vegetation, and the firmament, you know there is someone behind it.

### **Hebrews 11:3**

**'Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. '**

God was going to build a temple and showed Moses the vision and revelation. However, it wasn't by Moses' hands that God built it; He built through the hands of creative men. This means that everyone in the church is important—whether you're a pastor, someone in the pew, or someone who is skillful, whether you possess soft skills or hard skills. Whatever you have, you're valuable. That's why you must learn to hone your skills, refine them, and sharpen them. Be the best at what you do. This isn't about competition; it's about representing the best version of yourself. If you're a student, don't just settle for "anything." There are many students with the mentality of just wanting to pass. You hear them say, "I just want to pass," but what kind of mentality is that? When some students are striving for first class honors and flying colors, you're only saying, "Even if it's a 'D', just let them give me." That's a myopic mindset. No wonder when you get a 'D' or 'E', you blame others, saying "they gave me that grade." But when you get an 'A', you proudly claim, "I got an 'A'." Some will even say it's an attack, like "the demon in my house is doing this to me." But why aren't they attacking the first-class students? You are the only one they are attacking? There are certain attacks that respect intelligence. I'm not saying there are no attacks, but some attacks won't come near you when you're operating at a high level of intelligence.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LEVERAGING ON QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS/ASSOCIATION

The easiest way to rise and succeed in life is through relationships. No matter how high you get, there's always someone higher than you. Many people have what you don't have, and that's why the mindset of isolation must be removed from our lives. You don't know everything, and you are not God. That's why God, in His infinite wisdom, decided to spread Himself into many people, into different dimensions of Himself.

There are individuals they call geniuses, and one such person was my grandfather. Anything you see in my life today is a direct product of his influence. When it comes to intelligence, understanding books, and knowing things, I owe it all to him. I lived with him my whole life. He was a man you'd call an erudite, a gaffer—there was hardly any vocabulary my grandfather didn't know. Many of the things I say today come from him. He would gather us to listen to the news, and whenever a new vocabulary came up, he'd explain its meaning. We didn't need to consult a dictionary; we heard it directly from his mouth.

So, now you know where I grew from. They didn't just impart spiritual life to me; they gave me a healthy, well-rounded life. I'm proud of them. My grandparents have gone to be with God in glory, but I will always love them. My grandma was a teacher, and my grandpa was the number one editor at the Guardian Newspaper. Before anything was published, he would be the one to edit it, correcting all the errors, the vocabularies, and ensuring it was flawless. Without him, I wouldn't be where I am today. Relationships.

The easiest way to success in life is through quality associations. When you find one, stay there. I can tell you for certain that this house is one of such associations. We go beyond just teaching you from the pulpit. Quality relationships are key—when you find one, don't discard it. Will there be offenses? Yes. But offenses are a part of life. There is nowhere you will go where you won't face them. What matters is looking beyond the offense and focusing on what God has invested in that person.

The symbiosis—this combination and fellowship—of your life with genuine relationships is equal to a lifetime of success. Rising alone takes time, but when you align yourself with quality associations, your rise is imminent. It's not far-fetched. Your rise is just around the corner. I've maintained relationships for more than 15 years. I've been preaching in certain churches for the past 11 years, and they've consistently invited me—relationships. What are they seeing in me? Why am I still going? It's because of the strength of the relationship.

The road to the city may not be far; you only need the right person. When Peter was in that dungeon, he didn't know that all he needed was the help of an angel. The moment the angel showed up, even the doors opened at their accord, and he was shown the road to the city.

## Acts 12:7-10

**'And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. '**

So, where you're going in life may not be as far as you think, but the question is: can you follow? Some of you, God has given you a pastor. Can you follow? Do you understand that your life is directly connected to the teachings that flow from your pastor's life? He teaches you how to live, how to journey, and how to operate. The outcome of your life will ultimately be shaped by his guidance.

There are some who have disconnected from the place where they should grow, from where God has designed for them. Relationships are advantageous connections. Every true relationship holds value. A man of God once said, "Relationships are currencies that can literally be spent." Just like you spend money to buy groceries, you can spend relationships.

So, you are the most foolish person on earth if you think the only currency we spend is money. In fact, money is the least of the currencies we spend. The currencies that truly matter are far beyond just money. We spend relationships.

There are some people who, before getting a job, reach out for a recommendation or a reference, stating that they belong to this ministry. But if you are not a person of good character, how can I vouch for you? I have seen several individuals for whom we have written acknowledgments and commendations—even for opportunities overseas. Some were required to provide a recommendation from the place they served, and we had to write on their behalf.

Do you think the church is just a place where you come to hear the Word of God? Yes, that is primary and fundamental, but there is so much more that happens behind the scenes.

I remember a situation where I had to go to the police station because of an issue that happened with a member. I also had to call a lawyer on their behalf. Pastoring goes far beyond just teaching. There are times I call people's names one by one in prayer,

laboring over them. It involves psychological work, philosophical work—it can be draining.

On an average week, I am in at least three places. Sometimes, five. There are days when I find myself in three different places in a single day. So, every time you covet this kind of grace, covet well.

Just because Lot went with Abraham, he was blessed. It was not Lot that God called—it was Abraham. But by virtue of his association and followership, Lot partook in the blessing.

There are people among us who are handling significant things, yet you may not realize it. Some, within a few months or years, will rise as millionaires. But if all you do is come and go, merely warming the bench without building quality relationships, you will never go far.

God never designed anyone to rise alone. People rise on the shoulders of others.

Some people are even looking for spouses, yet everywhere they go, they are always frowning. There are people I have never seen smile before—that, for me, is a natural put-off. I was attracted to my wife that way. I was able to spot the gap tooth.

Yes, we know the country is not easy, but smile. You're not the only one living here. Many of us are here. Smile. Walk into places and let the atmosphere around you change.

Smile is a currency—I am a living witness. You can literally live your life smiling. Someone might say, “I just love the way he smiles.” That is enough reason for someone to be drawn to you.

Many years ago, someone was driving past and saw the poster of a man of God. As he looked at it, he said, “Who is this person?” He asked to be led to the church, and when he got there, he wrote a cheque for 50 million naira, saying, “I saw you, and I just like you.” That man of God was Apostle Johnson Suleman.

I used that testimony to pray. I replicate things—I don't just hear stories. I have seen people look at my picture and contribute to my ministry.

Smile is an emotion you must express. Laugh. Smile.

### **Amos 3:3**

**'Can two walk together, except they be agreed? '**

### **Proverbs 18:24**

**'A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'**

The precursor to building the right associations is friendliness. You must show yourself friendly. Don't just step into places of opportunity, hop in and hop out, without making quality relationships. Take the time to connect with people—exchange phone numbers, stay in touch, and nurture relationships.

I once met the wife of a general while traveling. I was coming from Lagos airport, and we had just landed in Abuja. I noticed a woman who looked exhausted, carrying heavy bags, while others simply walked past her. Without knowing who she was, I approached her and offered to help, and she agreed.

Sometimes, wealthy or influential people dress simply—you might see them in casual clothing that looks ordinary but is more expensive than an entire wardrobe. Have you ever seen Mark Zuckerberg in a suit? He mostly wears a simple T-shirt and jeans.

This woman, too, appeared casual. After I helped her, she asked, "Who are you?" I introduced myself, and that was when she told me she was the wife of a high-ranking general. I was surprised. She was the one who took my contact details, and I also got hers.

One day, when I had a pressing need, I suddenly saw her call. She had recharged my phone and even loaded my line with a substantial amount of internet data—all without me ever asking.

That's how we lose out on valuable relationships, especially with wealthy people. If you only see them as an opportunity, you will never build anything meaningful. Your house rent is due, and suddenly you remember the general's wife and give her a call. That makes you an opportunist—a consumer. Maintain relationships without always expecting to receive. Try not to beg. I'm not saying there won't be times when you genuinely need to ask for help, but relationships shouldn't be built on that.

We must show ourselves friendly. There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and many times, you find such friends in the church. In fact, the best place to find true friendships should be within the church. You don't go clubbing looking for friends. As a believer, what are you even looking for there? Stay within the environment of Christ, and God will reveal your own to you.

### Three Kinds of Relationships

1. **General Relationships** – These are the people you meet every day. There's no deep connection; they simply pass through your life.
2. **Seasonal Relationships** – These are relationships tied to a particular season in life. You may have attended the same school, served together on campus, or during NYSC, but once that phase is over, you rarely see them again.
3. **Covenant Relationships** – These are deep, lasting relationships, like the one between David and Jonathan. Even after Jonathan was long gone, David still honored their bond by showing kindness to his household.

## **2 Samuel 9:1**

**'And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake? '**

David extended favor to Jonathan's household because of their covenant relationship. Friendship is deep, especially when built on loyalty and trust. It's important to choose wisely—true friends don't backbite or betray. Be intentional about surrounding yourself with people who add value to your life, just as you add value to theirs.

## **How do we maintain relationships?**

### **➤ By Love**

## **Romans 12:9**

**' Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. '**

## **Hebrews 13:1**

**'Let brotherly love continue. '**

In every relationship, flaws will be evident because no one is perfect. While working together to improve, let brotherly love continue. Marriage, for instance, requires commitment despite imperfections. You don't walk away just because you see your spouse's flaws; instead, you keep loving, and your spouse keeps loving and submitting, as you both work through weaknesses. God hates divorce, but in cases of life-threatening abuse, the Bible recommends separation until the right steps are taken to restore the union properly.

**Love is fundamental** in maintaining quality relationships.

Offenses will come, but don't be offended.

## **Matthew 11:6**

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

## **Luke 7:19**

**'And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? '**

John was essentially saying, *"How can I be in prison, suffering, while you, the Savior, do nothing to rescue me?"* His doubt arose from his hardship. Many of us also question God in difficult times, asking, *"Lord, you say you are with me, so why am I going through all this?"*

➤ **Don't be offended.**

Offense is a silent destroyer of quality relationships.

➤ **You must avoid jealousy.**

Jealousy is native to humanity—it is one of our frailties, a weakness of men. But you must learn to control it.

For example, imagine Brother A goes to Brother B, sharing that he is trusting God for an American visa and asking him to join in prayer. Brother B holds hands with him and prays, declaring open doors. Yet, in his heart, he is thinking, *"It's you who knows how to go to America? I should die here?"* While his mouth is speaking blessings, his heart is speaking otherwise.

This kind of jealousy is a natural human tendency, but we have a spirit of control. When you see someone rising beside or behind you while you remain stagnant, it's easy to think, *"How come he's rising while I'm still here?"* However, when such thoughts come, you must learn to control yourself immediately.

**Celebrate people.** In celebrating others, jealousy dies gradually. If you don't kill jealousy, it will grow, and you may end up like Cain. So, make a deliberate effort to eliminate jealousy from your heart.

**Proverbs 14:30**

**'A sound heart is the life of the flesh: But envy the rottenness of the bones.'**

**Proverbs 27:4**

**'Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; But who is able to stand before envy?'**

You must avoid speaking evil of others. It's impossible to never speak about people, but the content of your speech is what matters. Are you pulling them down? Are you destroying their reputation? Avoid speaking evil of your brethren. It is evil to do so.

When someone comes to you, let it be that you can defend your brethren. This doesn't mean you should overlook or defend error, especially if the person is in error.

## Proverbs 6:16-19

**'These six things doth the LORD hate: Yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, Feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren. '**

### ➤ **We learn to forgive**

We learn not only to forgive but also to forbear. We forgive, and we forbear. Most of the time, forgiveness is once, but forbearance is continuous. For instance, early in our marriage, I lived in a studio-like apartment—a single room where I had everything: my TV, toilet, and all. Anytime I got back from work, I had a chair where I would remove my clothes and drop them. When I got married, I continued this habit. My wife brought it to my attention, but there came a time when she realized that this was no longer about forgiveness but forbearance—she had to endure it until I gained sense. And the moment my sense arrived, I stopped doing that.

I'm just letting you know that forgiveness can be a one-time act, but forbearance can last a lifetime. Some people who are meant to help you may have an angry disposition. If you also get angry and say, "Is he the only one? Always getting angry," you might spend the next 20 years in resentment because that's still the person God has chosen to help you. Otherwise, Elisha wouldn't have received the mantle, because Elijah was an angry man. That's why some of the sons of the prophets distanced themselves from him. Only one man was able to manage his anger and continue following him.

## 2 Kings 2:9-10

**'And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. '**

Some of your bosses are like that, but they will still pay your salary. You have to maintain the relationship because that's where your sustenance comes from. You will have to forbear; otherwise, you will forgo. Some of you have managed your parents up till now—you know how they are, yet you walk with them. You don't have a choice; they are still your parents, even if you no longer live under their roof. Honor them. We must honor our parents, both biological and spiritual. It is a culture we must institute in our lives.

### ➤ **The relationship must be symbiotic, not parasitic.**

That means everyone must contribute—don't be self-centered. You have a friend who always buys gifts for you, always calls you, yet you're not willing to use your airtime to

call. You must learn to contribute. When you see opportunities, share them with others. Someone once said that 'we don't only share links; we share opportunity links.'

There are people who don't want others to rise. They want to corner everything for themselves, thinking, *"If I share this, they too will have money."* What wickedness! Do you realize that helping others succeed can actually ease your own life? When people are empowered, they won't have to depend on you. *Many birds will fly, but they won't collide.* Let others rise as well. Some people will never forget you because of your investment in their lives—never!

I remember a particular year when I had ₦250,000, and I needed just ₦100,000 more for my apartment. A young man came to me and gave me cash—I was shocked. As I prayed, God cast my mind back to it. That's how some people's breakthroughs come.

I also remember a time when someone bought me something extremely expensive. As I was thinking about it, God reminded me, *"Do you remember the days you used to sell your phone?"* Now, phones will never be a problem for me. Even if I lose my phone and don't replace it immediately, I know someone could arise and say, *"Pastor, by tomorrow, you will get another one."*

God was reminding me of the days of my sacrifice. He was the one who said it to me. When I was on campus, I had one of the best phones. Back when BlackBerry first came out, only two of us in my entire department had it. The other person was a *Yahoo boy*, but I used mine for the Kingdom.

A man is not defined by the possessions he has on earth. A phone will never be my problem now.

You must learn to contribute to relationships—don't be a parasite. If every time it's *"Can you give me?"* people will start avoiding you. Some will go beyond avoidance and block you on all platforms. You will inevitably lose connection with such people if you are a parasite.

Some people's boundary is the gate. The boundary of some others is the sitting room, while a few can have access to your bedroom. Just like the outer court, the inner court, and the most holy place, there are levels to access. There are some people you only attend to at the gate, while others can be welcomed into your sitting room, and only a trusted few can be allowed into your most private space.

There are some people who are just users. They want to use everybody, including the pastor. By the time they get what they want, they disappear. I've seen many people like that. It does not change me. I stay with my call. I bless lives, whether they remain or leave—it's between them and God, not between me and them.

There are people who, after leaving a place—whether a ministry or an organization—keep checking back to see if it has fallen apart. They assume everyone is

like them. Meanwhile, some pastors, when someone leaves them, begin to curse them. That is not pastoral. We are not supposed to curse.

Say, 'I'm blessed.'

### **Numbers 23:8**

**'How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? '**

Do not walk the path of curse. The governments may not be concerned with what God is doing in your life, but if you engage in wrongdoing, such as rape, the consequence will be imprisonment. I urge you, do not walk in the path of curse. There are individuals who have covenants with the devil—may you never become a victim of such. Live a life of righteousness. Do not go overboard. Stay within the boundaries of your righteous existence. You don't do things anyhow, and declare, 'Who God has blessed, no man can curse.'

## CHAPTER SIX

### CAREER CHOICES AND TRANSITIONING FROM AN EMPLOYEE TO AN ENTREPRENEUR

There are some who combine their jobs with entrepreneurship, proving that it's possible to live the life of an entrepreneur while holding a white-collar job. Understand this clearly: there's a popular saying, 'Different strokes for different folks,' and 'One man's food is another man's poison.' Not everyone is wired to work as an employee in an organization, and not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur. You need to find your place. Don't jump into something just because you've heard it's the latest trend. Don't foolishly hand in your resignation letter without proper thought. The next year of your life could end up being a waste if you don't make well-informed decisions. Don't follow the crowd and make costly mistakes. Be very careful. Don't start something just because it feels right in the moment. We're in a system that's not working as it should, and you have to make it work.

For instance, if you start a business, logically speaking, it will take about two years for that business to begin to bloom. You can't expect things to work in just two months and then give up if it's not happening. If you keep jumping from one venture to the next, you might find yourself with seven unfinished businesses and nothing to show for it, because you're not staying consistent with any one of them. You're seeking immediate gratification, but it doesn't work that way. Your business must stand the test of time. For people to trust you, you must be around long enough to prove yourself.

Take a new water brand, for example. Even if it's a great product, people will often stick with the old one until they've had the chance to test and trust the new one. Some people will never switch from a brand like Eva Water, while others might eventually try the new brand after hearing good reports. But this trust takes time. Some people will even sample different options before committing fully.

It has been scientifically proven that our genetic makeup and composition are not the same. We are not all identical. While, before God, we are equal, in the context of this earth, there are differences. There are things I may dislike that you enjoy, and there are businesses that you may succeed in that I might not, unless I stay in my lane. We are not wired the same; we are wired differently.

So don't make decisions based on what you hear. Just because there's talk of no jobs, don't decide, while still on campus, not to work on your CV, not to apply for opportunities, or to make hasty decisions.

For some of you who feel a calling from God, I urge you to finish your schooling first. That thing that might make you want to tear up your certificate and claim God has called you will lead to suffering if you don't complete your education. Finish school, because only then will you truly understand life in a deeper way.

That passion you feel while on campus, the burning desire to pray for hours, may seem intense. Some of you are simply being swayed by what others have—seeing the luxuries and glamour of the lives of people in ministry. That's not God's calling; it's the *razmataz*, the drama you see in ministry that's influencing you. These things make you say, 'Ministry is my life.'

This is why some people manipulate others because they can't survive otherwise. I knew God called me to ministry, but I worked diligently while pursuing that calling. Not everyone's journey will be the same. Some of you may feel such a strong pressure from God that He may instruct you not to work at all.

For me, I was certain before I made my decision. You'll know a man who is sure because his results will speak for him. I've never had to manipulate anyone during my time in full-time ministry. By 'full-time,' I mean I no longer do any secular job, and it's been about six years now. I've been preaching for about 14 years, but as a full-time minister, it's been around six years.

We began farming some years ago, meticulously calculating the expected proceeds and planning to use them for expenses like our house rent. However, one day, while still at home, we received a call informing us that cows had entered the farm and consumed all the crops. When that happened, we understood what it meant. We've faced our share of challenges, but through it all, God has been faithful. Therefore, ensure that it's truly God leading you into ministry, business, or any other endeavor you pursue.

You can start with a white-collar job and transition into entrepreneurship—it's entirely possible. Take someone like Folorunsho Alakija, for example. She began as an executive secretary at a merchant bank, but today, she is a renowned entrepreneur and influential public speaker. She is also the richest woman in Africa. Similarly, Ibukun Awosika, who is not only a pastor but also the first female chairperson of First Bank of Nigeria, is a motivational speaker and an author.

## **Who is An Entrepreneur?**

An entrepreneur is someone who converts passion into profit. But profit, in this context, is not just money; it's about adding value to yourself and to the lives of others. Not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur, so we must be very careful. For some of us, we are just moved; we simply want to leave our jobs. Please, don't make that decision impulsively. And if you must make that move, ensure that you have saved up enough before transitioning. Make sure you have enough before you make the leap.

Entrepreneurs fall into two groups:

### **The Push Group**

These are individuals who have been made redundant or are unemployed. They go into entrepreneurship because they have family commitments that require their attention.

## The Pull Group

This group starts a business for reasons such as wanting to be their own boss, desiring independence, making money, spotting a market opportunity, or taking control of their own and their family's future.

Research suggests that those in the Pull Group tend to do better than those in the Push Group.

Those in the **Pull Group** are **driven by passion**, while those in the **Push Group** are **motivated by family commitments or other unreasonable reasons**. It's important to know why you want to be an entrepreneur. A single entrepreneur's approach is different from that of a married entrepreneur. For example, the way you run your business as a single person will change once you're married with children. Many factors will come into play, such as your children taking up your time, among other responsibilities. You must factor these changes into your plan and your life. Success in business requires a lot of discipline.

If you're starting a business, you must be very serious—extremely serious. Businesses don't plan to fail; they fail because they don't plan. If you want to venture into anything, you must take the time to understand it.

Before you start anything, there are key things you should check:

### ➤ **You must conduct market research.**

Market research equips you with valuable information about your proposed business. This is where you ask questions like, 'Is there a market for this product?' If so, 'Who are the people who want it?' 'How much are they willing to pay for it?' 'Do I need an office, or can I operate from home?' Some of you may have already started, but it's never too late to go back to the drawing board and assess your lapses. What am I doing wrong?

### ➤ **Who are my customers?**

For every product, there is always a specific demography. There are customers for every product. Even if you sell water, not everyone will buy your brand. Some will choose Eva water, for example, but it's not everyone's preference. It could be because of price, and no matter how much you try to persuade them, they'll stick with what they want.

So, 'Who are my customers? Where are they?' Identifying and determining your target audience goes a long way. Thankfully, we live in a tech age where you can easily find out where your customers are. You can focus your efforts on reaching them. For example, if you're doing a Facebook promotion, you can target specific categories of people—young adults, for instance. Knowing your customer base and audience is crucial. You must target them effectively. For instance, if you're running a small-scale business where your customers are on Facebook or Instagram, those are the platforms

you should focus on. Most small-scale businesses find that their customers aren't on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is where you'll find senior citizens and the big wigs of industries. If you're selling something like water and trying to find customers on LinkedIn, you might be looking in the wrong place. I'm not saying you won't find a few people there, but it's not your target audience. You have to embrace the tech age. Get on the interconnected network—it's a place for networking. The people who are making waves in business today are doing it online. Some entrepreneurs even rent shops not because they need a physical space, but because they need a place to display their products. Many of their customers are online, not in their local streets. They use the shop simply as a display space, snapping pictures, creating content, and posting it online. The ideas and resources you have inside you are more than enough.

Most likely, your passion and your gift are the roads to your blossoming destiny. The things within you—there are talents and skills you possess that can make waves. For example, as a teacher, you can get on the internet. Let's say you know quadratic equations or geometry, and you have the ability to break it down to the simplest level, where even a child can understand it. You can create a video of yourself teaching trigonometry, geometry, or any other topic, explaining it in whatever language you prefer. There will be people who resonate with you. At first, it might not seem like much, but as you consistently share your knowledge, you'll see people starting to ask, 'How do you teach mathematics so easily?' Sooner or later, you may even find big wigs reaching out to you, asking if you can tutor their children. If you have 10 students and you charge 5000 or 10000 Naira each, think of how much that is. Eventually, you'll keep expanding. By doing this, you're turning your value into productivity. You have value, but you must be productive with it.

There's someone who is a mechanic who simply explains how to use car parts on the internet. He records videos, and now his content is spreading everywhere. Sometimes, you don't even have to call your mechanic when you're on the road. By watching his video, you'll know exactly what to do with your car. Instead of calling your mechanic every time, you can now fix things yourself by following his guidance.

We have to be creative and make content that pulls in our audience. That small thing in your hand is not small if you put it on the right platform. We are in the age of the 'Internet of Things.'

I remember a few years ago, I woke up from a vision, and all I could hear was 'artificial intelligence.' I announced it, and now, artificial intelligence is a great deal. You can simply speak what you want, and AI will do it for you. This means there will be massive downsizing of jobs, because what you can do, AI can do as well. Some of the graphic design work you're doing, if you don't advance yourself, someone could just prompt AI, and it's done.

You have to keep learning. Some of us are armed with knowledge; I'm a pastor, but I read widely. For those of you who are tech-savvy, I encourage you to dive deeper. The assumption that everyone on the internet is a scammer—those days are gone.

So, where are your audience? Where are your customers? You need to track them down. They're most likely not going to come looking for you. So, what do you do? You go out and find them

### ➤ **What do they need?**

**What do your customers need**, not what you think they need? It's important to understand their actual needs, rather than making assumptions. You have to communicate with them in a way that resonates. Every platform attracts a different audience: on Facebook and Instagram, you'll find one group, while on LinkedIn, you'll connect with senior managers and company directors.

I came across something called the 80/20 rule, which states that 80% of your income will come from just 20% of your customers. When you identify those 20%, do everything possible to maintain them because they are your big deals. The rest can come in later, but these 20% are the ones who have shown consistent loyalty. You can even choose to brand their products differently or offer free delivery. Sometimes, doing things like this for free can make a big difference. While you might have factored the cost of delivery into your pricing, giving it for free can have a powerful impact.

### ➤ **Who are your competitors?**

It's not a crime to check out others who are doing what you're doing. If you're a photographer, selling jewelry, or in any other business, look at those who are making waves and thriving. How are they doing it? What are their pricing strategies? Study them, and see how you can improve or do it better, without necessarily undercutting their prices. You don't want to devalue yourself. If you must adjust your prices, that's fine, but in most cases, focus on how you can offer better value. It's not a bad idea to 'steal' ideas from your competitors

Steve Jobs says, **'We have always been shameless about stealing great ideas.'**

As long as it contributes to your growth, it will benefit you.

### ➤ **Finance**

The key issue many face is starting without proper ideas. The first thing you need to focus on is ideas—not money. Before anyone erects a structure, they first draw a blueprint. Similarly, it's the plan, the strategy, and the market research that lay the foundation for what you want to implement. Too often, we focus on the end product without considering the necessary groundwork. This advice also applies to those who have good jobs. Don't settle for just one or two streams of income. You should aim for at least three or four. While working, set aside part of your salary to invest in ventures like real estate or a restaurant. A well-managed food business can thrive if you understand your boundaries.

For example, after attending Word Feast, my wife and I didn't feel like cooking, so we decided to grab food from a reliable restaurant. Even though it was late at night, they still had more than enough food, which would likely remain until the next day. In contrast, a nearby restaurant, which used to stay open late, had adjusted its operations based on sales. They only cooked enough food to last the day, meaning that by the time we arrived, they had already sold out of most items. This is a lesson in strategy—always plan and adjust based on market research. By calculating your startup costs early on, you can make informed decisions and set the right foundation for your business.

### **What do you need money for?**

You need money for working capital to keep the business running. This includes funds to pay your staff if you have any, transportation costs, professional services if you need to hire external help, as well as covering bills and hospitality expenses.

### **How to raise capital.**

#### **➤ Assets**

If you have assets, there are things you can sell or use as collateral to get money to advance your business. For example, if you're using an iPhone that costs about a million naira but are holding onto it just to receive calls or show off, it's a sign of not taking your business seriously. If you need money for your business, consider selling such items. The only miracle you need is the miracle of using your brain. You don't need deliverance, but rather deliverance from ignorance.

If you have multiple streams of income, some can be shut down or liquidated to fund a promising business. Taking a loan is also an option. Many successful entrepreneurs, including top business figures like Dangote, live on loans. Even multinationals rely on loans. Just make sure that your business structure and planning are solid before taking such a step. For instance, if you've bought land in a remote area and it has appreciated in value, consider selling it to fund your business. And if you own virgin land that's undeveloped, start building on it. That land isn't truly yours if you're not using it, even if you have the paperwork.

Before I started full-time ministry, I worked in that area. I studied Urban and Regional Planning, and we sold houses and land. Prior to joining telecommunications, I worked with a realtor. If you don't develop a piece of land, it's not truly yours, even if you have the paperwork. There are lands with government acquisition, and I remember one time when a brother wanted to buy land. We took him with us, and I was there too, though my role wasn't to chat but to support. As the chatting was done, they realized that the area was a gorge.

This shows the importance of not buying land or property without proper consultation. Always consult experts or expatriates, as necessary. For some students who might be thinking, "Land? I don't have the money for that," you're probably thinking too low of

yourself. Anything can happen tomorrow. Keep an open mind and be ready for opportunities when they come.

➤ **Angel Investors,**

There are people who can fund your business, and you both can agree on the percentage. They have the money, you don't. They have millions, you don't. So, what do you do? You negotiate with them. For instance, you can propose a percentage split based on your contribution to the business. If it's 70/30, 60/40, or whatever works for both parties, ensure that it's legally agreed upon so there are no misunderstandings later. These types of investors are known as angel investors.

➤ **Family and friends.**

Some of your family members or friends may be able to help you. If you approach them for business, you are responsible. Present a solid structure, a clear plan, and demonstrate that you're serious about it. People are more likely to invest in you if they can see you're committed. This is how you can raise money for your business. For those struggling with raising capital, now you know how it works.

For those who are working, you need to focus on saving up to reach your goal—let's say you have a goal of 1.5 million naira. If your salary is 200,000 naira, you must learn to save consistently each month. This way, your lump sum savings can effectively fund your business when you're ready to start. To do this, you'll need to cut back on extra expenses like buying clothes or other non-essentials, because the goal is to save.

Remember, a job is not just a place to earn; it's also a place to learn. Many people dislike their jobs, and while that's a tough reality, it's the truth for many. Some stay in jobs because of the salary, not because they are passionate about the work. It might be due to feeling unappreciated, uninspired, low pay, long working hours, or the strain of commuting. But you must shift your perspective. Don't just focus on what you want to earn, but also on what you want to learn. Every job offers a learning curve, and there's always something valuable you can take away from it.

Most of the jobs I did involved interactions with people. While working in telecommunications, I had to engage with people, sell the benefits of Ntel, and prove it was the best and fastest option. In real estate, I had to convince clients that our properties were top-notch and trustworthy. These experiences also enhanced my ministry skills, as I learned to connect with people and understand their needs. Even in the midst of mistakes, make sure to learn from them. A job can serve as a stepping stone, whether it's setting up your own business or transitioning into another opportunity. Always adopt the attitude of learning and growing from every experience.

## How to learn from your job?

### ➤ Relatability

You learn how to connect with people. In your job, you'll encounter all types of individuals: those who share your values, and those who don't. It's crucial to learn how to interact with people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and perspectives.

### ➤ Learn Transferrable Skills

Transferable skills are essential in any industry, such as IT skills. Having a working knowledge of Microsoft Office programs like Word and Excel is fundamental. These skills also include decision-making, numeracy, organizational skills, and the ability to work under deadlines. You can develop them either directly or indirectly by observing and learning how to use your initiative. These are often referred to as soft skills. They're called "soft" because they don't necessarily require formal education; you can acquire them through experience or informal learning. While formal schooling can be beneficial, many people who haven't attended traditional school have still become computer literate and developed these valuable skills.

### ➤ Position Yourself To Be Responsible

Stop hiding your potentials, especially if you work in an organization. Put yourself on the spotlight. There are times that you are doing business with top managerial big wigs, those who are very important. Lend your voice. Even if you don't know what they are saying, ask intelligent questions. Contribute. Do you know what you are doing? You are putting yourself up for recommendation. Be the valuable entity that your organization needs. It is counterproductive or ineffective when your potentials are hid

## Matthew 5:14-16

**'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. '**

You shouldn't hide your potential. Let it shine. Keep your eyes open and be aware of what's happening around you. Some people don't even know that promotion is ongoing in their organization. During my time on campus, there were those who knew the results before they were officially released, simply because they were close to the lecturers. Similarly, in your organization, there are people who are in the know, maybe even those with personal connections to the boss. It's wise to pay attention and learn what they know. You don't have to be in close contact with them, but observe how things are done, both well and poorly. This observation will help you prepare for your own growth, because one day, you could find yourself in a leadership position, and you'll need to know how to organize things properly.

## ➤ Learn excellent presentation skills

I'm not sure if there's anything I love more than presentation skills—your ability to communicate effectively and showcase your value. Public speaking is incredibly important.

What impact does public speaking have on you?

Those who speak well in public tend to get promoted faster and earn the respect of both colleagues and customers. They can influence people to buy goods and services, making them a valuable asset to their employer. So, if you need to train yourself to speak well publicly, do it. I know people who actually pay for that.

## ➤ Time management

One of the greatest problems humans face is time management. Time is your greatest asset—it moves at the speed of light. Before you know it, 24 hours have passed. The only thing that goes up and never comes down is time. It keeps moving forward; that's why you can't be 25 this year and 24 next year. Time keeps ticking.

And you know what? We all have the same 24 hours. I remember years ago, someone asked Bill Gates one of his secrets. He said he does not waste time. When asked what he meant, he explained that even if his pen drops while working, he won't pick it up because the time spent doing that would cost him money. These people are disciplined. They may not pray, but they are disciplined.

Meanwhile, some of you spend three hours in meaningless discussions. You visit someone's shop and end up watching TV together. Then, at night, you complain there were no sales. Some of you don't even open your shops until 11 a.m.

I remember those days, when I go from place to place in ministry. Sometimes, after returning early from a ministrations, by 4:30 a.m., I would see people already selling *moinmoin*. After hours of praying, hunger would set in, and as I walked, I would just buy *puff-puff*.

Now, imagine if those snacks weren't available—who knows, maybe I would have collapsed on the road. But some people took it upon themselves to wake up early, cook, and do something productive while others were still sleeping. That is the same time some of you are being chased in your dreams.

You need to realize that you might be wasting too much time on inconsequential things. Time must be managed properly.

## How do you manage your time?

Some of you have calendars on your phone and various apps to help with your priority list. While you are at your job, set your priorities right from the start of the day.

This applies to both entrepreneurs and those in white-collar jobs—set your priorities right.

URGENT	IMPORTANT	CAN WAIT	TIME ALLOCATION	STATUS

Create a table like the one above to help structure your day. Identify the tasks that are **urgent**, **important**, and **can wait**, then **allocate time** for each. As you go through your day, **refer back to your calendar and check the status**: *Have I done this? Have I not done this?* This is how you effectively manage your time.

Make sure you track your progress throughout the day!

When you organize your time this way, you'll know how to cut off excesses because you have many important things to focus on. Sometimes, it becomes difficult to pick calls or reply to chats because you are fully engaged throughout the day.

Brethren, do not waste your time—time is ticking. For those of us who are students and desire to rise as high flyers, you must devote your time to reading. The Bible advocates that. *Read*. Believers are meant to excel, not to justify failure by giving it a name and calling it *God's dealing*.

Declare, *"I will not fail. And where failure comes, I will learn from it and move on."*

## **My Expectations for You:**

Go over this as many times as you can. Digest it. Write down the things you want to do. Do this prayerfully, asking God what He intends for you.

Don't take this lightly. Some people are making waves with cryptocurrency, others with affiliate marketing. In fact, we must add digital skills to our portfolio—it's the big deal right now. We complain about the rising dollar, but there are young people receiving their salaries in dollars. While you may be praying for the dollar to come down, they're praying for it to keep increasing. The prayer remains that everything gets easier for us.

This is a matter of life and destiny. Sit down and read this to yourself again. I don't want us to regret our lives in the near future. What's coming globally is something we've never seen before, and one of the attacks will be on the economy of nations, so we must rise economically. I'm telling you this now.

For those of you with jobs, don't base your entire life on that job. Ensure you have something else you're doing that you can fall back on. It's not a good time to depend solely on your parents. Rise up and do something meaningful. Your parents have a contributory role in your life—they must do their part. But as young individuals, get challenged to ensure you're also getting into something.


Declare, *"My head will not reject the word of God."*

Did you glean wisdom?

Before you conclude this reading, take a few moments to contend for the grace to be disciplined and to apply everything you have learned from this book.

## Stay Connected

We would love to hear from you! For more teachings, resources, and updates:

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