

SOLOMON JOHNSON O.



JOURNEY
OF THE
REBORN
REBORN

Solomon Johnson Ojaruwedai

JOURNEY OF THE REBORN

(The New Believer's Handbook)

A handy resource to acquaint new converts
of Jesus Christ with basic knowledge regarding
the new life in Him and He in them.

(John 15:5)

JOURNEY OF THE REBORN

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*The word “**man**” in this material represents mankind
and refers to both male and female (man, woman,
boys and girls).

DEDICATION

This piece is dedicated to everyone who has acknowledged Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord, and to those who choose to go the extra mile to forsake all, carry their cross and follow Him (Jesus Christ) in the ministry of reconciliation.

Being fully convinced that Jehovah, our God and heavenly Father, rewards those who diligently seek Him, you will not lose your heavenly and earthly rewards, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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FOREWORD

This book by Solomon Johnson clearly seeks to fill a real gap that exists in Christian literature. The Great Commission is about making disciples, not just converts. The fast-paced highly mobile world in which we now live is making the task of discipleship more challenging. That is why a small, easy-to-read book like this one is very helpful. However, though small in size, this book is loaded with the basics of the faith that a new believer needs to know in support of his walk with Jesus Christ. The book is aptly titled, “JOURNEY OF THE REBORN”.

The book begins by addressing the question, ‘What does it mean to be born again?’ It is shocking how many people who claim to be born again cannot satisfactorily answer this question. Many answer this question by telling you what church they attend. The unfortunate reality is that, while you would expect the church to comprise a mixed multitude, the lack of depth among

church folks is at an unacceptable level. Solomon nevertheless, underscores the necessity for every believer to be established in a home church where the journey of discipleship is expected to continue. I particularly like the fact that the author has intentionally drawn his quotations from a variety of bible versions, especially the more modern ones that new believers find more easily comprehensible.

Throughout the church age, evangelism has remained God's heartbeat. It would therefore, appear that the author put his ear to God's heart to receive some nuggets to help the new believer, as well as any believer committed to spreading the good news. It is therefore my pleasure to commend this book to every believer, especially those newly born again.

Ben Akabueze

Pastor-in-Charge

Redeemed Christian Church of God,

Lagos Province 39

PREFACE

One of the challenges I have faced as a mobile evangelist is the inability to share basic biblical doctrines to help the new Jesus' convert(s) begin their new journey into knowing God intimately. This constraint, resulting from irregular preaching time, distractions on the vehicle and unexpected alighting (drop off) of the new believer(s) from the vehicle, leaves them (the new believer) without the basic knowledge of what next to do.

When the sermon is over and everyone has disembarked from the vehicle, what free resource that serves as a guide in the convert's new faith is available to share with them?

This question was the burden that led to the birth of this work: JOURNEY of the REBORN - a handbook that is designed to aid new believers of Jesus Christ find their footing in their walk with our heavenly Father, among the body of Christ - community of

believers, and in the secular space they find themselves.

This handbook contains some fundamental teachings, including faith, origin of man, communing with God through His Word (the Holy Bible), relating with God and man, the essence of becoming a member of a local assembly (the church), the battle between the old and new nature of the new believer and the intentional decisions toward repentance from dead works – the process of sanctification requiring our intentional yielding and “workout” according to God’s Word.

This material is not intended to replace the training organised by the "local church" for equipping new believers. It is the mobile evangelist's instant guide for the new believer on the next line of action after conversion, which also includes becoming a member of a local assembly, where they can be thoroughly nurtured. So, it is advised that these new believers are well equipped and followed-up when they join a local assembly.

I am also delighted to mention that this work is not only beneficial to new Jesus’ converts: it also serves as a valuable resource for introducing the Christian faith

in homes, schools, and is incredibly helpful to those who are seeking a new outlook to assist them in their Christian journey.

Finally, it is my prayer, in Jesus' name, that this handbook is found helpful to the preacher/teacher, the Jesus' convert(s) as well as to those who would stumble on any piece of its content. Amen.

Shalom

Solomon J. Ojaruwedai

Co-labourer in God's vineyard

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I acknowledge the help, guidance, teaching and quickening of the Holy Spirit of God. I could not have been able to start and finish without You. I present to You all the Thanks, sir.

To my amiable Pastors: Ben Akabueze, Nathaniel Bassey, Yemi Temowo, I say big thank you, sirs, for your creative encouragement. You're blessed. I also acknowledge the labour of Pastor Gbenga Adeboye and Pastor Gbenga Salami, and all other men and women of God who have, and will yet labour over me in the place of prayer, teaching and counselling, both directly and indirectly. May God bless you.

Thanks to my open-hearted brother, Marvellous Olufelami, for making out time to peruse the manuscript and offer those priceless contributions. I am also grateful to my fellow RECSOMite and Brother, Egwu Lawrence, for standing with me in prayers through the

days and nights. Thank you, sir.

I appreciate you, Chukwuemeka Monyei, and Judith Emmanuel for lending me your perspective on this work. Thanks to you too, Udo Nwankwo and Betiku Kaynosh Onoshi for that timely edit. I also thank you, Bright Nzenwa for those wise words that came in handy.

Many thanks to you, brother Seyi Sogbanmu. Indeed, God works in an indescribable way. Your encouragement and technical counsel are beyond words. Thanks to the “Detailz Graphix” team for the technical support too.

My appreciation equally goes to the team members of “WHO DO YOU WORSHIP” Ministries. Thank you for standing in the gap.

To a superb brother, Sunday Onuh, thank you for editing and proofreading this work. You are simply amazing.

This is also a great opportunity to say thank you to my dearly beloved biological father, Johnson Ojaruwedia - Orhoesie (late), and mother, Elizabeth Ojaruwedia - Orhoesie, who led me, by example, how to be a good Christian. My gratitude also goes to all my siblings - the

Johnson Ojaruwedias, as well as my mother in-law, mama Olukemui Ariba, for their relentless support towards my family and I.

Finally, my profound gratitude goes to my wife, Motunrayo Opeyemi Ojaruwedai. Thanks for your input and support through those rough and tough times that brought about spiritual stamina in my life. To the children God has entrusted to the care of my wife and I, thank you too, for being a blessing.

You have all made a difference in this work and are greatly appreciated.

Shalom!

INTRODUCTION

There are many learning curves. One should not draw conclusion that only one teaching approach is the best. This is because even if it may have been tested and approved by a couple of recognised individuals, there are yet uncountable ways by which we learn.

In the Christian faith, we are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and each of His teachings is perceived differently and produces results based on the understanding of the student.

I therefore submit that this material is just one of many approaches to a wealth of information, to aid the Jesus' convert in his/her walk into the fullness of the image of Christ.

It is my prayer that as you read and digest this material, the eyes of your understanding may be

enlightened by revelation directly from this resource, and indirectly by your personal experience, and that your knowledge of the will of God be increased through the light of God's word. Amen.

CHAPTER ONE

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN
TO BE BORN AGAIN?**

Have you ever tried to share a great idea with someone who do not seem to understand the explanations of your concept? This is how hard, in fact, impossible it is, to use the natural to explain the spiritual. Only a spirit can interpret the things of the spirit. This is why the essential part of man was created in the likeness of a spirit so that he can render the right interpretations of the things of the spirit.

Genesis 1:27 CEB - *God created humanity [man] in His (God's) own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them.*

John 4:24 KJV - *God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

The first thing to note from the first Scripture quoted above is that the first humans were created by God. The next, is that they were created in the image of God. Then finally, God created them male and female

(man and woman). The second scripture above makes it clear that God is a spirit: His nature or essence is spirit.

The sequence in the creation of man began with man being in the image of God, after His likeness. This reveals that man was in a state not visible to the natural eyes.

The word “image” used in the Bible passage above is from a Hebrew word, צֶלֶם (tselem) which means 'phantom' or 'shadow'. Phantom is defined as 'a representation of something that is difficult to understand.' (Merriam-Webster 2023).

Yes! God is greater than the natural mind can comprehend! Only by revelation (spiritual knowledge) do we catch a glimpse of Him! He is a spirit and incomprehensible. So, I believe this is why God created man to be a spirit-being so that he (man) might be a representation of Him (God) in the natural/material world. The natural/material refers to tangible things. Those things we can touch, see, hold, smell...e.t.c., with our physical senses.

Since the spirit of man needs a body to relate to the material world, the next stage in the creation of man was now brought to light.

Genesis 2:7 KJV - *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

The spiritual nature of man was then enclosed in a lifeless body made of a mixture of mist and dust (smooth clay), and thereafter activated by the breath of God.

So, you see, God created the man (Adam) in such a way that he (man) can relate with His (God's) spirit nature (being a spirit), and at the same time being able to communicate spiritual things to the natural world because of the body which he has. Remember also, that this man was not just a spirit, but one in the image of God. This means that there are other creations of God that are ethereal which are not directly of God's image.

Something happened to this man (Adam) that was created in the image of God. He disobeyed his Creator and because of this act of disobedience, he lost the image of God in which he was created. So, when it was time for him to procreate (bring forth children), he could only reproduce his kind. Since he lost the image of God, he was only able to bring forth children in his own image, not in the image of God.

Genesis 5:3 AMP - *When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.*

Think about this: how do you feel when your concept is misrepresented? For instance, you shared a great idea about your dream house with an architect, who after his architectural drawing delivers a completely different diagram from what you shared with him. This is what happened to Adam and Eve, the first humans in the earth. They misrepresented God, having been warned about it. And this led to a degraded state - from being a reflection of God to being a shadow of themselves. This is the beginning of disobedience.

Now it is clear, that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they lost their identity- their resemblance (image) of God, and because of this they were unable to carry out the mandate of God on earth.

So, should everything remain in this state? No! the Creator's got a plan.

The Last Adam (Replacement of the First)

1 Corinthians 15:45 CEB - *So it is also written, “The first human, Adam, became a living person,” and the last Adam became a spirit that gives life.*

Notice that Jesus is not the second Adam, but the last. This means that no other Adam should be expected from anywhere, because that which the first Adam failed to do (that is to reflect the image of the invisible God in his earthly duties), Jesus, the last Adam, did perfectly.

It is also worth mentioning that this Jesus had been even before the entire world came to scene: Yes! Even before Adam was created. This has been a debate in the hearts of many, and I, personally, have come across many persons who have expressed their concerns about Jesus’ divine identity: that is, why He is called God. This is a subject that should be treated independently because of the volume of pages it will require for explanation, so, I invite you to watch out for my writings on this subject. Howbeit, I shall provide only two scriptures and a few statements to give a preview of the overall subject, and then for the purpose of this book, being a basic guide in the

Christian faith, I shall detail on Jesus being the last Adam.

Why is Jesus called God?

Genesis 1:1,3 NLT - *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [3] Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

John 1:1,3-4,14 NLT - *In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ¹³ God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. ¹⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone. ^{14a} So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.*

Before the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Then when God was to create the heavens and the earth He did that through His Word, that is, "He said". No one can say anything without a word. Likewise, God could not have "said" anything without the Word.

The Word of God is as good as God Himself, and it is this Word that came and dwelt among men: the Word of God wrapped in a body.

I will recommend that you keep on meditating on the above quoted bible passages on this subject, and I pray that this Word brings light into your heart to illuminate your understanding of the subject. Amen.

The Birth of Jesus, the Last Adam

Luke 1:30-31, 34-35 CEB - *The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?" The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son.*

Jesus, the last Adam, was sent from God the Creator, to fulfil the task the first Adam failed to do - to reflect the image of God on earth and do the will of God.

The Holy Ghost, custodian of the influential power of God, quickened (gave supernatural enablement to) the body of the virgin, Mary, just like He quickened the mortal bodies of men of old (Gideon, Samson, Bezaleel – son of Uri, David, Saul, Moses, Joshua, the Prophets, etc) to do the extraordinary. As a result of this quickening, Mary's body was equipped with supernatural ability to carry the seed of God.

Throughout Bible history, the visitation of the Holy Ghost upon mere men was to empower them for special assignment, and this was the same experience Mary had. She received the power of the Holy Ghost to conceive the image of the invisible God. This conception was sinless (not involving the semen of procreated man in the image of Adam), hence perfect for the task of God on the earth.

So, is Jesus the new image of God that Adam lost as a result of disobedience? Yes, He is.

Colossians 1:15 NLT - *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.*

Jesus, throughout His earthly assignment, was able to reflect the image of God on earth.

What is the image of God?

The Holy Bible has revealed several characters of God, but I have outlined three character of His image under which all others may fall: His LIFE; His LIGHT; and His LOVE. Adam could not manifest the life, light and love of God after his separation from God, which was as a result of sin. But Jesus Christ excelled in demonstrating the image of God. Find below His bold statements:

John 14:6 KJV - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 8:12 NLT - *Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."*

John 3:16 KJV - *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 15:9-10,12 CEB - *"As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my*

commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and remain in His love. This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you.

Jesus speaks of the Rebirth process for mankind

John 3:3-6 NIV - *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."^{14]} "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"^{15]} Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit."^{16]} *Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

According to the Bible passage above, two steps are involved in the rebirth process: the work of the Spirit and the work of water.

'Birth by the Spirit' refers to the work of the Holy Ghost, to deposit the seed of the image of God in you, which makes for a new spirit within you, while to be born of water is the sanctification process that you go through as you journey into the fullness of the image

of God through Christ, the visible image of God. The former occurs instantly while the latter is a progressive work of the word of God in the life of the reborn. This sanctification comes through the washing of water by the word of God. That is, the work which the word of God does in you as you intentionally carry out all the instructions you receive, to do away with old ungodly (sinful) thoughts and actions. Both sanctification and receiving of a new spirit is done by faith through grace.

Ephesians 5:26-27 TPT – *He [Jesus] died to make us holy and pure, cleansing us through the showering of the pure water of the word of God.¹²⁷ All that He does in us is designed to make us a mature church for His pleasure, until we become a source of praise to Him – glorious and radiant, beautiful and holy, without flaw. [Emphasis added]*

Ephesians 2:8 AMP - *For it is by grace [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God;*

1 John 5:1,5 NIV -*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves His child as well. ^{15]} Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Putting it all together...

To be born again means to go through a spiritual reset. That is to be spiritually reborn, by the power of the Holy Ghost in order to function again as the image of God. In addition to this spiritual rebirth, the body of the reborn will continue to undergo a cleansing process through the word of God. It is through this sanctified body that the image of God finds expression on the earth.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO BE BORN AGAIN?

It is to:

- a. regain the once lost image of the invisible God.

Ephesians 1:5 ERV - *And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ. This was what God wanted, and it pleased him to do it.*

- b. have a sweet and cordial relationship and fellowship with our heavenly Father.

2 Corinthians 13:14 NLT - *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

- c. manifest the image of God (life, light and love) to the world.

1 Peter 2:9 NLT - *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.*

- d. fulfil the mandate of fruitfulness, multiplication, and dominion.

Genesis 1:28 NKJV – *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

- e. take our rightful place that which God has.

Ephesians 2:5-6 NLT - *that even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) [6] For He raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.*

CHAPTER TWO

**HOW CAN I BECOME
BORN AGAIN?**

To be born again, based on the holy Bible, the following steps must be taken:

1. You have to come to the realisation that your current state is corrupt – being a product of the fallen nature of Adam.
2. You have to admit your need for a rebirth in order to have the new life of God – to be reborn of the Spirit of God.
3. You must be convinced of the importance of the new life in God.
4. You are to receive this new life by making a verbal confession and declaration of your conviction.
5. You must believe that you have received the new life of God based on the verbal confession and declaration you have truthfully made.

From the above information, we see that being born in a church or attending a particular denomination doesn't make an individual a child of God, neither does being the child of a Priest, Prophet, Pastor or Evangelist make one born again. There has to be a process to follow intentionally to be recreated. This process is acknowledging your sinful state and trading it in exchange for the life of Jesus.

REBIRTH, CONFESSION AND DECLARATION
(The Sinner's Prayer)

Dear God, I have realised and acknowledge that I was formed in iniquity and conceived in sin. This means that there is no good that can ever come out of me, no matter how good my works may appear before people. Please have mercy on me and forgive me for disobeying Your commands.

Today, I surrender, and trade my sinful life in exchange for the life of Jesus Christ, Your sinless Son, and I accept Him into my heart as my Saviour and my Lord.

I believe and accept that Jesus died on the cross of Calvary to take away my sin and guilt, and He rose again from the dead, and yet live, so that I might have His life.

Thank You my God and heavenly Father, for saving me and causing a rebirth in me through the life of Your Son, Jesus. In Jesus' name I have confessed. Amen.

If you just read the sinner's prayer (for the sake of reading) and would like to sincerely make an intentional decision to be born again, please go over it again below and say it aloud this time, with the whole of your heart.

SAY IT ALOUD TO YOUR HEARING!

Dear God, I have realised and acknowledge that I was formed in iniquity and conceived in sin. This means that there is no good that can ever come out of me, no matter how good my works may appear before people. Please have mercy on me and forgive me for disobeying Your commands.

Today, I surrender, and trade my sinful life in exchange for the life of Jesus Christ, Your sinless Son,

and I accept Him into my heart as my Saviour and my Lord.

I believe and accept that Jesus died on the cross of Calvary to take away my sin and guilt, and He rose again from the dead, and yet live, so that I might have His life.

Thank You my God, and heavenly Father, for saving me and causing a rebirth in me through the life of Your Son, Jesus. In Jesus' name I have confessed. Amen

Kindly reach out to us via any of the channels below with a short message like this;

"I HAVE JUST SAID THE SINNER'S PRAYER".

WhatsApp: +234 818 2643 882



Email: **thefollowuphub@gmail.com**

Please follow this link **<http://bit.ly/3XaicaW>**

or scan



to complete a simple online form for onward follow-up.

Thank you.

CHAPTER THREE

**REPENT AND REFRAIN
FROM YOUR OLD WAYS**

Hebrews 12:11 CEB - *No discipline is fun while it lasts, but it seems painful at the time. Later, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those who have been trained by it.*

Philippians 2:12 KJV - *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

In chapter one, the born-again process was elucidated in full: to be born of water and of the Spirit. Not one sided. This means that having received, by faith, the deposit of the image of God inside of us, it becomes our sole responsibility to work out the instructions we receive from God's word, which is also known as the process of sanctification through the word of God (washing of water by the word). In a nutshell, our mortal body (flesh) requires discipline (personal work out) – to obey God's word and to give room for the expression of the image of God through us who are in

this world. This working out of personal salvation requires revelation from the Holy Spirit on what to do and how to go about it otherwise we would burn out trying to use human wisdom to produce fruit pertaining to the Spirit. Note also that this revelation comes through the word of God. See chapters 6 and 8 for more information regarding the Holy Spirit, and the word of God, respectively.

This is why Jesus says that we will remain unfruitful except we abide in Him and He abides in us. Jesus is the WORD.

John 15:5 NIV - *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

It takes revelation to accept Christ Jesus into our hearts. but then it takes even more revelations to remain in Him. To "remain" means "to abide or to stay in there - day and night."

Sometimes, we get out of Christ to do some very ugly things which we afterwards become ashamed of, and regret to have done. Therefore, we must daily crave for this revelation in order to live out a victorious life over self - the old sinful nature. It is that spiritual

insight or attraction we receive, that makes us want to remain in Christ. Howbeit, this revelation needs constant and conscious practice in order to become our reality.

I have always believed that to abide in Jesus, and for Jesus to abide in us, is one and the same and only a repetition, but I have come to know that they are two different stages in the life of a Christian. The first, which is for Jesus to abide in us, means that we have a duty to invite Him into our heart. This happened at rebirth: the very moment we sincerely let Him into our hearts as our eyes opened to the reality of our sinful and fallen state. The second, which is for us to abide in Jesus Christ, refers to the daily surrender of our lives to Him.

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

This “daily surrender” is a life-long process (sanctification) after rebirth, until we are fully conformed into His image, reflected in our actions. When we abide in Him, we enthrone Him as Lord and

act based on His instructions only. But this happens with the help of the revelations we receive, as earlier mentioned.

Romans 8:29 CEB - *We know this because God knew them [those who will be saved] in advance, and He decided in advance that they would be conformed to the image of His Son. That way His Son would be the first of many brothers and sisters.*

I have learned that the training and tests, following the revelations, that bring stature to our inner man towards daily “surrender” is unique for everyone.

Followers of Jesus Christ struggle with so many things on their journey into manifesting maturity in the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Cultural, family, environmental and/or religious background(s) amongst others, are factors that contribute greatly to this struggle. Apart from our souls being saved from sin, a mindset/self has been developed over the years from these factors and display in various ways.

The Bible passages below outline some traits of the aforementioned factors:.

Galatians 5:19-21 NLT - *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear:*

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Sexual immorality | 2. Impurity |
| 3. Lustful pleasures | 4. Idolatry |
| 5. Sorcery | 6. Hostility |
| 7. Quarreling | 8. Jealousy |
| 9. Outbursts of anger. | 10. Selfish ambition |
| 11. Dissension | 12. Division |
| 13. Envy | 14. Drunkenness |
| 15. Wild parties | 16. Other sins like these |

Colossians 3:8-9 KJV - *But now ye also put off all these;*

Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, Filthy communication out of your mouth.

Do not lie to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Romans 1:26-31 NLT - *That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other.^[27] And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did*

shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. ^[28] Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, He abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. ^[29] Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ^[30] They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. ^[31] They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy.

These are the habits some Christians exhibit when they choose to gratify the old sinful nature - when they are not in Christ. But when we surrender our lives to Christ (to remain in Him), these elements begin to shed off and give place for the person of the Holy Spirit to manifest through us.

As also stated earlier, revelation is not enough: it requires our intentional action powered by the Holy Spirit to shed off our old ways, and this action of ours is what translates to the term “work out”. Remember, faith without works is unprofitable and dead.

James 2:26 KJV - *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

How do we "work out" our own salvation?

Think about physical exercises. We will only see the effect of our practice when we are consistent at it. In fact, we may observe some pains in some parts of our body when we cease to continue on the exercise. Even so, when we pull back into activities of the old sinful nature, having begun to live in Christ (working out), we end up in some kind of pain and even regret to have made such decision(s).

You may have heard some Christians say, "I will leave born-again aside and deal with you! Another will say "leave Jesus out of this business!" Some others don't even say as much but act likewise. It is dangerous to act that way! It only exposes such persons to pain and regret. We must be intentional about our workout - remaining in Christ. Our workout is to be done with reverential fear for God who has already equipped us with the power (ability) to become like Christ Jesus – the model we behold as we exercise.

2 Corinthians 3:18 CEB - *All of us are looking with unveiled faces at the glory of the Lord as if we were looking in a mirror. We are being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to the next degree of glory. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

James 1:23-25 ERV - *Hearing God's teaching and doing nothing is like looking at your face in the mirror and doing nothing about what you saw. You go away and immediately forget how bad you looked. But when you look into God's perfect law that sets people free, pay attention to it. If you do what it says, you will have God's blessing. Never just listen to His teaching and forget what you heard.*

John 1:12 KJV - *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:*

The power you need "to become" or to grow into a mature son or daughter of God became resident in you from the time you allowed Jesus into your heart, but you must be willing to go through that "becoming" process (sanctification) in order to really manifest maturity.

As I begin to wrap up on this subject, I invite you to pay careful attention to the following instructions.

1 Peter 5:8 NLT - *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.*

1 John 5:18-19 NLT - *We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them.^[19] We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.*

1 John 3:9 NLT - *Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God.*

The above bible passages admonish that you do not lose guard! Do not toy with sin! To have Christ Jesus in you is not just enough. Move from that level to the next, which is to abide in Him.

What Should You Do Then?

Galatians 5:16-17 NLT - *So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.^[17] The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.*

Romans 6:13-14 NLT - *Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.^[14] Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.*

Submit to the voice of the Holy Spirit within you. Whenever you feel confused about certain instructions you receive in your heart as a new believer, it is highly recommended that you check with the Bible for accuracy, or seek counsel from your pastor in church. Don't just approve the inner prompting because it feels good.

To avoid crises, remain in Christ! Work out the manifestation of your own salvation intentionally, then you will begin to see the character of Jesus Christ (God's visible image) display through you. Remember this saying by Jesus in **Matthew 7:20 NLT** - *Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.*

CHAPTER FOUR

FRUIT OF REPENTANCE

God has designed every tree to produce fruit of its kind, and this is also true for every follower of Christ. A mango seed has the potency of becoming a mango tree and to produce mango fruits. Likewise, a person who is born of the seed of the righteousness of God (Jesus Christ) grow in like manner and produce fruit of His kind, even the fruit of righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 KJV - *For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*

Luke 3:8 NLT - *Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.*

Acts 26:20 NLT - *..... all must repent of their sins and turn to God-and prove they have changed by the good things they do.*

Philippians 1:11 NLT - *May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation-the righteous character*

produced in your life by Jesus Christ-for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Isaiah 61:3 KJV -*that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.*

If Jesus is our righteousness, then the fruit of the Spirit of Jesus Christ should be produced through us, since His Spirit dwells in us.

What Is the Fruit of The Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ^[23] gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

Notice that the fruit of the Spirit as listed in the Bible passage above is in the singular form. It therefore means that it is a combination of each of the words on the list that makes up for the single fruit. One way to look at the list of the fruit of the Spirit is to see it as one whole fruit divided into nine parts. Another way to look at each of the nine listed parts of the fruit is to see them as features, characters, attributes, elements or components of the single fruit.

Jesus says, *“by their fruit we shall know them.”* This is to say that it is the demonstration of the fruit or character of a thing that reveals the hidden component, quality or identity of that tree or thing. Our demonstration of the character of the Holy Spirit of Christ is what reveals what stuff we are made of – whose we are and from whom we receive instructions when we act.

Romans 8:14 KJV - *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

The nine revealed characters of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in Galatians 5:22 - 23 can be grouped into three:

Group A: The position of the heart/heart filter;
 Group B: The position of the soul/body filter; and
 Group C: The position of the body/soul filter.

Group A: The position of the heart of the regenerated man - Love, Joy, Peace.

Matthew 12:34-35 ERV - *You snakes! You are so evil. How can you say anything good? What people say with their mouths comes from what fills their hearts. Those who are good have good things saved in*

their hearts. That's why they say good things. But those who are evil have hearts full of evil, and that's why they say things that are evil.

The motive and action of the reborn must filter through love, joy and peace of the Holy Spirit. This means that the overall action or reaction in the life of the born-again should be filtered through these features.

For example, if I want to correct someone who has erred, or react to an unpleasant event, I must do so with unconditional love, through the joy of the Lord, and in hope to achieve peace.

Group B: The position of the soul/the body filter – Forbearance or longsuffering, Kindness and Goodness. These features make up the filter through which the soul runs stimuli before transmitting signals to the body. Since the body acts based on whatever instruction it receives from the soul, impulses from the old nature (self) that tries to get in the way are vetted through this filter, and pure signals, in place of impure ones from the old nature, are sent to the body for action or reaction.

What this means for the reborn is that instead of reacting sharply and negatively to unpleasant situation or to someone who has caused us pain, this filter rather suggests we forbear or endure the situation, show kindness by demonstrating goodwill to the undeserved instead of repaying pain for pain or evil for evil.

This may come as a hard saying, and seemingly difficult to demonstrate, but with God nothing shall be impossible. I believe that a constant practice of this model will eventually make it a part of us. Our focus should not be in the power of the flesh/self to achieve this, but in the power of the Holy Spirit who is able to transform us as we yield to His workings.

Group C: The position of the flesh/the soul filter - Faithfulness, Gentleness or Meekness, Temperance or Self Control.

This filter guards against corruption from penetrating into the soul through the weakness of the flesh. It can otherwise be referred to as the soul filter.

Mankind has a unique ability to send and receive signals. Signals sent come from within while signals received originate from without. The members of our

body – eyes, ears, nose, e.t.c., are the tools with which we transmit these signals from without (our environment or world) into our souls. When the soul filter sieves corrupt elements like lust, display of pride, worldliness, e.t.c., coming from without, the soul is left with only healthy signals to process, since the transformed soul thrives on healthy feeds.

As earlier stated, a tree only produces fruits, having gone through certain stages. For the reborn to bring forth fruit of repentance, pruning is required. Pruning is the cutting away of anything that may hinder or slow the process of fruit bearing. This means that you will need to physically and intentionally cut away some things from your lifestyle that is not in synchrony with your new nature as born again. Please see chapter three for more details.

Now let's look in details at the nine manifesting characters of the Holy Spirit of Christ which is to be seen in the life of a fruitful believer.

Group A – Love, Joy and Peace.

- 1) Love. The first element listed in the scripture is love. Why love? Love because it is the first reflection of the image of God, our Father. According to **1 John 4:8 KJV** - *For God is love.* This love is the fundamental element upon which the other eight elements find support and strength: the mother of all the elements.

Since love is the basis for our salvation and our goal is to be conformed into the image of God through Jesus His Christ, we ought also to manifest the same kind of love that brought about our own salvation. The scripture below makes it clear, thus;

1 John 4:7-13 ERV - *Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child. And so everyone who loves knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love to us: He sent His only Son into the world to give us life through Him. True love is God's love for us, not our love for God. He sent His Son as the way to take away our sins. That is how much God loved us,*

dear friends! So we also must love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us. If we love each other, God's love has reached its goal—it is made perfect in us. We know that we live in God and God lives in us. We know this because he gave us His Spirit.

The kind of love God demonstrated toward us is different from the affectionate love exercised in the family and friend setting (Greek: *Philia*), or sensual/romantic love in marriage context (Greek: *Eros*). This is unconditional love. A love not dependent on personal interest or what one stands to gain. It is called **AGAPE** in Greek.

We understand that Jesus died for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8 NLT - *But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

The passage above made it clear that we were yet in sin when God demonstrated His love toward us. Sin is an ugly state that ordinarily should disqualify one from receiving God's love, yet God was kind to show us His love.

The pursuit for the manifestation of the love of Christ is the chase for selflessness, humility, patience and others, which are all elements of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:35-39 CEB - *Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "We are being put to death all day long for your sake." "We are treated like sheep for slaughter." But in all these things we win a sweeping victory through the one who loved us. I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.*

Against all odds, we are enjoined to yield to what the Word of God says about the love of Jesus Christ, that way, we would be acting out His love, which is a part of His image.

- 2) **Joy.** Blessed Reverend Obiora Ezekiel of the Christian Pentecostal Mission International, uses “JOY” as an acronym for "Jesus Over You." What this means is that irrespective of what you are faced with, the undeniable knowledge that Jesus is Over You or is in charge, is what guarantees you satisfaction.

Nehemiah 8:10 NLT - *Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!*

Joy is not happiness

While happiness is a function of external pleasure or satisfaction that is temporal, **JOY is an internal demonstration of pleasure and satisfaction rooted in Jesus Christ, the Word of God and in the knowledge of Him.** This is eternal in nature.

Furthermore, Joy can be interpreted as the product of total surrender to God - when we allow God to bring satisfaction to our longings, i.e., grace, while Happiness refers to the pleasurable outcome of human effort towards self-gratification.

More differences between joy and happiness are listed below:

The Joy of the Lord

- It is internal
- It comes from unconditional love (Agape)
- It is Christ based
- It is a choice. You have a responsibility to choose to have Joy.
- It comes from supporting and helping the weak
- It comes from serving others
- It comes from lifting people up
- It comes from making disciples for Christ
- It comes when others find satisfaction in God
- It is a major source of strength for the Christian

Worldly Happiness

- It is external
- It comes from conditional love—what one stands to gain
- Things has to come to you to make you happy
- It is circumstance based
- It is by chance. It is not guaranteed
- It comes from being served (When people serve you)
- It comes from oppressing and lording over the weak
- It comes from pushing people down in order to stay above
- It comes when others find satisfaction in you

From the above, you would have noticed that joy is a gift from God that comes from within the spirit of man and not based on external factors. I would like to add that Joy cannot be earned or purchase. In fact, the secret to the joy of the Lord is selflessness.

Still on this element of the fruit of the Spirit, it is very key to remember that while happiness is regulated by God's creation, joy is regulated by God the Creator, Himself. In other words, man can take away your happiness but no man can take away the joy of the Lord you have. Just as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, being born again is the beginning of the fullness of the joy of the Lord, which is the strength you need in your relationship with God through Christ Jesus.

Sources of Joy.

There are innumerable sources of joy, but here are a few captured below:

A. When you read the Bible and study it.

Psalm 19:8 NLT - *The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart.*

B. When you receive help from God.

Psalm 28:7 NLT - *The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust Him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.*

C. When you put your trust in God.

Psalm 34:8 NLT - *Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!*

D. When your sins are forgiven and the guilt is cleared.

Psalm 32:1-2 NLT - *Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! ^[2] Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!*

E. When you seek to build your relationship with God, your heavenly Father, and when you live a life of integrity.

Psalm 119:1-2 NLT - *Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD.*

^[2] *Joyful are those who obey His laws and search for Him with all their hearts.*

F. When you are in the presence of God.

Psalm 16:11 KJV - *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

G. When you go out to tell people about Jesus Christ and what He has done for you.

Isaiah 52:7-8 NLT - *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!*^[8] *The watchmen shout and sing with joy, for before their very eyes they see the LORD returning to Jerusalem.*

H. When we behold Jesus: a revelation of Jesus here in the earth, and the culmination of our hope, when we shall see Him in His glory face to face.

John 16:20 NLT - *I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to*

me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy.

Finally, on the subject of Joy, it is worth mentioning that it is with joy that you draw from the riches of God that is stored in the wells of salvation - a tool with which we access the wealth of God.

Isaiah 12:2-3 KJV - *Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. ^[3] Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*

Where is this well of salvation stored? Inside of you? Yes!

John 7:38 KJV - *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

This means that, the moment you accepted Christ Jesus into your heart, the immediate deposit of His Spirit inside of you became the main source (Living Water) for the rivers/wells that shall flow out from within you. This rivers or wells of water

stored inside of you is made available to you to cater for your daily needs.

How do the wells/rivers of water meet your needs?

This Living Water mentioned here represents the Spirit of Christ. So, the various manifestations of Christ Jesus are made available to you as you use JOY – the pail to draw out the water you need for the day.

How much of water can you draw out from this well?

With the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of you, you can draw as much as you covet: unlimited access. This is so because Jesus Christ had no limitation to how much of the Spirit of God He possessed. **John 3.34** declares that He is given the Spirit of God without measure.

Let me also mention that the saints of old possessed one Spirit at a time. None of them overflowed with immeasurable Spirit like Jesus.

Out of **Isaiah 11.2**, are a few of the spirits (waters) which Jesus manifested, according to bible scholars:

The Spirit of the Lord (of deliverance)

The spirit of wisdom

The spirit of understanding

The spirit of counsel

The spirit of might

The spirit of the fear of the Lord

The spirit of the knowledge of the Lord

Therefore, engaging these spirits when drawn from your inside are the fundamental and necessary tools needed to solve daily challenges and of course to do your day-to-day jobs. All of these Spirits, though have different functions, are of the One and only true Holy God of Israel-Jehovah.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 CEB - *A demonstration of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good. A word of wisdom is given by the Spirit to one person, a word of knowledge to another according to the same Spirit, faith to still another by the same Spirit, gifts of healing to another in the one Spirit, performance of miracles to another, prophecy to another, the ability to tell spirits apart to another, different kinds of tongues to another, and the interpretation of the tongues to another. All these*

things are produced by the one and same Spirit who gives what he wants to each person.

- 3) Peace.** The kind of peace you received when you accepted Jesus into your heart is not the type the world calls peace. This kind of peace is the person of Christ residing in you. And so, in the midst of chaos and confusion, the assurance that Jesus is with you and that He is your chief counsel grants you that comfort that all will be well.

John 14:27 NKJV - *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

This kind of peace is not derived from external pleasures or comfort, neither is it controlled by chaos, the presence of war, disagreements and the likes; it is sourced from the confidence and trust that Jesus is in control and will deliver the best to you. To enjoy the effect of this peace one needs to completely trust in God through Jesus Christ, and listen in for His instructions and directions.

Another useful requirement to enjoy this peace is longsuffering. Usually because of the rush humans have gotten into – a product of the fallen nature, we struggle to wait and want to make quick decisions, which most times, leads to pain and sometimes, loss.

Lean on Jesus to enjoy this PEACE.

NEXT...

Group B: Forbearance or Longsuffering, Kindness and Goodness.

The body filter.

4) Forbearance/Longsuffering: Delayed/enduring temper.

The word “longsuffering” used in our Bible verse is from a Greek word, Μακροθυμία (makrothumia), and refers to “longanimity”, which means the disposition to bear injuries patiently (Merriam-Webster 2023). It also connotes “forbearance” which means to refrain from the enforcement of your right/obligation that is due an offender (Merriam-Webster 2023). The same word “Makrothumia”, from makrothumōs

means “to take a longer time to burn with wrath or to be slowly stirred into wrath”. These definitions are captured in the following Bible passages:

James 1:19 KJV - *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

Proverbs 14:29 KJV - *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.*

Proverbs 15:18 KJV - *A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.*

I pray that more grace be made available to us to patiently bear the offences of others, all for the glory and praise of God, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Why should we patiently endure?

Hebrews 12:2 KJV - *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

2 Peter 3:9 KJV - *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Psalm 103:8 KJV - *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

From the Bible passages above, it is clear that the salvation of the souls of humanity is the reason for longsuffering. While the natural man will patiently endure for his own glory, the believer forbears the offences of others for the glory of God to be revealed in the life of the offender. Jesus endured the cross and despised the shame in order to fulfil the requirement for the salvation of the souls of mankind and the wrath of God is slowly triggered because He wants people to be reconciled to Him.

Is there a reward for longsuffering?

Yes! Unspeakable glorious joy of the Lord is a special reward for reconciling men and women to God, especially when we have to forbear painful events for their sake. This joy brings encouragement and satisfaction to us in our walk

with God as we sojourn in the earth. So, when we forbear unpleasant actions and situations people throw at us, it is for one purpose – that their souls might be saved and the image of God be revealed through them. This is what makes the believer different. When the unregenerated man or woman (self) is scheming ways to revenge the evil done them, the Spirit of Christ, in the life of a saint, is controlling the soul's response to stimulus, and God expects us to manifest this character of the Spirit of Christ to the people we associate with everywhere; at home, school, workplace, and even in the church.

5) Kindness. Goodwill to the undeserved.

Kindness, from the Greek word "χρηστότης" (chrēstotēs) refers to one with moral excellence in character or demeanour. This kindness is characterised by gentleness. So, we can say gentle kindness. When the Greek word "chrēstotēs" is further looked up, it tells of one's good action or goodness. **Romans 2:4, Romans 3:12, Romans 11:22.** So, putting it together, kindness in this Bible passage can be described as reaching out, with good intentions, to the undeserved in a gentle manner. It could also be presented as upholding and

demonstrating goodwill, with an excellent character or demeanour, to offenders. Since kindness (chrēstotēs) is characterised by gentleness, let us see what it means to be gentle.

A gentle person is someone who can be easily managed by others: someone fit for use. A person that is not difficult, harsh, hard, sharp (piercing) or bitter. Someone who's approachable by others. Gentleness does not mean that one should not be bold or firm. Neither does it mean that one should compromise God's standard.

Jesus, as gentle as He was during His earthly ministry, was still bold to declare the counsel of His heavenly Father, yet approachable by all. No matter how bold we are, we must be malleable in the things of God and approachable by men.

This makes much sense because as one of the features for the body filter, it sieves out the offence(s) and unpleasantness that comes at us, and yet reminds us of our responsibility to be disciplined and deliver kindness in a gentle manner as we handle the cause of the pain.

So, kindness being a part of the fruit of the Spirit, is a character that is expected of us, re-born in Christ, to manifest to the people around us, like Jesus did during His earthly ministry.

- 6) **Goodness:** The ability to do good lies only in God, for Jesus says that no man is good. The natural man can be nothing good except they be empowered by God to demonstrate goodness.

Goodness, according to the root Hebrew word *αγαθωσύνη* (*agathōsunē*), means uprightness of one's heart, soul and body. It has to do with the rightness of the heart, soul and body, according to God's standard. It is based on this uprightness that goodness, as an element of the fruit of the Spirit, is produced. Goodness also speaks of one's goodwill.

Goodness as a feature of the body filter in this group, sieves out the wicked actions and reactions the old sinful nature would perform when under pressure or faced with difficulties, which includes pain and other offensive situations, but delivers to the body stimuli that promotes uprightness, righteousness and truth. This feature protects against paying/rewarding evil with evil.

According to the Holy Bible, no human, operating in the natural and by nature, is good. Only God is good, and therefore to produce God-inspired “good” as a reborn of God, we must depend on Him to furnish us with the wisdom we need to do good works that bring Him pleasure.

Mark 10:18 NKJV - *And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.*

Acts 10:38 KJV - *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.*

We can see from **Acts 10:38** that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost in order to carry out good works. Without the Spirit of God, we will run into frustration trying to use the wisdom of the natural man to achieve the result inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Finally, did you notice how each of the features in this group of the fruit of the Spirit follow each other sequentially? Longsuffering which means to endure the pain while we wait, is followed by

kindness, which is to reach out with good intentions to the undeserved, in a gentle manner, and then summed up with an expression of the desired good intention to the undeserved person or situation (rewarding good with evil)?

PRAYER

I pray that the Holy Ghost will quicken our bodies with the life we need to manifest these elements of the fruit of the Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Group C: Faithfulness, Gentleness/Meekness and Temperance. I also call these elements of the fruit of the Spirit the soul filter. It is developed to handle matters relating to self.

- 7) **Faithfulness.** Faithfulness is a word that has been for while. While we look at faithfulness from a conventional viewpoint, we shall also see something new about the subject as it relates to the recipient of the promise made by the promiser, who is mostly believed to be the only one that needs to be faithful in an agreement.

The word “faithfulness” or “faith”, is drawn from the Greek word “pistis”. The same Greek word is used for “fidelity”, as captured in **Titus 2:10 KJV**

- Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Fidelity is said to be adherence to something to which one is bound by a pledge or duty (Merriam-Webster 2023). So, to be faithful means to be steadfast in affection or allegiance (Merriam-Webster 2023). Simply put, to be faithful is to do what you say you will do: to keep the promise you have made.

When we hold-fast or stay glued to our commitment, it becomes the quality of our faithfulness, and to be faithful simply means “to do what you say you will do”. Keeping the promise!

Psalm 15:1,4c NLT - *Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?.... those who keep their promises even when it hurts. [Paraphrased]*

The two sides to faithfulness

I have realised that faithfulness is a two-way street: the side of the promiser and that of the recipient of the promise. What I have grown to know to be the

general practice of faithfulness lies on the part of the promiser, because the weight of the promise lies majorly on him/her. But a closer look at the pact reveals that the recipient of the promise also has a part to play – to accept or decline the promise. When the receiver consents to the promise, he has also made a commitment. And when the recipient fails to uphold his/her part of the agreement, he/she can be referred to as being unfaithful.

How does faithfulness apply to matters relating to self/flesh?

The flesh, in its fallen state, is usually impatient on general matters. This means that even when we consent to promises, the natural phenomenon is to walk away when delay sets in. This suggests to me that a major ingredient in developing this character of the Holy Spirit is patience/longsuffering.

One of the reasons many quit waiting for that which is promised them is impatience. When we are unable to wait, especially when it feels like time is not on our side, we abandon the promise, and even when the person who made the promise is willing to keep his commitment, we give

excuses for our failure to wait. The need to grow in this character helps the new believer handle personal commitments as well as pledges to others in order to prevent corruption into the soul.

When we remain hopeful to see a change in someone who has promised a change in behaviour, and/or when we make personal commitments to abstain from ungodly acts, are examples of events that require faithfulness.

In addition, when we regard those secret commitments we make between God and ourselves, they increase our fidelity for other external obligations, but when we become unfaithful with those, it becomes a struggle trying to keep up with our pledges to others.

Just as we labour to keep the promise we make to others, we should likewise be intentional about keeping our commitments to ourselves regarding lust, pride, power and affluence, that the world or our flesh may throw at us.

The next time you make a promise to yourself, maybe to abstain from one sinful activity or the other, remember that failure to fulfil your promise

amounts to unfaithfulness. Also, when next you consent to the promise of someone, be ready to wait until the promise is fulfilled (unless disannulled upon the agreement of the persons involved), otherwise you would have breached your part of the contract. So, before consenting to any contract, please be guided so as to avoid been unfaithful. Remember, one secret to faithfulness is the demonstration of patience.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, please guide me by Your Holy Spirit into healthy commitments, and equip me with the required strength to wait until the commitment is consummated, in Jesus' name. Amen.

- 8) Gentleness.** This component of the fruit of the Holy Spirit speaks of a mild disposition, but more than just being mild, it focuses more on meekness.

As powerful as the Holy Spirit is, He will not force you into any action. He is so meek. Even though He has all power, all abilities, wisdom and knowledge, He always remain gentle.

Matthew 11:29 CEB - *Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I'm gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves.*

Matthew 11:29 KJV - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

As you have seen, other translations would exchange gentleness for meekness. So, what does it mean to be meek?

This is the ability for us to put our potentials and/or positions under control: to exercise dominion over our natural, acquired or bestowed ability, including knowledge, skills, oratory ability, authority and power. The list goes on.

Other related words used to describe meekness are humility, submission, unboastful.

Jesus, being in the form of God made Himself of no reputation but took upon Himself the form of a servant. This is humility.

Philippians 2:6-8 ERV - *He was like God in every way, but he did not think that his being equal with God was something to use for his own benefit. Instead, he gave up everything, even his place with God. He accepted the role of a servant, appearing in human form. During his life as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God, even when that caused his death-death on a cross.*

Another passage I love so much that describes meekness is **John 18:36 KJV**

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Jesus had the power to call His servants to fight for Him, but He restrained Himself from doing so. That's meekness.

This is a good place to mention that all of these preparations that the holy Spirit is carrying out in our lives, as we submit ourselves to Him, is for our manifestation of the fullness of the image of God.

Moses, the old testament figure, is another man that demonstrated meekness. Although God empowered him so much that he could path the red sea, and perform all other kinds of miracles – in fact, he was made a god to Pharaoh of that time, he never used the power against the murmuring and head-strong children of Israel. That's meekness with authority and power.

May our fellowship with the Holy Spirit bring us to this point where we put all that we are, and have acquired behind and relate with humanity with a lowly heart and humility, in Jesus' name. Amen.

9) Temperance: also known as self-control.

It refers to the demonstration of dominion (controlling power or influence) over the members of the body to prevent them from engaging in sights or events that arouse/excite appetites that birth sinful activities in the soul (the emotion, mind and will).

This soul filter alerts the body on activities that leads to anger, pride, sensual cravings, and everything that brings satisfaction and boasts to self.

As a new born saint, there might be struggles with putting the old trained “SELF” under control. That old nature still wants to boss you around. Victory over the old nature comes from constantly yielding to the leading of the Holy Spirit which in turn trains you to abide by the rules of the Spirit. The old man wants to still party, engage in wild activities and other practices that are contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Some of the cravings of the old nature have been mentioned in chapter three (3), but a few are listed below for quick reference:

Galatians 5:19-21 CEB - *The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious, since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good, idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that. I warn you as I have already warned you, that those who do these kinds of things won't inherit God's kingdom.*

Finally on this subject, it is worth being reminded that ungodly or unholy association frustrates your

effort of yielding to the leadership of the Holy Spirit within you; therefore, it is advised that you wisely disassociate yourself from corrupt practices and persons practising corruption.

1 Corinthians 15:33 KJV - *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

In concluding this chapter, I believe it is necessary to sound a reminder that the very day we accepted Christ into our heart is the same day and hour the fruit of the Spirit was deposited in us: all of the components/qualities of the fruit of the Spirit. But then it is our responsibility to allow God, through His Word, prune us or break the old walls of culture, religion, schools of thought, and the likes, to the extent that we are able to give expression to the manifestation of these qualities or characters. So, we are able to showcase the Holy Spirit of Christ, who resides in us, only if we yield to Him so that He may be known more than we are known.

To Jesus alone be all the glory and praise. Amen.

PRAYER

Dear heavenly father, teach us how to yield to your will. Guide us on how to be still as You prune us of our old ways. Help us to obey you until we are fully transformed into your image and to bring reflections of you i our home and surroundings. In Jesus' name.

CHAPTER FIVE

**FAITH IN YOUR
CHRISTIAN JOURNEY**

W hat Is Faith?

Imagine you have just ordered a car from overseas and the shipping company is yet to deliver it to your location from the country of purchase, but you have already received all the documents of the car couriered to you. What this means is that although you are yet to physically take possession of the car, you have all the necessary proofs or evidence to show that you own the car. This is the same with faith. It is a substance that re-assures the hope of someone, and a token or receipt of purchase for the items you're yet to see. Faith is believing before you set your eyes upon the expectation. This is contrary to the belief system of the fallen nature of man which likes to see before it believes.

Hebrews 11:1 KJV - *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Now that you are born again (born of the spirit) you need faith in your journey into the fullness of the image of God.

Ephesians 4:13-15 NLT - *This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ^[14] Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever, they sound like the truth. ^[15] Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church.*

When a seed is planted in the soil, a journey to becoming a tree begins. This is the same with you who has just undergone rebirth by the Spirit. The Journey to the fullness of the image of God is done through FAITH. The goal is to become as Christ Jesus, the visible image of the invisible God. So, the life of Christ becomes the map (template) for this journey.

Faith, in this journey is believing that you are already what God says you are because of His seed/life which

He deposited inside of you at rebirth. Your current lifestyle may not be in synchrony with what God says you are, but believing what God says and working in line with His Word makes faith active.

Faith without works is unfruitful, unproductive and dead.

James 2:26 KJV - *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Walk By Faith and Not by Sight

Your walk with God, relationship with people, and daily living, is now based upon faith. The following are a few beliefs to uphold and practise as a new-born in Christ:

1. You must believe that there is a God who is Supreme, who is equally the Creator of all things-seen and unseen.

Psalm 24:1 NIV - *The earth belongs to the Lord God Almighty, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*

2. You must believe that you have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. To be reconciled with God means to have all issues pertaining to your separation from Him resolved.

2 Corinthians 5:18 KJV - *And all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ...*

3. You must believe that you have the seed (life) of God in you.

1 Peter 1:23 NKJV - *...having being born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides for ever....*

4. You must believe that you have been bought with a priceless substance, the blood of Jesus, and adopted as God's child.

Acts 20:28 ERV - *.... you must be shepherds to the church of God, the people He bought with His own blood....*

5. You must believe that God is your heavenly Father.

Galatians 4:4-7 NIV - *But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,^[5] to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.^[6] Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba , Father." ^[7] So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are His child, God has made you also an heir.*

6. You must believe that your heavenly Father hears you when you speak to Him directly or say anything out of your mouth or in your heart. He is the One who rewards your pursuit of Him.

Jeremiah 33:3 KJV - *Call unto me, and I will answer thee...*

Hebrews 11:6 KJV - *But without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]: for he [anyone] who comes to God must believe that He is [real], and that He is [One] who rewards those that diligently seek Him. [Emphasis added]*

7. You must believe that the Holy Bible is a holy book containing the Words of God and documented by men who were inspired by God, the Father.

2 Timothy 3:16 KJV - All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Three applications of faith:

1. **Faith and sonship with your heavenly Father.**

John 1:12 KJV - *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:*

Power to become sons and daughters of God is given to those who receive Jesus into their heart (those who believe on His name).

The following scriptures outline the functions of the power that is released at rebirth to becoming sons and daughters;

- a. **Philippians 2:12 KJV** - *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, "work out your own salvation" with fear and trembling.*
- b. **Philippians 2:13 ERV** – *Yes, it is God who is working in you. He helps you want to do what pleases Him, and He gives you the power to do it.*

The power to “work-out” the manifestation of our sonship was deposited at the time of rebirth. This means that our zeal, followed by intentional actions in pursuit of God and towards pleasing Him, is sponsored by God Himself.

2. Faith and our daily living.

We see that faith, being a receipt, gives us that confidence we need to patiently push through to the expected end.

Philippians 1:6 KJV - *Being "confident" of this very thing, that He which hath "begun" a good work in you will perform it "until the day of Jesus Christ:"*

Living by faith is viewing things with the eyes of faith and working them out with our focus on that which we have seen by faith.

2 Corinthians 5:7 KJV - *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

For example, the spiritual receipt for your salvation has been preserved for you in the word of God before the preacher brought the message of salvation to you. He only exposed you to the reality of that spiritual receipt. The spiritual document states that you have the power to become the son of God and to be reconciled to God if only you believe, and your act of believing the preacher's testimony about God's plan for you is the step of faith that you took to claim the salvation or deliverance that you had hoped for. Also, your daily work-out is an action done by faith (what is written or revealed to you), and it is for the purpose of manifesting the image of God (your hope). This "work-out" is your intentional act to set yourself apart for God.

2 Peter 1:3 ERV – *Jesus has the power of God. And His power has given us everything we need to*

live a life devoted to God. We have these things because we know Him. Jesus chose us by His glory and goodness,

Philippians 2:12-13 KJV - Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.^[13] For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

3. Faith and our work with men.

2 Peter 3:9 NIV - *The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

We are expected to exercise the same forbearance towards people like our heavenly Father does toward us because we are His offsprings. The unregenerated man and carnally minded can be very difficult to work with, and as such there has been increased chaos in the society resulting from impatience for one another.

Ephesians 4:2-3 NLT - *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. [3] Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.*

Philippians 4:5 AMP - *Let your gentle spirit [your graciousness, unselfishness, mercy, tolerance, and patience] be known to all people. The Lord is near.*

Having the life of God and allowing God, by His Spirit, flesh out His character means a new culture (way of life) for you, and relating with humans become a whole new experience.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Introduction to a New Guide, Helper and Friend)

When you were naturally born into this physical world, you were automatically assigned to a family: whether your biological or non-biological guardians, whose job it is to provide you with the essential guide to maturity. This support you received was unlimited - from the right food to eat, prevention from danger, choosing the right school and friends and many more. You could not choose for yourself. It was done for you.

It is no different when we are born into the family of God by His Spirit. Someone has been assigned to provide us with the same parental or guardian function. Although He may not be seen, His guardian effect is noticeable in the physical. For example, we can feel the wind or breeze on our skin but cannot see it. The same effect applies here. He guides every newborn (in Christ Jesus) on what to feed, where to go, how to avoid dangers and so on. He is known as the **HOLY SPIRIT**.

John 14:16-17,26 NLT - *And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. [17] He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and later will be in you. [26] But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative - that is, the Holy Spirit - He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.*

Based on the scripture above, we can see that He comforts, teaches, guides, advocates, intercedes, helps, reveals the Person of Jesus to the new believer and much more.

It is note worthy that He is a Person and should not be addressed as an object with the pronoun "it". The fact that He is invisible does not make Him an object.

In your Christian journey, you will need His help and guidance all the way into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the visible image of God, even Jesus Christ.

How Do You Meet and Receive the Holy Spirit?

Well, the very moment you invited the person of Jesus into your heart is the exact same time the Holy Spirit takes His place inside of you.

How do you know?

As I earlier mentioned, you may not see the action but He is there because you sincerely invited Jesus into your heart, and you will start to see the truth and proofs of this when you consciously acknowledge and admit His presence in You, without doubts, and then start to relate with Him based on that knowledge. In addition, yielding the power of your will (submission) to Him gives allowance for His manifestation through you. Remember, He will not force you into any activity. You yield, you receive help!

Who is that fellow that needs help from someone stronger and still exercise his own strength? You have to be still in order to know that He is in control.

Psalm 46:10 KJV - *Be still, and know that I am God:*

How Do You Engage Him in Your Daily Affairs?

John 16:13 NLT - *When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future.*

You will begin to receive promptings that will guide you from danger. These promptings may come as a knowledge. That is, you will know the information, not as though you heard it from some physical person(s). The more you obey His voice the clearer the voice becomes and the firmer it sounds inside of you. Howbeit, if you choose to quieten the voice or discard the information or instruction He provides, you may scarcely hear Him, because you have chosen to strengthen the voice of the old nature (self). The Holy Spirit will only guide you into all truth, as mentioned in the bible passage above: He will not force you into carrying out any activities you are not willing to yield, through His promptings. The more we yield to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the less power the old nature manifests.

It is worth mentioning that the promptings and guidance of the Holy Spirit will always be in line with

the written word of God (the Holy Bible), and the nature of God. In addition, since the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth and will remind you all things, this implies that reading the Bible will enhance your relationship and experience with Him.

Consider the Bible passages below;

Mark 13:11 NIV - *Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.*

1 John 2:27 NIV - *As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit---just as it has taught you, remain in Him.*

Can You See the Holy Spirit?

John 3:8 ERV - The wind blows wherever it wants to. You hear it, but you don't know where it is coming from or where it is going. It is the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Just like the wind, whose impact we feel but can't see it, so is the Holy Spirit in the life of every born-again at conversion. There may not have been any dramatic expression of His presence, but He resides right there inside of you.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COMMUNING WITH GOD

How easy would it be to get the intervention of the president of a nation concerning an emergency situation in your state, through his governor in your state, compared to telling him directly, being his son's best friend and receiving advocacy from him (his son) on the subject matter? This is the privilege we have as adopted children of God, through the blood of Jesus. When we make our pleas or requests through Jesus Christ, His Son, we are guaranteed of response. In fact the best response according to His will.

What does it mean to commune with God?

To commune with God means to pray or entreat or talk to Him pertaining to anything as you journey into the fullness of Him - His image. The best way to commune with God is through His written word (the Holy Bible) and His spoken word (as revealed in your heart).

In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus's taught His disciples how to pray by giving them a prayer pattern.

Matthew 6:9-13 NLT ^[9] *Pray like this, Jesus says: Our Father in heaven, blessed be Your holy name. ^[10] Let Your Kingdom come. Let Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ^[11] Give me today the food I need (spiritual and physical: Matthew 4:4) ^[12] and forgive me my sins, as I forgive those who sin against me. ^[13] And don't let me yield to temptation, but rescue me from the evil one.*

Below is a template on how to pray with the written word of God (Holy Bible).

You may want to talk to God concerning your health. The first thing you need to do is to search the pages of the scriptures to locate the portions where God has promised healing, then petition Him with the bible passage.

For example, this Bible passage, **1 Peter 2:24** says that we have been healed by Jesus' stripes. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed".

So, based on the Bible passage, you can pray like this;

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for your provision for my health as in 1 Peter 2:24, which says that "by the stripes of Jesus Christ we have been healed". Today, I call forth the manifestation of the healing You have made available to me in Your Word, in my (mention specific healing needs), and I thank You in advance because You are faithful to keep Your word, in Jesus' name. Amen

You have just spoken to your heavenly Father in faith. The next action to take is to patiently watch out for your healing to arrive or take effect on your body (mention specific areas), as you continue to thank God in advance for the manifestation. See the scriptures below to support the waiting time after prayers.

Colossians 4:2 NLT - *Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.*

Philippians 4:6 NLT - *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE HOLY BIBLE

(An Essential Tool for Spiritual Growth)

The Holy Bible is an undeniable testament to the words of God spoken to mankind. It is a collection of evidence that contains the divine word, spoken at various times and seasons, and recorded by those who experienced the events firsthand, including eyewitnesses, as well as those who were the vessels/medium through whom the word of God was revealed.

Hebrews 1:1 NLT - *Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our “ancestors” through the prophets. [Emphasis added]*

1. The Word of God is like Water.

Why do farmers look forward to rain or erect a water reservoir on their farmland? I believe it is because of the importance of water to their plants. They want water to be at reach at all times. Imagine sowing a seed in the ground without the

knowledge of the importance of water. What do you think will happen to the seed?

The effect of water on the plant is the same as the importance of the word of God in the life of the reborn: to bring about the development and manifestation of the seed/life of God inside of you. It is so important that failure to water the seed can lead to unproductivity and death of the seed.

Let's look at the following scriptures:

Ephesians 5:26 TPT – *He [Jesus] died to make us holy and pure, cleansing us through the showering of the pure water of the word of God. [Emphasis added]*

1 Corinthians 3:6-8 NIV - *I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.^[7] So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.^[8] The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.*

In summary, either planting, watering or increase is only achieved through the Word of God.

2. The Word of God as a Manual.

Reading the Bible is like going through the manufacturer's manual of a new product for effective use. Since the Bible is the manufacturer's manual for the effective operation of man, the best way to live this new life is to read it regularly. The Holy Bible is a book inspired by the Holy Ghost for the purpose of guiding the children of God on their way of life here on earth. But how will you know what is written in the manual without reading it?

Because of the volume of the Bible, many new believers find it difficult to read/study it. They don't even know where to start. The following are a few Bible reading suggestions and I recommend you strive to read at least one chapter a day.

- The book of James
- The gospel according to John
- The first, Second and Third epistle of John
- The book of Romans
- The book of Hebrews
- The book of Philippians
- The book of Colossians

- The book of Ephesians
- The book of Acts
- Other New Testament epistles

Some daily devotional suggestions from different authors have been listed in the last chapter of this book, as bonus. Please note that while other Christian books are helpful for your spiritual growth it cannot replace the written word of God – the Bible. So, please check with the Bible for every teaching and doctrine that you may come across in your pursuit for spiritual growth, and be sure it is Jesus-centred.

CHAPTER NINE

**JOIN A
LOCAL ASSEMBLY**
(A Church or House Fellowship Centre)

The church is a local gathering of Jesus' converts, although it now has some strangers who come for different purposes, especially those with ulterior motives, making the congregation a mixed multitude.

Why should you go to church?

Hebrews 10:25 NLT - *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of Jesus' return is drawing near.*

Going to church (a local Christian gathering) can help you discover some helpful Bible passages in your Christian journey besides personally reading and studying your Bible. It is also a way of increasing the intelligibility of the voice of God. Fellowship with brethren helps us to recognise God's voice during preaching and through the spiritual songs we sing in church.

Below are a few additional reasons why we are encouraged to gather together in church:

1. God commands we keep the sabbath. To observe a gathering for worship.

Exodus 20:8 NIV - Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

2. Jesus commands us to meet corporately and feast on the Holy Communion in remembrance of Him.

1 Corinthians 11:24-26 NIV - and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." [25] In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26] For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

3. You are part of the body of Christ so the church also needs you for her to advance on the earth.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14,27 NIV - *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ^[13] For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body--- whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free---and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ^[14] Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ^[27] Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

4. It is a corporate meeting place on earth where saints meet with our heavenly Father.

Acts 4:31 KJV - *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

5. It is to encourage one another.

Hebrews 10:25 NLT - *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.*

6. It is to pray for one another.

James 5:14 NIV - *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.*

7. It is for corporate worship or ministrations.

Acts 13:2 NIV - *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

8. It is to learn from each other.

James 5:16 NIV - *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

9. It is for us to flourish or become fruitful.

Psalms 92:13 KJV - *Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

10. It is to become equipped with knowledge of the word of God.

Ephesians 4:12-14 NLT - *Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ^[13] This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ^[14] Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.*

11. It is to benefit from corporate anointing.

Acts 4:31 NIV - *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly...*

12. It is to gain a sense of belonging to a community of Jesus' converts.

Acts 4:32 NIV - *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.*

13. We also benefit from healthy connections; socially and professionally.

Acts 18:1-3 NLT - *Then Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ^{12]} There he became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. They had left Italy when Claudius Caesar deported all Jews from Rome. ^{13]} Paul lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers just as he was.*

14. It provides us the opportunity of giving corporately.

2 Corinthians 9:1 NLT - *I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem.*

There are many more reasons why we should belong to a local assembly of worship (church). As you attend regularly and intentionally, you will discover more.

CHAPTER TEN

**BE COMMITTED
TO SERVING HIM**

(Become a Devout Member of a Church)

Psalm 92:13 KJV - *Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

No matter the quality of a seed, its multiplication value will not be known if it remains in the hand or storage facility. Except it is planted in the soil, it would have been deprived of the platform and opportunity to grow and multiply, and become beneficial to others. Being planted in a church is just the same. It gives you the opportunity to grow and become fruitful and useful in the body of Christ.

To be planted in a church means submitting to the authority of the leadership of the assembly, and being a part of what God is doing there too. This could also mean joining the workforce of the assembly. This is necessary because it will bring you closer to a small unit in the church where your growth can be monitored as well as your service to God on a closer level using your skill(s) and talent(s).

Some churches organise a little training for prospective workers before integrating them into available departments in the church for service.

Listed below are suggestions of a few departments in some local assemblies;

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. Ushering. | 2. Choir. | 3. Protocol |
| 4. Security. | 5. Child care. | 6. Prayer |
| 7. Special duties. | 8. Hospitality... | |

Please do well to approach the church leadership and ask questions on how to become a worker or to serve in the church. Afterwards, prayerfully identify how your gift or talent can be effectively utilised in the department you are assigned.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

**THE RETURN
OF JESUS CHRIST**

(Harvest of the Saints)

Finally, when the Lord of the harvest will come, will He find you fruitful?

Below are bible passages that speak in details of how we should position ourselves to be harvest-ready.

James 5:7-8 NLT - *Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. ^[8] You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.*

2 Peter 3:2-14 NLT - *I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles. ^[3] Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. ^[4] They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained*

the same since the world was first created." [5] They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of His command, and He brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. [6] Then He used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. [7] And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. [8] But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. [9] The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. [10] But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. [11] Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, [12] looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, He will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. [13] But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth He has promised, a world

filled with God's righteousness. ^[14] And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

Matthew 25:1-13 KJV - *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ^[2] And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ^[3] They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ^[4] But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ^[5] While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ^[6] And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ^[7] Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ^[8] And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. ^[9] But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. ^[10] And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ^[11] Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ^[12] But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. [13] Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

Few points to note:

1. Jesus will surely return. Just as God promised through His word that He would destroy the ancient world with water and did so. He will likewise uphold His word concerning the harvest of the saints before the promised destruction of this earth and heaven with fire.
2. You and I are to lead a peaceable life: a life that is pure and blameless in the sight of the Lord.
3. It takes more than purity to be harvested; it also requires readiness. Out of the ten virgins (pure vessels), only five who were prepared and eagerly waiting for the bridegroom went with Him.
4. Longsuffering is needed. There may come unpleasant events as you and I wait: we must not give up. As our heavenly Father is forbearing toward us for our transformation into the image of His Christ, so should we forbear all things as we wait for our redemption.

5. While you and I wait for His return, we should continue to pray and intensify our communion with God through Christ Jesus.

Revelation 22:20 KJV - *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

CHAPTER TWELVE

BIBLE READING GUIDE

It is usually my suggestion to new believers to begin reading at least one chapter of the Bible daily. Having read the book of James over and over, I recommend you begin your Bible reading journey from there because it explains the basic Christian ethics. You can then advance to the Gospel According to John, followed by First, Second and Third Epistle of John, then, Romans, Hebrews, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Acts, and other New Testament writings. This is my personal preference based on their content and benefits I derived while reading them.

I also recommend the use of daily devotional manuals prepared by other elders in the Christian faith, though I advocate that you ensure they are Bible-based and Jesus-centred.

Below is a list of some daily devotional manuals I have benefited from:

1. Open heavens by Pastor E.A. Adeboye
2. Our daily bread by Our Daily Bread Ministries
3. Rhapsody of realities by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome
4. Word for today by Grace so Amazing Foundation
5. Daily Bible verse and Prayer by Plough Publishing House (NY)

There are a lot more materials that can also be used as guide as you learn how to pray with the Bible. I pray that the Holy Spirit guides you through your choice of these resources. Amen.

It is also my prayer that you remain encouraged and maintain focus as you journey into the fullness of the image of God through this handbook, and more teachings from your local assembly as well as other materials you may come across (guided by the Holy Bible), in Jesus' name. Amen.

Finally, I charge you with the following words from Apostle Paul....

Philippians 4:4-9 NLT - *Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again-rejoice!* ^[5] *Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.* ^[6] *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all He has done.* ^[7] *Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.* ^[8] *And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.* ^[9] *Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.*

And now, may God, our heavenly Father, fill you with the knowledge of Him and His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding so that you please Him all the days of your life and so that you may be fruitful in every good work. May He also cause you to grow into the fullness of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

Shalom.

CONNECT WITH US

- Do you have any question?
- Do you desire to be guided in your walk with God?
- Do you seek counselling?

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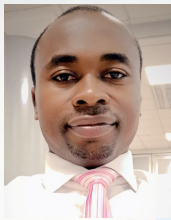
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Solomon Johnson Ojaruwedai is the President/Founder of "Who Do You Worship" Ministries; a bible-based worship ministry founded in Lagos Nigeria, that focuses on the essence of spiritual rebirth - reconciling strayed persons to the Almighty God, and the importance of genuine worship of Him, emphasising Jesus Christ as the prerequisite for "spirit and truth" worship - the acceptable model for worshipping the Almighty God.

As a mobile proclaimer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through music, spoken word and other creative arts, he has ministered at various locations and in different gatherings - crusades, churches, streets, vehicles, general and psychiatric hospitals, schools, homes, and privately - on a one-on-one basis. He is married to Motunrayo Opeyemi and their marriage is blessed with children.

ABOUT THE BOOK

If you were to get an invitation to behold the image of the Almighty Creator-God, how would you react, and what would your expectation be?

This thought-provoking question is at the heart of the inspiring handbook, **Journey of the Reborn**: why you need to be acquainted with the knowledge of the image of God and how to become the image of God. This handbook is a product of *outcomes from various mobile outreaches and personal experiences*, and it is designed to help people become a reflection of the Almighty God in the material world.

In this book, the author takes you on a journey through the room of obscurity into a palace of knowledge, from where you draw wisdom to handle challenging situations including identity crisis, lack and insufficiency, rejection, loneliness, pain and more.

If you ever dreamed of living life to the fullest, and making impact on the lives of others, this book is for you.

