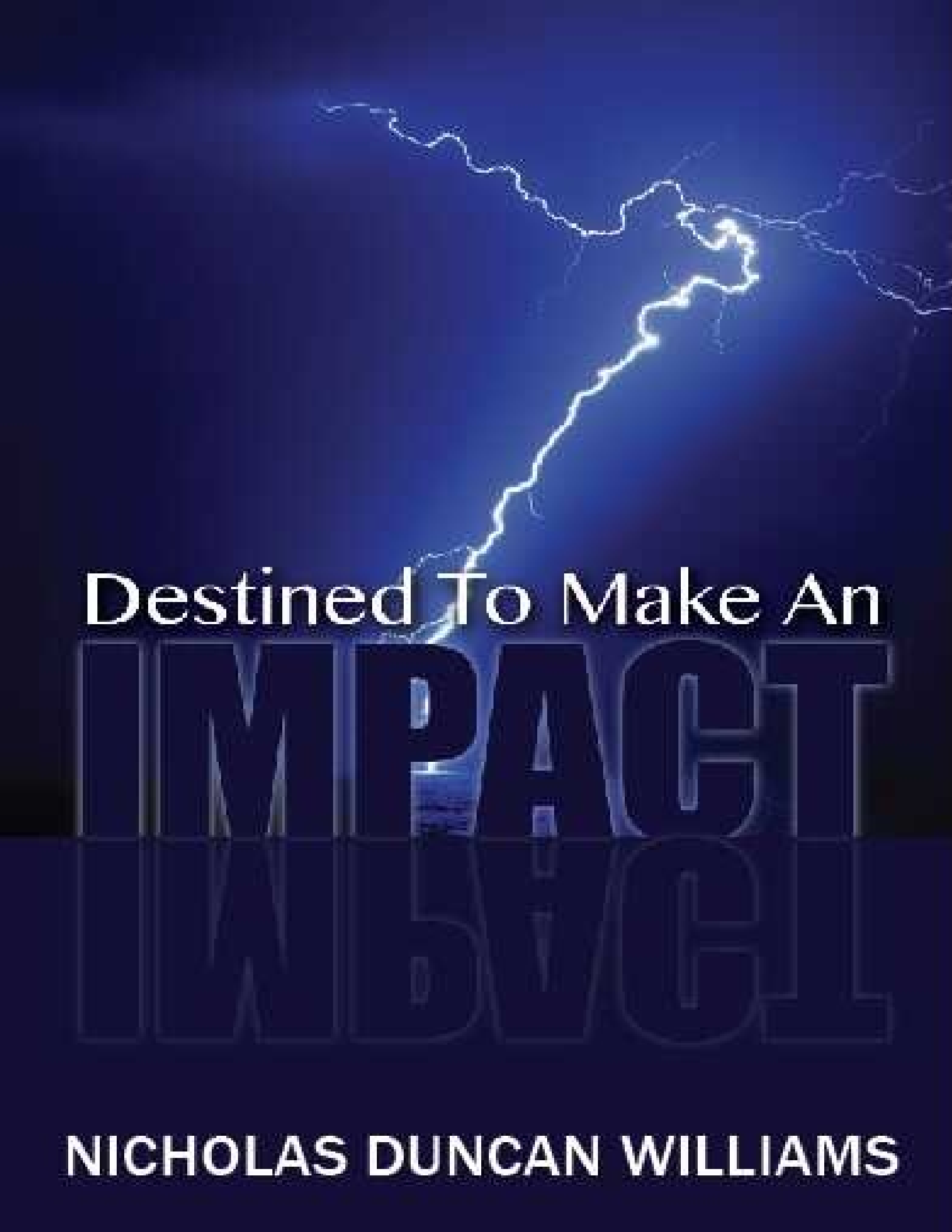




Destined To Make An

IMPACT

WHEEL

NICHOLAS DUNCAN WILLIAMS

Destined to Make an Impact

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All scriptural quotations are from King James Version of the Bible unless stated otherwise.

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1. *Divine Timing*
2. *The Price of Greatness*
3. *The Supernatural Power of a Praying Man*
4. *The Incredible Power of a Praying Woman*
5. *Praying Through the Promises of God*
6. *Binding The Strong Man*
7. *Enforcing Prophetic Decrees*
8. *When Mothers Pray*

Introduction

There are numerous challenges that life throws our way. For some, failure is due to circumstances beyond their control. Others miss opportunities to succeed or prevail. This book comes to you with a very clear message of inspiration – ***you can succeed in the name of Jesus!***

Time, and life, is no respecter of persons or position. Yet, how do we explain why some people succeed in attaining laudable goals - even in the face of setbacks, handicaps, disabilities and weaknesses – and some do not? The answer is in this book.

I, like king David, discovered that, “for by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have leaped over a wall” (Psalm 19:29). ***Success in life starts with Christ.*** By the finger of God I rose above what was a hopeless situation.

Do not let your circumstances, where you come from or what people believe about you, stop you from fulfilling God’s purpose for your life. You, too, can have a story to tell if you believe God’s Word.

Have there been times when you have wondered what Christianity is all about? Probably you have asked yourself if there is such a thing as true Christianity. Can one succeed in life as a faithful Christian? Can faith in Christ really overcome the world? Is prosperity in God’s plan for you? Is divine healing a reality today? Should you really aspire to succeed in life? And, if so, does God provide the resources through His word to enable you to achieve your goals?

Christianity is a mystery and, beyond all doubt, it is more than a religion. It has attracted critics and detractors for nearly two thousand years. Yet, throughout its history, all the destructive devices wicked men have set up to wipe it out have only served to accelerate its growth.

Still, some ask, “Can it be that Christianity is something more than going to church? Is it God’s purpose that you affect the world with your testimony of salvation in Christ? What is faith? Does it work?” Someone once told me, “I

tried this faith stuff once and it didn't work, so I stopped." Is this the way you feel? Are these questions familiar to you?

Beloved, we can go on endlessly posing similar questions. Thank God, this book can provide some answers. It will present you with tested keys to successful Christian living that are applicable anywhere and at any time. It is important that you begin to read with an open heart. Only in so doing may the Spirit of God impress upon you those precious truths that are written here. Do not be anxious, dear friend, for it is the Father's will that you succeed in life. By God's Grace, I found out how.

May this book bring you a release and open new vistas of power for victory and success!

Chapter One

THE STORY OF SALVATION

Full-Gospel Christianity is more than a sophisticated biblical gimmick for fooling naïve country folk. It goes far beyond ritualistic dogmas. It is a way of life. Living in Christ is not a part-time occupation; in truth, it is a lifetime experience. Salvation in Christ is not merely a mental assent to a sinner's prayer. It is much, much more!

First of all, we must appreciate that Christianity is not something to be used only in times of trouble, like a fire extinguisher. Rather, it is a lifetime commitment to God that gives our lives both physical and spiritual meaning and purpose.

Let us go to the roots of the salvation story. Jesus was the first person to use the term "born again." He was speaking to a top religious official named Nicodemus when He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). Nicodemus thought Jesus was talking about a second physical birth. His confusion is understandable, because as the Bible tells us, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14). In a similar vein, the Bible says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

This last passage speaks of two realms, the physical and the spiritual. The physical realm deals with our senses - sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. The spiritual realm cannot be detected by our physical senses. It is achieved purely by faith.

Man is a spirit. He has a soul and lives inside a body. It is important to note that without the new birth, man is not what God created him to be. He is in a fallen state, regardless of his education, status or influence. (Rom. 3:23).

In the beginning

The story of salvation reaches back into the Garden of Eden in the Book of

Genesis. God Himself created man in His own likeness. The Bible says emphatically, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (Gen. 1:27). God called the first man Adam, and he, in turn, called his wife Eve. The Bible says God placed them in a beautiful garden and charged them with the responsibility of cultivating and caring for it, while enjoying the fruits thereof. “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15).

We have already established that God created man in His own image and after His likeness. In every sense of the word, man, at the creation, was a direct replica of the Creator. Bear that in mind, because it is an extremely important fact and much depends on it.

The word “likeness” expresses the idea of “an exact replica or duplication in kind.” In other words, God duplicated Himself in mankind. I believe that disproves the theory of evolution and all the “monkey business” about man crawling around on all fours, balancing among the trees and suddenly walking upright. Man did not evolve from a monkey, but was originally made in the image of God, with full intellectual and spiritual capabilities.

God gave man supreme authority and dominion over the works of His hands, and this position was firmly enshrined in the following proclamations: *“and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth (Genesis 1:26) And God blessed them, and God said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over....every living thing that moveth on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)*

Let me share a few insights about Adam’s position in the whole framework of creation. It is evident from the Scriptures above that God made him superior to the rest of creation. As both a physical and a spiritual being, God placed man directly under His authority and, further, placed all other creation under man’s authority. Adam ruled over the earth (see Hebrew 2:6-7). He was subordinate

only to God.

Theologians suggest that the key to a total understanding of the Bible lies within its very first chapters, which I believe without reservation. Along with the glory, splendor and majesty of Adam's position, God laid down a few clearly irrevocable "do's" and "don'ts" concerning their relationship and fellowship, and Adam's responsibilities.

The fall

In Genesis 2:16-17, we read: "*and the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" I want you to observe and note the word "commanded." Sure enough, what God has commanded must be obeyed. That, uncompromisingly, is His immutable word and it remains so today. God has commanded all men to repent and be born again.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (John 3:3, 7)

The Bible makes no secret of the fact that Adam missed the mark. In fact, it was something much more than that. Adam and his wife, Eve, ate of the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17; 3:16). In so doing, Adam disobeyed God. What he did was tantamount to high treason; he sold his birthright to Satan (1 Tim. 2:14). A sad commentary indeed!

Friend, what Adam and Eve did was more significant than just eating a piece of fruit. The issue here was disobedience to God's word, which undermined Adam's superior position in the economy of God, and this had deep and far-reaching spiritual implications.

God commanded Adam to subdue the earth and have dominion over all things. Do you realize that the snake was also a living creature? Adam could

have exercised authority over it! After all, according to the Bible, Adam had already given names to all the creatures, including the snake (Gen. 2:19-20).

Man was created with a will. He was made a free moral being, accountable for all his actions that did not line up with God's Word. This is a crucial truth. Allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten you with understanding. There were both physical and spiritual consequences for Adam's disobedience. Just as God had decreed, Adam died. In the Garden of Eden, Adam died spiritually the moment he sinned, passing from immortality to mortality. The penalty of death had been pronounced. As a result, about 930 years later, Adam died physically as well. Sin has a wage called "death," and Adam had to pay the price in full, no matter how long it took.

In his book, *Newborn*, Harold M. Frelich makes an interesting comment on the story of Adam. He says, "Spiritually man is dead. The spirit of man is like the top story with a skylight that opens to heaven. When Adam fell, this part of his being died at once, he had a blackout. That is why when God came down to the garden, Adam ran to hide. There was no spiritual response to God's fellowship. There was fear instead. This dreadful tragedy was passed on to Adam's entire posterity." The Bible says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and the death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Adam died in spirit and later in body. In the spirit, he was alienated from God; he shifted from the realm of faith to the realm of the senses. Adam could no longer understand spiritual things. His spiritual inclinations were lost. Whereas at creation Adam had been given dominion over this world, he ceded his power, authority and dominion to Satan. Thus, Satan became the god of this world who "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. 4:4).

This point is emphasized in the account of the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4:6. "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." There is no account that Jesus disputed the validity of this overwhelming statement. It was a direct

consequence of Adam selling out to Satan.

Adam's fall also affected mankind physically. Poverty, disease, aging and all other kinds of suffering have since beset the human race. The famous American Charismatic Bible teacher, Dr. Kenneth Hagin, elaborates on this point: Spiritual death is that which lays hold of our spirits then our bodies; physical death is a manifestation of spiritual death. The second death is the ultimate finality of death, or the fate of the spiritual dead. Spiritual death came to earth first, Dr. Hagin emphasized, and then manifested itself in the physical body by destroying it.

Just as Satan became Adam's new master and lord, we, too, are born in submission to the devil and his evil manipulations. In Romans 6:16, the Apostle Paul asks rhetorically, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Just as a small drop of poison can contaminate a person's system, so sin entered mankind's spirit when man fell, and every part of his being became contaminated. Thus, mankind has been spiritually enslaved to Satan.

How can man escape this bondage? The answer lies in an "Emancipation Proclamation" that God declared for us in heaven.

Chapter Two

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

Forced slavery is an abominable act of mankind. It is a cruel system whereby one person becomes another's chattel. In a spiritual sense, that is what man became after the Fall. He became a slave to Satan, sin and sickness.

The world undoubtedly knows more than one kind of slavery. Physical slavery in some form or another has been practiced throughout the ages. Historically, this institution proliferated in Africa, the Middle East, India, China, Rome and Greece, and most recently and notoriously, in the Americas. Yet today, physical slavery, for the most part, is no longer considered acceptable in the world.

An examination of how this development was achieved can offer us an insight into how to free ourselves from our own bondage to Satan. In 1808, as a result of mounting international condemnation of human slavery, both the United States and Britain outlawed the African slave trade. By 1840, slavery was completely abolished in the British colonies. France freed the slaves in its colonies in 1848.

Although European colonies in Central and South America continued to tolerate the practice of slavery, the struggle between abolitionists and slave owners in the United States reached a climax in 1860 with the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1863, in a single paragraph of a speech, the President announced the "Emancipation Proclamation," freeing all American slaves from that day forward. In 1865, the Civil War ended with the defeat of the slave-owning South. The adoption of the thirteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution officially completed the abolition of slavery in the United States. The price of freedom had been paid with the blood of American soldiers.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the tree, they immediately became slaves of disobedience and the devil. That single act of disobeying God meant that they had obeyed the devil. Thus, by choice, they became slaves to

sin.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin or unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16)

In essence, the spirits of Adam and Eve were transformed from the likeness, or image, of God to the likeness of their new master, the devil. All men born after Adam have had sinful natures. Scripture corroborates this fact. Mankind, the Bible says, is “carnal, sold under sin” (Rom.7:14). It says in Ephesians 2:1, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin.” In man, “dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18).

The willful disobedience of Adam and Eve was sinful before God. Logically, before God could give back eternal life, someone had to pay the price to buy us back from the condition of slavery. The price of redemption required that it be a life for a life. Redemption was God’s rescue operation.

Redemption

In 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23, Paul defines redemption as being bought with a price. Just as the physical freedom of American slaves was bought with the blood of Union soldiers, our redemption came by the blood of Christ, who was sent to earth to achieve it for us. (Read also Isaiah 44:21,22; Matt 20:28; Heb 9:12; Gal 4:14.)

Christ did not die for His own sins, of course; He Himself was sinless. “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” (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life at Calvary for the sins of mankind. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3, “... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” The crucifixion of Jesus Christ at Calvary was the supreme price of sin, paid to obtain eternal redemption for mankind (Heb 9:12).

From what is one redeemed? From the bondage of the law and its curses; from the power of sin and the grave; and from all troubles, iniquity, evil, death,

and destruction; from the shackles of satanic oppression, obsession and possession. (Read Gal. 4:5; 3:13; Rom. 6:18; Psalm 49:15; Gen. 48:16.) Through redemption, we have justification, forgiveness, adoption and purification. And, friend, believe that it is precious (Rom 3:24; Eph. 1:17; Tit. 2:14). By redemption, God manifested His power, grace, love and compassion (Isaiah. 50:2; John 3:16).

When we are redeemed we become God's property, His first fruits, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a precious people; that we should shew forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Almost two thousand years ago, God proclaimed our emancipation. Mankind was set free! Liberty had come! Freedom had been purchased! The debt was paid! Redemption was made complete! The curse was broken! Mankind was liberated from slavery to Satan. (Gal 3:13-14).

Oh, what good news! Our emancipation proclamation continues to be a valid declaration of freedom. It is a "legal document" backed by all the authority and power of heaven, condemning Satan's attempt to enslave you. Now, it is up to you to believe it, confess it and act on it. Rise up in the power of God's might and shout for joy, sin has no hold on you! Sickness has no power over you! The precious blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, bought your freedom. The curse is broken. Jesus Christ has saved you and lives in your heart. Jesus the Savior and Lord is your Emancipator and Liberator.

Are all free?

In his book, *Authority In Three Worlds*, the American Bible teacher Charles Capps, made a captivating statement on salvation. He said, "There is only one way to heaven. It is not through the church door. It is through Jesus the door! Jesus is the way!"

Jesus Christ the Son of God gave His life for each of us: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Furthermore, Paul tells us, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6)

Beloved friend, the Bible stands indisputably as the solid foundation for everything the Christian believes. What we feel or think is not always the truth, but the Word of God is TRUTH.

The divine arrangement for changing man’s sinful nature back to the likeness of our Creator is to be born again. As we saw in the case of Nicodemus (John 3:1-8), this concept cannot be understood in physical terms because it is a spiritual experience. Rather, the phenomenon occurs when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, asking Him to forgive you your sins and to become Lord of your life.

Our generation has a misconception of what truth is. Truth has assumed many faces today. Humanism and intellectualism have embedded themselves deep into the minds of many. I do not dispute or ignore the scientific and technological breakthroughs of our age. But I stand firmly by the Word of God regardless of our degree of scientific advancement. No matter how high man progresses mentally, the Bible emphasizes that he is dead to the things of God. The Bible says in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Even the most educated men in the world, if they are not born again spiritually, still “have their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:18). Remember Nicodemus? Though he was an outstanding educational and legislative leader in his day, Jesus openly told him, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:3). Secular education is necessary; academic excellence is indispensable. However, when it comes to the things of the spirit, they matter very little. A renowned Bible scholar once philosophized, “Education never takes a man higher than the top of his skull.”

Today, many have put their hope of salvation in church membership. What a fallacy! It is one thing to have one’s name written in a church register, and quite

another to have it inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life. Millions cling to what they call "confirmation." If your faith is not based on faith in Jesus Christ, even a church confirmation will be useless. You will be confirmed and, yet, condemned. The whole doctrine of confirmation seems to have been hijacked by the devil, and he is using it to make people committed to church rather than to Christ. Confirmations will not save your soul. Only repentance and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ will.

For others, baptism is the consolation. They stretch out their necks and shout, "Archbishop, I am a Christian. I was baptized as a small baby." But this, too, is false ground upon which to stand. Renew your mind with the biblical truth, and the true baptism by water is a post-salvation and post-conversion experience. Indeed, if you are not born again, no number, no formula, no method of baptism will save your soul. If anything, you will go into the water a dry sinner, only to emerge a wet sinner.

At conversion, you die to sin (Rom. 6:1-2), to self (Gal. 2:20), and to the world (Gal. 6:14). Thereafter you are baptized as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:19, to symbolize your identification with his death, burial and resurrection. Baptism does not lead to salvation but is a visible sign of the change that has taken place inside.

Briefly, let me talk about religious ceremonies, such as ablutions, penance, prayer forms and the like. If these are not based on personal faith in the Lord Jesus, they become mere formalism. To substitute formalism for personal faith in Christ is to reject His suffering on Calvary's cross (1 Cor. 1:18).

God is unwilling that any of His creation should perish (2 Peter 3:9). The divine provision is that, "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Salvation is for all (Mark 16:15). God requires that you believe His Word concerning the salvation of your soul when you hear or read it today (Heb. 2:3).

This goes beyond any kind of mental assent to His Word or a memorization of scriptures. The Bible says that "with the heart man believeth unto

righteousness” (Rom. 10:10). When you believe the word of God with your heart, it produces faith. Faith produces a corresponding action. Some Christians live under the erroneous belief that they will go to heaven no matter how they live. I personally disagree, because there is no logic to this idea. Your behavior must correspond with your belief. The infallible Word of God encourages born-again Christians to walk in Christ (Phil. 2:5; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Just imagine this. How can you as a born-again believer, saved, washed in the precious blood of Jesus and filled with Holy Spirit of God, comfortably continue smoking, telling lies, fornicating and indulging in all of the activities of the unbeliever? Where, then, is your witness? Where, then, is your light?

Unfortunately, many Christians know Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord. “Is there a difference, Bishop Nick?” you may ask. Absolutely, there is a world of difference. If you accept Christ as Savior of your soul, then certainly you must live daily in total submission and obedience to His Word. His Word is His will for your life on earth in every situation. When you say, “Jesus is Lord,” it is by implication a confession of submission. You are turning your life over to Him. You must realize that when Jesus is Lord over your life, it means walking hand in hand with Him. There will be times when you get into difficult situations. The world and its divergent values may press in on you. No matter what happens, though, we cannot afford to compromise the Word of God.

Occasionally, I have heard some Christians give flimsy excuses for their compromising ways. “Pastor, you know the situation in which I find myself. I can’t help it.” “God understands,” they may add apologetically. Hear me: God does not tolerate compromise. His Word says: *“there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* (1 Cor. 10:13)

Today, as always, God is calling for separation. Repent of your sins and accept the salvation of God through faith in Jesus Christ as his blood washes away your sins. Thus, you are saved by the grace of God (Eph. 2:8-9).

A new position

In the previous pages I gave you a personal word on salvation. We have in this chapter taken a look at God's Emancipation Proclamation. That sounds big, doesn't it? I have tried to show you how God has redeemed for us that which the devil stole. God has restored to His saints power, authority, glory, blessings, prosperity, health and peace in this life on earth. Salvation in Christ is just the door through which one enters the mansion of goodness prepared by God. It is the first step on the way that leads one on a long journey by faith to the land of glory. Jesus, who is the ***door***, is also the ***way***! You enter the ***door*** to walk in the ***way***.

The next chapter is critical to your life. You are saved, but where do you go from here? There is such a thing as the faith *life* (Rom. 1:17). God has a word for your new life. Colossians 1:13 affirms that he "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." As a born-again Christian, you are a child of the Kingdom (Eph 2:19), and you must live in obedience to the divine law - God's Word.

Chapter Three

THE OVERCOMING FAITH

Faith is the master key to all God has promised for mankind. In the same way, unbelief is the bolt that forever shuts man out from God's presence and provision.

There is so much talk about faith among Christians today that sometimes its true significance is lost. Today, Christian men and women, and even children, talk and preach about faith. Many claim to base their lives upon it. Yet, more often than not, they have a limited understanding of what faith truly means. The Bible makes no secret of the fact that "the just shall live by faith" (Rom 1: 17), and that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). Faith is what the born-again Christian lives by. Faith pleases God, and to please God, we must have faith.

Maybe you still have questions such as: What is faith? How does one acquire faith? Does faith increase and grow? Are there different kinds of faith? Can I lose my faith? Do all people have faith? Your thorough comprehension of the answers to these questions will give you the overcoming faith that is so vital for life.

According to Harold Freligh, "Faith is that voluntary act and attitude of the individual whereby he places the weight of his need upon and governs his actions by a trusted object. In the scriptural realm the trusted 'object' is God, and 'faith' is the voluntary act induced by hearing and believing His word."

If any man has seen faith in action in this generation, surely it must be one of the "fathers" of the Charismatic movement, Dr. Oral Roberts. Let us see what he says about faith. What is there about faith that causes God's rewards to come to us? First of all, faith is the only thing that recognizes God for who He is.

We cannot talk critically about faith without examining Hebrews 11. This chapter is sometimes called the "Hymn of Faith," just as 1 Corinthians 13 is

known as the “Hymn of Love,” and Genesis 1 as the “Hymn of Creation.” Hebrews 11:1 states, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

In his Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul helps us to understand that faith operates in a realm other than that of sight or outward tangible evidence. As we read in Mark 11:22, “Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God!” This is because the faith of God is eternal in essence, spiritual in substance and unfathomable in scope. Glory to God! The faith of God sits high in the heavens. The faith of God is spiritual; everything about God is spiritual.

A new convert once stopped me in the church’s corridor and asked. “Do you say God has given me faith?” There was a deep searching look in his eyes. I laid my hands on his shoulders and quickly assured him from Romans 12:3, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among, you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

There is natural faith just as there is supernatural faith. Natural faith is for that which is born of nature, but the God-kind of faith is a spiritual phenomenon. I explained to this young man, “The supernatural faith is God-ward and stands solely upon the Word of God regardless of any natural influences.” He nodded his head, and shouted with excitement, “Amen!”

The character of faith

You should read this chapter with spiritual understanding because timeless truths are involved. There are no obstacles between faith and God. Faith is a deep and abiding belief in Christ, and is centered solely on Him as God’s eternal word. Remember, Jesus said that “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).

Faith is not the same as hope. Faith gives substance to our hopes (Heb. 11:1). In other words, if you do not have hope, you have nothing for your faith to obtain. And, as Dr. Frederick K. C. Price, Senior Pastor of Crenshaw Christian

Center, California, wrote, “If you have hope and do not have faith then you have nothing by which to obtain that which you hope for.” Faith is essentially related to every aspect of the Christian experience. It is related foremost:

To Repentance: *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21)*

To Justification: *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God Through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1-2)*

To the preaching of the gospel: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Rom. 1:16-17)*

To the written word: *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. (John 20:31)*

To obedience: *But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. (Rom 16:26)*

To prayer: *But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)*

Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)

Faith is not only a fact; faith is also an act. Your faith must be related to your works (James 2:14-26). By faith, Christ indwells us: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17). It is by faith that we receive the Holy Spirit: “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might

receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3:14). Faith clothes us in God’s righteousness after providing us with the remission of sins: “And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith...To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Phil. 3:9; Acts 10:43).

Faith is the believer’s lifeline. When faith stops flowing in the believer’s life, be certain that spiritual death will surely follow. The fact that faith is the gift of God (Rom. 12:3) does not preclude a need for a willful determination to follow a life of faith on our part. This unwavering life of faith demands your daily watchfulness.

We can compare faith to a man riding a bicycle; he must not stop lest he falls down. Faith is not static; it is a virile, living principle. Commenting on the giant strides made in his ever-flourishing ministry, the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa of Nigeria said, “Faith is not timid, it has a divine propelling force operating it.”

Faith in action

There are many spiritual lessons and messages on the successful operation of faith in the Bible. Recently God laid a deep impression on my heart that, “Faith will always find a way out.” The spiritual lessons inherent in this message are many. Consider, for instance, this narrative from the Gospel of Matthew:

*And behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: **For she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.** (Matt. 9:20-21)*

Great lessons of faith are contained in this precious scripture. Faith always encounters hurdles and barriers, but it always manages to overcome them. In Mark’s account of the same incident, he tells how the woman with the issue of blood, “had suffered many things of many physicians” (Mark 5:26). Perhaps she sold all her possessions to obtain medical attention. Her life was slowly ebbing

away.

Then, one day, she heard about Jesus. There is one such day in every man's life - the day of divine visitation. Behold, today is the day God stills your tempest. The wretched woman heard that Jesus, the miracle worker, was in town. She made up her mind firmly. With resolute confidence, she said, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole" (Matt 9:21).

This woman was despised, mocked and scorned. She was regarded as unwholesome and unclean. Undoubtedly, she was aware of people's negative attitudes towards her. Prejudice, I believe, was her initial challenge to overcome.

The second obstacle she had to overcome was the crowd. There will always be a greater number of people to foster discouragement than to cultivate encouragement and acceptance. Nevertheless, the woman's faith saw her through. If your faith is weak, then it is because your vision of Christ, the ultimate Source of your miracle, is blurred.

The woman set her eyes, mind and heart on Jesus. Everyone around Jesus had a need, but their doubt and unbelief stood in their way. Many were religious "window-shoppers." But, lo and behold, here came a woman with a resolute and overcoming faith. As she stepped forward, the crowd predictably began to murmur, complain and cast contemptuous remarks. The Bible says she came from "behind, and touched his garment" (Mark 5:27). She refused to be deterred by the teeming, jostling crowd. The faith that overcomes the world is the faith that does not respect hindrances. She kept moving toward Jesus Christ, but the crowds, seeing her determination, began to resist her. But her perseverance caused the crowd to draw back because she was not the kind of person who gave up. Faith keeps going. Hallelujah! It is by keeping your eyes on Jesus that you will reach your goal.

Eventually, the afflicted woman stood behind Jesus, the Author of Life. This was not the time for prayer and fasting or binding and loosing, my friend. After all, it was the prayer, fasting, binding and loosing which had brought her inches away from the healer. It was time to act on the Word she had heard and believed.

It was time to put her faith into action. She “touched his garment” (Mark 5:27). Jesus immediately felt “virtue” – or power - go out of Him, and demanded to know who had touched Him. Believe it. A single touch can make a difference. When He turned and saw the woman, He said to her, “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matt. 9:22).

Jesus referred only to the woman’s faith. He did not say that her education, wealth or even her tears had made her whole, but rather her faith. Genuine faith in the living God can cause a fig tree to wither. Faith, according to Jesus, moves mountains. In this particular example, the woman’s faith caused her chronic medical problem to be resolved once and for all. *Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)*

God is no respecter of persons, but I believe that He is a respecter of faith. The sad problem among Christians today is that they fail to exercise faith to receive that which is prophesied for them. For instance, once they hear a prophecy about their lives, they go to sleep in anticipation of the results. Such laxity or spiritual inactivity is unsupported by scripture.

Get it straight in your mind that you need to exercise faith to receive your miracle even that which is prophesied for you.

I want to relate to you another dramatic incident demonstrating the power of overcoming faith. The Bible records the story of four friends in Mark 2:2-5 who brought their fifth friend, a paralyzed man, to be healed by Jesus. As usual, a large gathering in the house made it difficult for them to enter. Yet, the four loyal friends stood together in faith for the healing of their companion. Thank God always for friends who have faith to stand with you and believe that God will provide all your needs.

They did not carry him to a native doctor, a fetish priest or some so-called religious clown on the backside of town. Instead, the four friends agreed, in a commendable display of unity of faith, to bring their sick friend to Jesus. They realized that He was in the world to answer all human needs. The four friends

had faith, and the sick man, too, had faith. Otherwise, he would have opposed their earnest efforts. Faith will always find a way. Faith does not take no for an answer.

In Mark 2:4, we discover an unusual and strange action: “And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.”

Friend, this is a verse, which has stirred me ever since I first read it. What mighty faith this is! Some Christians give up after one or two attempts. In Matthew 7:7 the Bible commands us to “ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” I believe that the story of the four friends and the paralyzed man is an example of more than a one-time asking, seeking or knocking. Evident in that scripture is a call to persistence. Faith persists!

The account mentions that when Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the man who was sick of the palsy, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” In verse 11, Jesus rewards his faith: “I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”

God does not want to see your fear, doubt and unbelief. Jesus does not notice people’s lack of education and money or even their tears. Rather, Jesus sees their faith. Faith is agreeing with the Word of God.

If you agree with what the devil is saying, it shall come to pass. The signs and wonders of unbelief will befall you. No! Agree with the word of God and confess it, and you will live. That is the key to a faith that overcomes. Do not be ensnared by the words of your mouth. God, at creation set in motion certain spiritual and natural laws. What you sow is what you shall reap (Gal 6:7).

If you have a vision or dream, build it up on the word of God and begin to confess it. Nuture the word in your spirit, nourish it by daily confession according to the scriptures, and it will come to pass. Travail through prayer and faith; your dream will not die. In the fullness of time you will see its birth, if you

uphold it by a faith-filled confession.

Be mindful of what you read, with whom you associate and what you hear. These three things will alter your life for good or bad, for life or death, for accomplishment or failure, and for faith or unbelief. If you constantly associate with unbelievers, they will help destroy your faith. But the good news is that if you associate with people of faith and Bible-believing brethren, you will become a giant in faith. The Joshuas and the Calebs of our day always flock together.

Faith is mentioned twenty-one times in Hebrews 11, and not without a reason. All men and women who overcame the world, subdued kingdoms, ceased the mouths of roaring lions, quenched fire and wrought righteousness (Heb. 11:33-39) were people of faith. The lions have not changed, the fire is the same, kingdoms continue to rebel and oppose the gospel, that same old dragon, the devil, is still around. All these problems will continue to confront you. But the good news is this: you too can overcome the world by faith.

Chapter Four

A STEP BEYOND

Ever since I was born again, the one thing that has always impressed me about the Bible is its flawless logic. Every necessary distinction is meticulously made and maintained throughout its pages. Every basic promise is worked out to its final logical conclusion or consequence.

There is no denying that the Bible is an authentic work of the Holy Spirit. Aside from questions about the seat of final authority in religion, the Bible does have an authority from which we cannot escape. In spite of diverse theories of inspiration, the Bible is, in a distinct sense, God's Word - the Seed of God's Kingdom - and a main medium of God's power.

D. L. Moody, a great American evangelist, was once asked whether he considered the Bible to be inspired. His answer was brief and to the point: "I know the Bible is inspired," he said, "because it inspires me!"

As a minister of the Gospel, I have come to put implicit and unquestioning faith in God and His Word. Let us digress for a while as I share with you valuable Scripture passages that have led me to depend tenaciously on Christ and His Word. Because Christ identified Himself with us so completely, every believer now stands in a new position to receive God's blessings:

- * When Christ was crucified, we were crucified with Him. (Rom. 6:6)
- * When He died, we died. (Rom. 6:2-3, 6; Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20)
- * When He was buried, we were buried. (Rom. 6:4-5)
- * When He overcame Satan, we overcame Satan. (Col. 2:15)
- * When He was quickened in a new creation, we were quickened with Him. (Eph. 2:5)
- * When He arose from the grave, we rose with Him into newness of life. (Rom. 6:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:15; Col. 2:12; 3:1)
- * When He ascended into heaven, we ascended with Him into Heaven.

(Eph. 2:6)

* When He sat down at the right hand of majesty on High, we sat down with Him in heavenly places. (Eph. 1:18-23; 2:6)

Christ our Lord didn't die to save Himself from sin because He was sinless. Neither did He need to overcome Satan's power for Himself because Satan has always been under Him. Rather, He did it all to give us authority over Satan and the joy of walking in a new creation with Him.

The Pauline revelation presents staggering proof to support the new position that believers have in Christ. Some folks would have us believe that in this life we do not have any clear promise of blessing, success or prosperity. The Scripture says we have! And I say again that I stand by God's word above anything else. In the Old and the New Testaments, God leaves no one in doubt concerning the blessing of success laid up for His children (3 John 2).

Look closely at Deuteronomy 29:9 "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do." God is saying that if you keep the Word, your prosperity is guaranteed. How do you keep the Word? In your heart, of course!

Paul in his letter to the Church at Philippi declared, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19). By "all," he means Christ will supply you with everything you need - spiritually, emotionally and physically - not necessarily everything you want, although He can give you extra blessings if He sees fit.

The Bible is spilling over with countless promises of blessings, assurances of success in all human endeavors, and divine backing in all affairs concerning His children. But if Christians are destined for success according to God's word, why are many apparently not succeeding in their ministries, businesses and marriages?

Step out!

Today, I can confidently say God is looking for men and women who will

believe Him. The reason is simple. It is the Bible's way to success. You might ask, "But, Bishop Nick, how can you prove that?" Here is biblical proof. The children of Israel constituted a type of the Church in their calling and commandment. God specifically called them out of bondage in Egypt and promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. (See Exodus 3:8)

God does not call you to make nothing out of your life. He is a God of promotion. The land flowing with milk and honey, which God spoke of, was the Promised Land. God said He had given it to the children of Israel. After preparatory survey, they discovered to their dismay that there were giants in the land. The majority of the Israelites were shocked beyond recovery. "God has deceived us," they cried in anger.

Not too long ago I studied this particular passage about the Israelites and the possession of the Promised Land. God stirred me up one night and whispered into my spirit. "My son, Nick," He said, "remember this day that all my Promised Lands have giants, but that, notwithstanding, I have given the land to you for possession."

Friend, these words introduced me to a new appreciation of how to walk in faith and succeed. Living by faith is not for the fearful, weak-kneed or faint-hearted. The Israelites, did not truly believe that - giants or no giants - God had given them the land. The presence of giants in the Promised Land are no great obstacle for believers who together share a testimony that enables them to enter the Promised Land in triumph and victory.

It might startle you to hear that if God gave me a Promised Land without giants, I would not take it. I live to testify to His Glory. The crisis of faith with the Israelites is similar to the woeful dilemma of many Christians today. They cannot believe God enough.

Maybe you have been in your job for too long. God desires that you go forward. He has made you the head and not the tail. Or perhaps you have pegged yourself to a certain amount of giving to God's work. God is saying to you, "Move up, there is a step beyond."

Let me pause here to talk about your prayer life. Occasionally I hear “Oh, Pastor Nick, in those days when I was newly converted I could pray for three hours non-stop.” For many reasons, after the first flush of conversion, the fire amongst believers frequently dies down to flickering embers. Stir up the fire again! God wants more of you than your thirty minutes of dozing, religious prayer. There is a step beyond!

It could be that your once buoyant business has hit an all-time low. It is not God’s will for you to suffer constant losses and to undergo frequent changes in fortune. We know who is responsible; it is the old dragon - the devil. It is time to stand upon God’s word and step out in faith. God will be glorified in your business by your demonstration of faith. I say to you today, “Believe God and His Word; He wishes you to step beyond your present circumstances.”

Then came Jesus

In Luke 5:4, the Bible gives an interesting account of an event in the life of Peter, a disciple of Jesus Christ. A fisherman by profession, he fished all night and caught nothing. All hope was lost. He and his colleagues began to put their equipment and fishing gear away for the homeward journey. Then came Jesus!

His arrival was in itself a miracle. Jesus set out to bless Peter, but He needed Peter’s assistance. It was as though the Lord had asked Peter, “What can you offer to assist in spreading the gospel?” Thoughts of failure raced through Peter’s mind. In shame he muttered slowly, “I am a failure, Lord, I have nothing to offer and my business has almost collapsed.”

Jesus thought differently. There was something Peter had that could be of immense use - his boat of course. “Can I climb into your boat and preach the gospel to the multitudes?” Jesus asked. Peter in all gladness offered the boat. After preaching to the crowd, Jesus rewarded Peter for the seeds he was able to sow by offering Jesus his empty boat.

The logic behind the story is simple, and it applies to all Christians. In order to receive God’s blessing you have to make sacrifices. You must give to receive.

In Luke 5:4 the Bible records, “Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.” Jesus was rewarding Peter with a miracle that would give him a great harvest.

But Peter’s outspoken nature got the better of him in verse 5 when he declared, “Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing.”

Beloved friend, have you also toiled all day and yet received nothing? Have you worked all week without any apparent result? Have you worked all month without any success? Do not give up. You are on the brink of a miracle. Even in your impoverished condition, God still needs something from you in order to bless you. God wants to see your faith, for faith makes a way where there is none. Your life becomes new, purposeful and useful once you surrender it to God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus instructed Peter to launch out into the deep. One can gather from the statement that before the arrival of Jesus, Peter was fishing in shallow waters. Similarly, today is your hour of salvation. Put all your faith in Jesus and strike out for deeper waters.

A few instructive points in their dialogue deserve proper regard. In verse 5, Peter said, “Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.” What do you think Peter did? For the miracle or success he expected, Peter practiced the Word. Peter did not just meditate upon the Word. He acted it out in faith.

A key step toward realizing the success God has promised you is instant obedience to the voice of Christ. After all, Peter was an authority on fishing with many years’ of experience, which should have been a hindrance to accepting the words of Jesus. But there is no record that it was.

There is a second salient point. Commercial fishermen do not usually fish during the day - except when they go deep-sea fishing – because fish are harder to catch during the day. Peter, a veteran fisherman, might have said something like this to Jesus: “Please, Jesus, for your information it is already daybreak, and it is pointless to fish during the day.”

When God wants to perform a miracle, He breaks all human formulas and

rules. Because Peter chose to ignore what he knew and obey Jesus, Peter caught more than enough fish.

Jesus tells you to launch out into the deep in your prayer life. Take a step forward, wait upon the Lord in fasting and prayer, and God will move in your affairs. The deep is where the miracles are. It is there that your healing, prosperity and abundance lie.

What we find in Luke 5:6-7 should amaze you. It says, “And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.” Thank God for Peter’s obedience because it yielded very fruitful results. He caught more than he ever had before in his career as a fisherman.

Put the world of God first in your life. Be word-conscious! If you are going to be successful as a Christian, then learn how to be guided by God’s Word. *Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only...For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.* (James 1:22-23)

Don’t miss the message of Luke 5:7. Peter’s fellow fishermen were stunned beyond words. The nets were so heavy, that he could not lift it out by himself; he had to call for extra help. When God allows you to prosper, He does so that you can bless others.

We have already discussed the revelation behind the mystery of salvation. You have also read about God’s Emancipation Proclamation, His declaration of your total freedom. Now, having digested the principles of a faith that overcomes, you can begin to bear fruit in your life. You have realized that God through Christ has destined you to take a step beyond. What good news! It is the truth in Christ that sets a man free. (See John 8:32.) The *Word* of God is the *Will* of God. Read the will every day.

Chapter Five

SUCCESS MINDEDNESS

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.
(Col. 3:17)

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (Josh. 1:8)

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings; Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. (Prov. 4:20-23)

God wants your life to be full of success, but only as long as it is based upon His Word. The reason is that when you prosper through His Word, you are definitely prospering in a way that will yield eternal value in you. The verses we read in Proverbs 4:20-23 should be central to your heart. In verse 20 it says, “Attend to my words.” How do you attend to God’s Word? The phrase means “pay attention” to the instructions that I have given you. This calls for a conscious effort to read, meditate on and obey the Word.

You know too well that failure to pay attention to duties in your office for weeks could get you fired. Certainly, you are mindful not to miss three consecutive meetings of your professional organization, otherwise, your name could be struck from the books. Let me pose the question. How often do you read God’s Word? Once in a while? Or when you feel like taking a glance? When you sit in church? At times when it is convenient to you? Or when some crisis comes your way?

It doesn’t have to be that way! Remember, the Word of God is a tree of life that produces riches, honor, promotion and joy. Therefore, attend diligently to

God's Word with the same zeal you give to office duties and professional matters.

Let us take a look at Proverbs 4:21 again. It says, do not let the Word of God "depart from thine eyes." The Word of God is spiritual motivation for the human spirit. As you read God's Word, yield to it, and meditate upon it day and night. It will doubtlessly help you to envision goals whether they are physical, spiritual or financial.

Building a Word-based life

Many years ago I desired to prosper and succeed in life. Yet, I did not know God's Word, His acts or His ways. I did all there was to do according to the ways of the world. I did not know what the Bible said. I knew many who were gambling to succeed. I tried it, and it brought me nothing but sorrow. I could count scores of people who had stowed away in ships bound for Europe in the hopes of eking out a living there. I know – I tried it and failed.

Friends said to me, "Nick, the new thing is drugs. It is a fast life and you can make it big in no time." What else could I do? I believed my friends and ended up burning off some of my fingers in one of our evil escapades.

In those days I can recall many people who seemed to think it was possible to live by worldly standards and still be a true Christian. When I found Christ, or better still, when He found me, I discovered from God's Word through His prophet Hosea, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). God's people are destroyed by the lack of knowledge that godly men and women will prosper and succeed as they become diligent in following God's path.

The Scripture says in 3 John 2, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

If you believe that God does not want you to prosper or succeed, then I probably can't persuade you otherwise. At best, I can counsel you to renew your mind with God's Word in its full revelation. The biggest headaches I have had as a member of the body of Christ have arisen from the idea that many have that

you can't serve God and prosper. This garbage was sold to religious folks through the centuries, and it has been one tough lie to eradicate.

Every now and then someone will say to me, "Man of God, please let us be careful about this prosperity and success teaching."

"What is your reason, sir?" I reply.

"Eh, when people succeed and prosper, Pastor, they cease to be humble," my companion says.

"You cannot support your thoughts with God's Word," I say, in the hopes of enlightening them.

There have been times when I wondered, "Certainly, if these principles of faith and success were really true, someone would have taught them in the church." Not long ago, some churches attacked me when I shared these truths about God's plan to bless us. Thank God that today many of them have found the truth at last.

When I started working with these simple principles in the Christian Action Faith Ministries, things started changing for the better. I appreciate that results don't come suddenly, but gradually. Our church is into the full revelation of God's success plan. Take a look at 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Note that it says, all scripture is given by God and is profitable for us. Instruction in God's word will definitely and purposefully change our preconceived ideas and bring us to a better understanding of God's success plan.

Things to meditate on

In Joshua 1:8 we come across an unusual scripture verse: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have **good**

success.”

Several times in Joshua chapter one, we find God speaking to His servant about being courageous enough to continue the task his predecessor Moses had begun. However, Joshua 1:8 presents us with new truths that many Christians have not read, refused to accept or simply ignored them. Verse 8 is one particular verse, which has richly influenced my Christian experience. It has brought me great joy and success as I have studied and meditated on the truth in what God told Joshua.

This is a pronouncement of God Himself, so let us be careful as we examine it. It is a foundation for success. The first part says, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth.” The book of the law means the Scriptures, or what we know today as the Holy Bible. God says His Word should not depart from your mouth. Read it over and over again. This is a commandment, not just to Joshua, but also to all who desire to walk with God and know His ways. Will you accept it as your own commandment, too? The law or the Word of God can depart from your mouth if you allow it to. If you allow the word to depart from your mouth, something else apart from God’s word will come out of your mouth. Can you guess what that will be? You will end up speaking about religious mentalities, intellectual theories, latest discoveries and ways of the world, fears or other manifestations of plain unbelief.

The next portion says, “but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.” Let me ask you, “What should you meditate on day and night?” The fact is that what you meditate on day and night will eventually show in your life. It will be manifested in your words and reflected in your actions. What does God want you to meditate on always? It is just what He told Joshua. “This book of the law.” Let me speak a word of caution here. The Bible says in another place, “Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45). Whether you like it or not, what is in your heart will come out when you speak. Thus, we should meditate on His Word. It should be the controlling force of our thoughts.

Friend, we must not deceive ourselves. We must make a deliberate effort to

meditate on the Word of God day and night. The cares of this world and the pressures of life and ministry can choke out the desire for the Word.

The 21st century Christian has a lot of forces to contend with if he is to stay true to God's Word and be able to meditate on it successfully. God's talk with Joshua (1:8) occurred several thousand years ago, at a time when society was far different from what it is today. Joshua did not face the distractions of television, radio, billboards and advertisements, all of which are vying for our attention. The 21st century Christian has little time. As a result, we must carefully steward the time that we have.

With all the negative influences and time-stealing pressures of today, we have other means to meditate on the Word of God day and night. We have the modern conveniences of cassette tape recorders, CD players, Christian music and a never-ending stream of teaching seminars among other things. Unlike Joshua, we can enjoy the Bible on our iPods or MP3 players, even while we jog, lie in bed, drive or on board an airplane for hours. The problem is simply that many don't desire to use these technological advancements to their advantage.

"But, Archbishop, I am so busy, I don't have time," you might murmur apologetically. It is simply a matter of time management. I do not know how you spend your time, but believe me, I too am a very busy man.

"Oh Pastor, but you are a busy man of God," some will cry out. Of course, I am, but you must never get so busy as to miss out on meditating on the Word of the Lord. Apportion time every day to read the Bible. Be faithful in it, no matter what happens. Friends and visitors will inevitably show up at that hour, but plan in your heart to be faithful in it. I call this discipline. No man or woman has ever succeeded without personal discipline. If you can afford it, get yourself a Bible on audiocassette or CD and play it between meals, when you are relaxing and at bedtime. Even if you can't afford it, go down to your local library and borrow it for free! There is no excuse!

Do you have a car? Don't just sit in the traffic looking at the latest mini-skirts and stylish haircuts. Use your cassette or CD player to meditate on the

Word of God. Save some money and buy yourself an i-Pod and take it with you to the office or as you travel by road or by air. I am not saying that you should use your official time listening to the Word of God. What I mean is, use your break time to listen to or read the Bible or other good Christian books.

There is an important point I must emphasize. You will find out that what you meditate on is exactly what bears fruit in your life. Take time to read and listen to other messages such as healing, prosperity, holiness, evangelism, consecration and giving so that your Christian life will be a balanced one.

Now, for my last word on meditating on the Word of God: remember that the Bible states in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” Paul implies here that you must hear, and keep on hearing consistently, if you expect your faith to grow. He says “faith cometh.” If you do the hearing just once, faith for success will not come. Hang in there and hear it repeatedly until it moves you from mere mental assent to a dynamic and heartfelt faith.

Our next portion of scripture from Joshua 1:8 is, “that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.” You can’t give what you don’t have, and you can’t say what you don’t know. To try either would amount to self-deception. It is worth noting that James 1:2 says, “be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.” As you begin to meditate on the Word of God, your actions will begin to reflect that faith. If you are to prosper by God’s way, then it stands to reason that you must do so according to His Word. When you use the Word of God as your foundation, you will experience great consistency in your life and nature. In essence, the Word of God will produce success in your life.

For clear application of what I mean, read Luke 6:43-49. You may ask, “Bishop Nick, do you mean that if the Word does not depart from my mouth, and I meditate on it day and night, and observe to do all that is written in the Bible, I will *succeed*?” My plain answer is, “Yes, you will succeed! You will succeed in your marriage, job, business and education, if you do God’s Word.”

Allow me to ask you a question. “Does God actually intend to do all He has

said in His word?” Of course, He does! Why on earth would God encourage you as His child to be a success if He is a failure? That would be strange!

Are you afraid of success? You don't have to be if you know that you are a child of God, created in His image. How do I convince you of this important point? The verse we are looking at says, “that thou observe to do according to all that is written therein.” Simply put, God is telling you, “Be sure to do as I have said.”

The next logical question to ask is whether God would want to force you to do anything of which He has no idea. That would be unfair, which is not God's nature. A dear friend of mine, Rev. Casey Treat, a pastor of a large congregation in the United States, said in response to such people, “In all truth, God is the most successful Being in the universe. He's the only One who's never had to cut back, lay people off, take out a loan or lease, and has never rented anything. God is successful.”

Rev. Treat, based in the Pacific Northwest of the United States and founder of Dominion University, said emphatically, “God teaches the principles of success to His people. Those who truly walk with God succeed. Whether it is in the financial realm or in their ministry of teaching, or sewing, those who truly walk with God can, and will, succeed if they use God's Principles.”

This is the cardinal reason why God says, “Observe to do according to all that is written therein.” That is the only way you may be able to succeed in God's way.

Read again from the Book of Joshua, Chapter 1, verse 8, “for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.” In other words, the prosperity and good success, which God desired for Joshua was dependent upon Joshua doing certain things. But this is a conditional sentence. To fully comprehend the impact of this portion of scripture, you must know what God said in the first half.

Joshua was not to allow the Word of God to depart out of his mouth. He also had to meditate on the Word day and night, and make sure he did exactly

what was stated in the Word. God implied that if Joshua would do these three things, success and prosperity would be guaranteed.

In order for you to succeed and prosper, then, you need to follow the same steps that God gave to Joshua. But before proceeding, be forewarned. Many young men and women today walk with God and minister about God and believe that that alone will bring success. This process is important and has its place in God's calling. But that alone will never bring complete success to your life. Others take off immediately after a man of God lays hands on them. They assume that the laying on of hands is all that it takes. My friend, there is more to it than this. Imparting of the spirit and the power of anointing are important, but always remember God's Word to Joshua in 1:8.

Joshua's success went beyond serving Moses or receiving the gift of the spiritual from him. Joshua succeeded because he did all of that *and* believed God's word. We see proof of this faith in God's Word during Joshua's battle against Jericho, which resulted in the walls falling down. The feat reveals a man who knew how to believe God and meditated day and night on His Word.

Do you remember the man in the Bible who spoke words of faith to stop the sun while he fought his enemies? That was Joshua (Joshua 10:14). In fact Joshua was a success as a soldier, statesman and captain of God's people for only one reason - he lived by the words recorded in Joshua 1:8.

Things to always remember

- * Don't let God's Word ever depart from your mouth.
- * Meditate on God's Word day and night.
- * Do what God has said. Follow His principles for success.
- * Your own success depends on your obedience to God's Word

Chapter Six

FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

No human being will be really successful in the affairs of this life unless he applies the sayings of Jesus. That is, he must put the Lord's words into action. Jesus said in Luke 6:47-49: *Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.*

In this parable lies an important secret to success in life. Once we do the things Jesus says, we will have a firm foundation laid on a rock. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:4 *“that Rock was Christ.”*

Over the years, I have built within my spirit a strong consciousness of success. It has not been easy to reach this level of faith and growth, but it has been worth the diligence. Gradually, I have become intolerant of defeat and failure. Have I faced adversities and challenges? Indeed, I have. I have gone through crises so severe they might have been driven me to consider suicide. In fact, I have had opportunities by the minute and hour to withdraw and succumb, but this I have refused to do. In fact, as I work right now on this revised edition of this book, I have survived the most potentially devastating crisis that a man can face. But I did not accept defeat. Why? Because my life is built on the Rock of ages!

Let us consider these beautiful words of Jesus in Luke 6:47-49. In verses 48 and 49 we are introduced to two builders to whom we all can relate because it is given to each of us to build our lives. Every ambition we cherish, every deed we

perform is a building block. Not all builders are the same, however, some are sensible, some foolish. Furthermore, Jesus said that the man who hears His teachings and puts them into practice “is like a man who built a house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock” (Luke 6:48). Building a life should be no tent-pitching affair.

Ours is an “instant gratification” generation; we depend on instant tea, instant pictures, fast foods, microwaves and so on. In John White’s article on “The Doorway to Holiness,” which appeared in the Winter 1990 issue of *Equipping the Saints* magazine, he notes, “We live in a day in which to become a Christian you are supposed to believe the correct beliefs. Gradually you learn the Christian jargon and gain confidence in socializing in the Christian community. This is a quick fix form of Christianity which tends to produce either reformed sinners or else weak Christians.”

John White is talking about the man “who without a foundation built a house upon the earth” (Luke 6:40). Such a person will afterwards turn around and declare that the Word of God does not work. But this is not true. The Word works! He who is wise puts Christ at the foundation of everything he does, be it his education, marriage, vacation, friends and ministry.

In the second part of Jesus’ parable we arrive at a spectacular truth, which has to do with the test to which the house is subjected: “The flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock” (Luke 6:48).

This was no minor rainstorm. Even poorly constructed houses are able to weather little storms. But the real test comes when a severe storm hits. That is when refuge and security are needed. The house that was built on a firm foundation stood the severe test of floodwaters. It was immovable and steadfast! As we can see from the parable, the secret was not in the construction of the house itself. Rather, the source of strength was the “rock” upon which the house was founded (Luke 6:48).

God has shown us repeatedly that the reason many Christians do not

succeed is because they lack a good foundation. There are many obstacles to success. Divorce is one obstacle that can stop men and women from achieving their goals. For some it is sickness. For a good many others, the problem may be poverty, or a lack of some kind. But for everyone on earth the storms of life come and go. Like it or not, there is no escaping them. But I know that if your life is built on Christ and you obey His Words, you will rise above your limitations and meet the challenges that may come your way.

The solid foundation

It is hard work to lay a good foundation. We can all agree on that. A builder must take time to check the building site. He must do some excavation work and sometimes drive pilings deep into the earth. But a careless builder might decide that since a foundation is not exposed to view, it would be unprofitable to spend much time and effort on it. Actually, the reverse is true.

For us, floods could come in the form of inflation, sudden sickness or any of the other problems that can beset mankind. But, if you plant the incorruptible seed in your heart and do faithfully the things Jesus commanded, you *will succeed* in spite of them. The man who builds his house on his confession only will be washed away.

Who will withstand the storm? Who will stem the tide? Who will *succeed* in the face of all odds? The doer of the Word will do all these things.

Our church is not called Christian Action Faith Ministries just because it sounds good. *By God's grace, I have led the people through Christian action!* We have acted on God's Word. There have been times when we were pressed to the wall and surrounded by fear, but, thank God, we faced the storm and walked on in faith. Men of wicked imaginations have sat in judgment of my ministry and me. They have pronounced a death sentence upon God's work, but in every case we have survived by the grace of God to give our testimony today. At times, my very life has been in danger. It was like standing on a precipice. In the darkness of those times, I sometimes wondered whether daybreak would ever

come. What do you do in times like that? I looked beyond my immediate attacks and fears and I refused to be stopped for, after all, if God is with me, who can be against me.

As I discovered years ago, there is a great lesson here concerning the building of solid foundations for success in any field of life. In Nehemiah 6:1-4, we read: *“Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem and Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had built the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gate;): That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them saying I am doing a great work, so I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.”*

This is a passage full of lessons for every Christian aspiring to succeed. In verse 1 we learn that the enemies of Nehemiah were stirred up from sleep when they discovered his exploits. Where were Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem when Nehemiah was serving as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes? They took no interest in him as long as he was an unknown servant in a foreign court. But Nehemiah got their attention when he decided to obey the Word and strive for success and come out of obscurity.

In chapter 2, verse 10, we learn, “When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.” At this point the enemies were merely grieved at Nehemiah’s efforts. They probably only wished that Nehemiah would fail. Understand, child of God, many people will be uncomfortable with your plans for success. But I encourage you to stay on course and not be deterred.

We learn of a new dimension in the enemy’s strategy against Nehemiah as he forged ahead and began carrying out what God had told him to do: “But when

Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the King?” (Nehemiah 2:19)

Previously, in Nehemiah 2:10, they were only grieved in their hearts. But then their hatred deepened. They laughed at, scorned and came to despise Nehemiah and his colleagues. They believed that Nehemiah’s building project was an absolute rebellion against the king. Not able to battle Nehemiah alone, they tried to make him look like a criminal in order to stop him from succeeding.

Does all this sound similar to problems you have faced in business, education or ministry? As you aspire to success, you must come to terms with the fact that many will despise you and even scornfully laugh at you. What will you do? Pack it in and call it quits? Or go on in the face of accusation and threats? My word to you is “*Go on.*” Child of God, don’t look back. Go on, and become what God has said you will be.

Call for courage and boldness

I now know from two authorities - God’s word and the experiences of life - that no man or woman can succeed or prosper who lacks courage, boldness and wisdom. There will be times when the flesh simply wants to cower and lie down in defeat. But you must fight it out in the spirit, where the real fight of faith is settled (Phil. 3:14).

Have you closely followed the story of Nehemiah? In chapter 4 verse 1, the Bible declares, “But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we built the wall, *he was wroth*, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.” In verse 2, he labeled Nehemiah and the Israelites, “feeble Jews.” Yes, enemies will call you names and denigrate you, but don’t be deterred. Keep at it and you will succeed. In verse 3, the detractors stated, “Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.” Is it true that foxes climb city walls? Was it also true that Nehemiah was doing a sub-standard job of no lasting value in Jerusalem? Hardly! All the talk about foxes climbing and pulling down

Nehemiah's work was inspired by jealousy.

If you begin to succeed, how will you deal with all the envy that will come your way? You will not have to invite it, I promise you. As your prosperity and success become more manifest, jealous sentiments against you will become more conspicuous.

We come now in Nehemiah's story to the moment of true confrontation. At a certain point, his enemies might have envisaged that he was not the kind of man who could be stopped by scorn and empty threats. Tobiah and his team tried scorn, indignation, threats and mockery, but to no avail (Nehemiah 2:10, 19; 4:1, 3). When that failed, they intensified their onslaught. As we see in Nehemiah 4:8, they "conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."

Mark this scripture now, and remember it every day of your life. The enemies of Nehemiah's success planned an all-out assault with the sole aim of hindering his work. The satanic influences, which attempted to stop Nehemiah from doing the will of God in his generation, are still around today to try to prevent you from succeeding. But bear in mind the words of Jesus in John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." Make this your prayer and objective. If it worked for Jesus, it will work for you!

Finally, let me show you a strange link in the experiences of Nehemiah. In Nehemiah 2:10; 4:1; 4:7, we read that Tobiah, Sanballat and Geshem *heard* what Nehemiah was doing on different occasions. An issue that bothered me was who was reporting events in Nehemiah's camp to the enemies? Were there agents of Tobiah and company in Nehemiah's camp? Or were some friends of Nehemiah betraying him? Don't waste time trying to figure out the answer. Why? Do what Nehemiah did! And what was that? Nehemiah did not bother his head about who was betraying him. Rather, he doggedly went on doing what God told him to do.

God has graciously given us much success and prosperity in Christian Action Faith Ministries. Everything that happened to Nehemiah we have faced in

our day and time. Sometimes I wondered, “Would people have been so offended if I had used my father’s building for a hotel or brothel?” I don’t think so. If I had turned it into a “joint” for the perpetration of sin and evil and to promote promiscuity, I believe my friends would have been many. But the story is different today. As a result of the work of Christian Action Faith Ministries, thousands of men and women from all walks of life and strata of society in Ghana are on fire for God. And sure enough, it is making some people uncomfortable. Sad isn’t it?

In just 52 days, Nehemiah made a name for himself and brought glory to God Almighty and honor to his nation. Do you promise to do the same today? Do you promise God that no enemy will deter you in the things He has told you to do? Do you promise God that all the scheming and machinations of Satan will actually motivate you to greater exploits?

If these are the words of your mouth according to the desires of your heart then together we can shout, “The God of Heaven, he will bless us; therefore, we his servants will arise and build!” (Nehemiah 2:20).

Amen, and so shall it be in Jesus’ name!

Chapter Seven

DESTINED FOR SUCCESS

You have, by now, established in your heart that beyond a doubt God wants you to succeed in this life as a Christian. However, the Scriptures assembled below indicate that you have a critical role to play in making your dreams of success come true. I want to show you how to do it.

“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” (Psalm 27:13)

“Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; So shall thy poverty come as one that traveled, and thy want as an armed man.” (Prov. 6:10-11). “Seeth thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; and he shall not stand before mean men”. (Prov. 22:29)

From this moment onward develop your faith to the point that you don’t allow negativity to come out of your mouth. Will you start believing that every word you say will come to pass?

Image Change

The real problem for many people is that they walk around with a negative mindset. As it were, they never seem to think “any good thing will ever come out of Nazareth.” (John 1:46)

The majority of Christians who know the word of God are plagued with laziness of the spirit. All their lives they don’t grow beyond daily confessions of faith. Every day they go on a “claiming spree.” Even in the Old Testament when the children of Israel cried for manna from heaven, God did not spoon-feed them. They had to go out and fetch for themselves what God had provided.

It does not matter where you come from, what your family background is or how educated you are. You can move from poverty to prosperity or from sickness to health, if you will first change your inner image.

“But Archbishop, your case is different,” some will say. My friend, please

understand. No man or woman in my family was born again before my salvation. There was no one to emulate from my family who succeeded by standing irrevocably on the Word of God. But that did not affect me. Not at all! Gradually, by the Word of God, I laid aside all negative images, the restrictions of society and my perceived limitations on my life.

On this point, the Apostle Paul has a word for us from 1 Corinthians 15:10: “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

It is obviously a dangerous position to become self-reliant and self-sufficient. This state of mind, so prevalent in the body of Christ, often leads to frustration and disappointment in our lives. Consider that if Paul had dwelt on his past, he would have become discouraged. But, Paul said, “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

The miracle of my success began when I realized that I was valuable to God. When I realized how much God esteemed me, how He created me in His own image, as one of His offspring, I refused to let anybody on earth make me feel inferior or unworthy. I cherish what Mark Twain said, “Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambition. Small people always do that, but really great people make you feel that you, too, can become great.”

Doesn't the Bible say that if you walk with the wise you will be wise? From now on examine your company, and keep company with those who have a sense of destiny in their lives.

Do you have an identity crisis in your life? As a Christian many years ago I faced similar self doubt until I read the words of Mary Cowley, a famous Dallas businesswoman. She said, “You are somebody because God never wastes His time to make a nobody.”

The greatest discovery you can ever make is your true identity in God. Realize that God never planned for you to be a failure in life. Jesus did not come to condemn you. Neither do I. The Word of God says, “For God sent not His Son

into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:17).

I agree that success cannot be achieved effortlessly. I am not selling you some ‘instant formula’ from a Hollywood commercial. Instead, we are sharing precious truths from the Bible, which generations have ignored. By renewing your mind with these truths, you can start on the trail to a new beginning in Christ. All sorts of amazing miracles will begin in your life as you discover and accept the image of God in you and your potential in His word. The Bible reassures us that you are God’s workmanship (Eph. 2:10).

I read a challenging passage written by famous evangelist, Dr. T. L. Osborn in his classic, *You Are God’s Best*. His subject was: The Worth of Self-Value. He wrote:

Self-value will rid you of all jealousy because you will never again want to be anyone else.

Self-value will wipe out inferiority because you are in God’s class of being and He, in you, is greater than any *person* or any *power* outside of you. (1 John 4:4).

Self-value will eliminate fear of failure or defeat because nothing can stop you and God working together.

Self-value will give you courage because you discover that with God at work in you, you become indomitable.

Self-value will cause you to stand up tall, to square your shoulders, to walk with a steady stride, and to rise to the level of the importance for which God created you.

I have read these words by Dr. Osborn many times, and as a result, I have seen God’s power performing all His works in me. You need to take the first step: recognize your value! Now, from this moment onward, the seeds of God’s greatness will germinate in you by His word. You see, whatever one can say about a parent is equally true of his or her offspring. In the plan of God, He arranged that whatever could be said about Him could also be said about you. In

Genesis 1:18, God said, “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over every living thing.”

Possessions that God gave to mankind are listed in Deuteronomy 29 - 30. Here we learn that God never planned for you or any member of humanity to experience sickness, fear, inferiority, defeat or failure. God’s family is supposed to represent Him and, of course, to reflect His lifestyle on earth. You may wonder, “But, Man of God, what can I do about it?” Let this principle take deep root in you. Begin to see and respect yourself as a member of divine royalty. God is at work in you right now!

How can you achieve and hold on to success as a child of God? The following principles will work not just in ministry, but also in any realm of life, if you work at them diligently. Half-hearted commitment to objectives will never get you far. At best, all your plans will be stillborn.

Vision

A few chapters back, I shared with you how to bring your plans to fulfillment. You also learned that God’s family is supposed to represent Him and reflect His lifestyle on earth. Now I turn to how you can establish your vision in your heart. It follows the same theme as before: God is not purposeless. He has a vision.

Rev. Casey Treat defined vision as, “A mental picture of a future state.” I agree with him because many people who talk about vision in the body of Christ don’t have a mental picture of what that means. Someone once asked Thomas Edison how he managed to give the world so many inventions. He said, “Because I never think in words, I think in pictures.” Is that what you do, too? There is no way you will succeed without envisioning the state to which you aspire.

Often, I have come across many adventurous young men who talk about their great plans for the future. When I ask them to describe their vision, they sometimes respond, “Er, Archbishop, I am just moving in faith like Abraham.”

“Did the Bible say Abraham was just rambling in the wilderness?” I reply. They respond, “God will work things out.”

Many of these precious Christian folks are operating with zeal but without knowledge. God can drop a dream, goal or desire in your heart, but it is up to you to receive and nurture it in your spirit. A classic example of this is found in Habakkuk 2:2: “And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Read again what God told Habakkuk about visions.

- * What is it that you must do?
- * You must know the vision.
- * The vision must be part of you.
- * Read and meditate about your vision daily.
- * God has appointed a time for your vision.
- * You must begin to work your way toward your vision.
- * Have some patience for the vision to come to pass.

Remember, God told Joshua, “See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the King thereof, and the mighty men of valor” (Joshua 6:12). Joshua was within reach of Jericho, though he was yet to capture it, God told Joshua that He had already given Jericho to him. Joshua as a leader and a man destined for success, had to begin to see that what God had said was true even before it really happened.

I am sad to say that the main reason millions of people ramble aimlessly through life is that they have no vision. They have no motivation. And the Bible says that without a vision (a motivating force) you will perish. You cannot afford to wander in a thousand directions all your life. Are you destined for success? Create a vision for your family, business or ministry, and go for it! I love what Dr. Yonggi Cho said: “Don’t worry about getting faith. If you have a vision, you’ll get faith.” Do you understand that statement?

Before proceeding, I offer you the following admonitions:

* You must establish a daily sense of discipline to get you to where you want to be.

* Establish optimistic goals that stretch, challenge and excite you. Then go for it!

* If a man has no goals, then it tells you something about the man. What is it?

* Failure to plan is planning to fail.

* Build a good self-image in the Word and remember: you will only attract people who are like you.

* Encourage, motivate and inspire the people around you.

* Prosperity, divine health, peace, joy and fulfillment are not optional blessings – **they are responsibilities**. If you are not an example of it, if you are not the Word made flesh, then others will never get it!

* Build relationships with people.

* Communicate. Implant your vision in others.

* Walk by faith in God's word.

* Be willing to change when change comes.

I entrust the words of Dr. Robert Schuller to you: "Your role, plus your goal, plus the toll will equal success!" Amen.

Chapter Eight

MY TESTIMONY

It is good for a man to constantly remember from whence he came, especially if he is a servant of God. This practice serves several purposes. Among them, it helps him to remain humble, regardless of any promotions or rewards that come to him as a result of his endeavors. In addition, it allows him to depend totally on God in all things. I believe it is for these reasons that God repeatedly reminded King David of his lowly beginnings. Before he became ruler of Israel, he was a mere shepherd boy.

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.” (Deut. 28:1,2)

“Keep therefore the words of the covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. “ (Deut. 29:9)

It is good to remember where God begun with you. *“Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”(Phil. 1:6)*

I have never failed to keep my humble beginnings in proper perspective. God took me out of the miry clay, set my feet fast upon the rock, and put a song in my mouth to sing. Beloved, I owe it all to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who has made all the difference in my life.

I lay before you now the amazing testimony of my life. Every step of the way, you will stand with me to glorify God for the spectacular deliverances, miraculous healings and the divine grace and favor He has demonstrated in my life, even before I was born. The blessings and prosperity of God in my life are no secret, and I am a living testimony to His faithfulness.

God declared of the Prophet Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5)

The Travails

The story of the circumstances under which I was born is a clear indication that to accomplish His purpose God overrules the schemes and designs of the enemy.

One day, my mother said to me, “Nicholas, have I ever told you what travails I endured to give birth to you?”

Curiously, I replied, “Mama, what is it that you have not told me all these years about my birth?”

“Sit down please,” she said to me, directing me to a large chair.

“I daily bless the Name of the Lord for your life and His calling you,” she said. “Whenever I look back more than three decades ago and recollect it all, I see the finger of God in your life both to preserve and to use you.”

My mother went on to recount how she battled through nine months of bleeding after she conceived me. It was as if the devil made every move to destroy me before birth. But I rejoice to say the seed of the Lord can never be destroyed. Be assured also that whatever God has planted in your life, He will also watch over to preserve for His name’s sake.

When the devil realized that he could not prevent my birth, he initiated other schemes to wreck God’s plan for my life. He attacked my parents and brought about a divorce. As is often the case, the separation between my father and mother had rather an adverse effect on my adolescence. As a result, I was confronted with all kinds of problems from an early age.

Because I belonged to a large family of brothers and sisters, a lack of financial support stifled my education. I eventually enrolled in school at a rather advanced age compared to my classmates. I was a clear four years older than the next oldest student in my class. The jeers and attendant discomfort turned me

into a bully. But this did not last for long. The embarrassment of my late entry into school forced my mother to make a difficult decision. We moved to Wa in the Upper Region of Ghana. The harsh realities of life and deprivation began to take their toll on me. My only consolation in Wa was that a large number of my classmates were also far older than the stipulated age. This gave me some breathing space for a while.

As a result of the demands of my mother's profession as a nurse, we transferred to Bolgatanga after a sojourn of two years in the cruel Harmattan land. This move did not change my situation significantly. If anything, it presented me with new hardships to endure. In fact, I spent my initial year there at home because there was not enough money for my school fees.

Bolgatanga Market

Faced with such difficulties, I decided it was time to go to work to support myself. This was not easy. I struck a bargain with local newspaper vendors who each day supplied me with bulk copies of the Daily Graphic. Further supplies from vendors obviously depended on my integrity in making prompt returns, as well as my talent as a salesman. Each morning, well before daybreak, I took a quick bath and, whistling discordantly to keep my spirits up, I set off for work. By sheer drive and determination, I soon established myself as the "Accra boy" who made incredible sales.

As soon as my newspaper sales were over, I trotted home and donned my school uniform. Slowly and with great determination I overcame my inability to support myself while in school. There is no denying that the presence of large sums of money in the hands of a schoolboy can have a negative influence on him. In fact, my newspaper sales adversely affected my schoolwork. This was exacerbated by the enticement to work longer hours so that I could afford to buy personal items.

To increase my income, I took on one more responsibility - pushing wooden food carriage trucks. This generated more income for me in spite of the

strain on my young body. The truck pushing business in the Bolgatanga market was a highly competitive one. It called for all the imagination and creativity I could muster. For days, I worked assiduously on my hired food carriage truck. I painted it with bright colors. With all my youthful artistry, I made awkward designs on the front and sides to attract customers. My efforts yielded the desired results. Buyers wrestled over who would benefit from my beautifully decorated carrier. In a matter of weeks, I had established my position as a hardworking food carriage truck pusher all over the Bolgatanga market.

One day I received some discouraging news about my newspaper sales business. The proprietors had gone bankrupt and had decided to wind up the business. Then, the owner of my food truck called me a few mornings after the newspaper sales ended. “Small Nick,” he said, with his hand gently tapping my quivering shoulders. “Eh, due to some problems I’m encountering, I have decided to withdraw the truck and move out of town.”

I was momentarily dazed by the full implication of his words. I bowed my head and I cried tears of despair. Anguish engulfed me. After a short while, he said to me, “Goodbye, Nick, and God help you.” With that, he left, taking his truck with him.

I cannot recall how long I stood there watching him push the truck away, but the noise of two cocks locked up in tumultuous combat in the corner of the room stirred me out of my stupor. Considering the day a rather gloomy one, I withdrew into bed and lay down for hours analyzing the events of my life. Fortunately, my mother somehow managed to raise enough money to cover my needs, thereby easing my agony over the closure of my businesses.

Back To Accra

In 1972, after five years in Bolgatanga, my family returned to Accra where my mother had been transferred. I felt a welcome relief because I knew that the capital would offer much better business opportunities.

Life and business in Accra were certainly different from Bolgatanga. A

whole range of ideas rolled through my mind and school no longer held my interest. The reason was simple - I had outgrown it. I was no longer in a mood to tolerate the taunting and jeering of my fellow students who felt that I was far too big for my class. Besides, I could not stand being a bully anymore.

I was determined to make up quickly in Accra for all that I had lost in Bolgatanga. Several times, I strolled through the teeming crowd of pedestrians, visitors, sellers and buyers. I carefully surveyed the land for a couple of weeks. Then, I made my move. With the small capital I was able to raise, I embarked on the business of selling “P.K.” chewing gum to the afternoon cinema punters at the Opera Square. This was brisk business, but obviously not enough to sustain me. Therefore, earlier in the morning I would go over to the Accra Central train station where I helped to carry bags of foodstuffs for a fixed fee. Late in the evenings, to save money I walked the nearly ten-kilometer distance to Kokomlemle where I was living with my uncle who had offered to put me up in his garage. At cock’s crow, I would crawl out of the garage and hurry to the Accra Central station. The new friends I made, there, introduced me to gambling. This was a welcome escape from the nightly loneliness of my garage apartment and provided better company than my nighttime companions, the cockroaches which raced fiercely in the darkness around my bed.

My mother, however, was determined that I should return to school. After several rounds of discussions and an “official intervention,” I opted to go and stay with my father, a former politician, at the Airport Residential Area. This decision marked the beginning of events that were to alter the course of my life.

My father was in a “no-nonsense” mood concerning my explanations about my inability to return to the classroom. He opted to deposit me in an elementary school in Madina, near Accra. Before long, however, I discovered that for too long I had stayed too far away from the chalk, the teacher and the classroom. Too many societal influences had firmly gripped me. The discos and blazing voices of the highlife had taken a toll on my heart. I could not concentrate on my studies. One day I walked out never to go back again. I was determined to seek

laurels elsewhere.

This time the sound of the airplanes attracted me. Soon, I made a large company of friends by helping air travelers check their luggage and by assisting them with whatever other miscellaneous assignments I could find. I established myself at the airport as a self-appointed travel agent.

Sense of Destiny

As the days turned from weeks into months, I began to realize that there had to be more to life than being the flotsam and jetsam of society. I was aware of a new sense of awakening coming over me. It was like stirring up out of a stupor to discover you are the child of a king, a prince without even knowing it. How can I express to you the feeling that I experienced? It was like a veil was pulled off my mind as, through my gloom of hopelessness, I began to dimly comprehend that life could offer so much more. A new sense of destiny seized me, and I could neither wriggle out of it nor comprehend its meaning. Worst of all, my position as a 'goroboy,' or airport attendant, did not align with this new uncomfortable realization.

I began to re-examine my life. I felt within my heart that new vistas and new horizons lay in store for me. And this I did not know! In the same vein, I realized that there were also some strong forces determined to destroy my life.

One evening in 1974, I walked into my father's presence as he reclined on the sofa gazing at the sunset. He took one cursory glance at me and returned his gaze to the sunset. I could figure out what he thought about me. If anything, he considered me a wayward young man - listless, hopeless, a failure waiting to happen. But certainly that was not God's opinion of me. Before I could state my purpose, he asked, "What do you want?" I pulled myself together quickly as my thoughts ran haywire.

I stammered a reply: "Please, I want to talk to you about my plans to go to America." With a loud cough of derision, he retorted, "Alright, thanks for coming. I'll see you later." All the while, he had not as much as stolen a second

glance at me. With heaviness of heart, I slammed the door behind me. I left my father's room with the resolute determination to prove him wrong. "I must pay any price to succeed in life," I swore to myself, making no secret of my vow to my street friends.

With an air of urgency and importance, I told my friends as we gazed across the Accra airport runway, "I am simply fed up with Ghana; I am tired of this land." It was of no consequence to me whether they believed me or not. Every young man I knew had made plans to go to America or Europe in search of the 'golden fleece.' As far as I knew, that was the only route to success and recognition, and I was not going to be left out of the race.

Abortive Stowaway

In the middle of 1974, my plans for going to Europe were complete. There was no going back. Because of the dangerous nature of my plan of action I thought it wise to conceal my scheme from my parents and close associates.

Two routes were open to me. The first possibility was to travel by air, but I readily ruled out that option because I did not have enough money to buy a plane ticket. The second option was to stow away on a foreign ship bound for Europe. This was extremely dangerous. There were many stories about Ghanaian boys who stowed away on foreign ships only to be cast overboard by ships' captains to be mauled and killed by sharks. For nights, I lay sleepless calculating the risk involved in what I was about to do. "This could mean life or death," I thought to myself, "but there is no way out for me." My mind was made up!

To avoid detection by my parents and friends, I wrapped a couple of shirts and trousers in a polythene bag and headed for the lorry station before daybreak.

"Which vehicle is going to Kumasi?" I enquired with a shivering voice. The officials pointed to a bus en route to Abidjan. I hurriedly boarded it for the first leg of my trip to greener pastures. The second leg was from Kumasi to Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire, where I was presented with a problem: I did not speak French. This did not deter me, however, because I viewed myself as a

passenger in transit. By clever scheming and evading questions about my identity, I smuggled myself on board a ship headed for France. I squeezed myself amongst a pile of timber logs stowed on deck. I had hidden some French bread in some long goalkeeper's socks and had also carefully stowed a small container of water. It was enough, I hoped, to last an uncertain number of days. To beat security, I donned all my clothing - two pairs of trousers, two heavy-duty shirts, two sweaters and two coats. I thought I was set for life in the logs.

Then, as often is the case, the unexpected happened. I had been in the logs for seven days and nights. As far as I could tell, there was no difference between the day and night. I was under complete self-imposed restriction - seven days in a lying position. Torrential rains came down and my fortitude and courage were stretched to the limit. I was suddenly faced with the grim reality of dying from exposure and hunger in the midst of the logs. As the ship tossed turbulently, seawater washed over the logs where I was hiding. The only option open to me was to come out and surrender to the ship's captain, which might mean death. As I stretched and stepped out of hiding, I came face to face with other stowaways amidst the logs who had also been forced to surrender by the unexpected rain.

Needless to say, the captain of the ship seemed set to cast us overboard when the chief mate of the ship appeared on the scene and started asking our names.

"My name is Nicholas," I said humbly as he approached me. Suddenly the chief mate stopped in his tracks. He gazed into my eyes. My thoughts were racing wildly. I felt like I was standing on a precipice ready to be pushed to my death. After a pause, he said, "My son is also called Nicholas."

It was like a miracle! He stopped asking the rest of the stowaways for their names and walked over to the captain. After a lengthy argument and some angry gesticulations from the captain, the possibility of the death sentence was quashed. We were marched without further interrogation to a cargo hold beneath the ship. Despite the fact that it was like a dungeon without adequate light and

food, it was unquestionably better than lying among the logs.

Way Back Home

Finally, when the ship reached France and berthed at the port of Marseilles, we were released with a stern warning not to disclose our identity in town. We found harbor jobs to keep body and soul together. But I was in search of deeper adventures, and that meant I needed to make more money. Before I could do anything about it, however, the police arrested me as they swooped down on a company of rioting port workers. This time, the officials were bent on deporting me back to Ghana. On my homebound journey, I was put on another ship to Barcelona in Spain and then to Dakar in Senegal. The French officials there put me aboard a plane, which was destined for Accra.

Just when the aircraft touched the runway in Accra, I made up my mind to pull a fast one on my father. I could not bear to disclose to him the details of my abortive stowaway attempt and consequent deportation. Therefore, with the little amount of foreign currency I had on me I bought a giant-sized bottle of Johnnie Walker whisky and presented it to my father under the pretext that I had just flown in from John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. I lied to save face and to please him.

Another Mission Impossible

The days and weeks after my deportation were difficult. I was gripped with uneasiness, and I itched to go back to Europe. In 1975, I travelled by road to Abidjan where once again I smuggled myself aboard a ship, this time destined for Haifa, Israel. After a few days on the high seas, I surrendered to the captain with the hope that he would consider me for a job. Instead, I was locked up and eventually brought back to Takoradi.

The rest of 1975 was devoted to working out new schemes to achieve the lofty goals that were sprouting in my mind. Meanwhile, my company of friends multiplied and I spared no efforts in telling them glowing stories of the charm and beauty of Europe based on my faint recollections.

The God Factor

Throughout this time, ideas about God and the meaning of creation began to flood my mind with great urgency. The more I fought these thoughts, the more fear and anxiety assailed me. Suddenly, it struck me that there must be a “God-factor” in the affairs of men and I set my heart to unraveling this mystery.

I took a trip toward the end of 1975 to the Western Region of Ghana where I walked alone for several kilometers through thick tropical forest to a popular shrine recommended by friends. The fetish priest welcomed me with glee. He set a work to consult his gods about my fate. Suddenly, the priest shot out of his inner court to the reception area and stared at me. He went into the inner court again, this time performing frenzied dancing and gagging of a weird nature. When he came out again, he had a cold lifeless look in his eyes.

“Young man, who are you?” he asked.

I stammered a reply, “Errr, I am from Accra.”

He did not seem satisfied with my answer. “I say, tell me who you are now!

Cold fear ran through my body, but I managed to say, “Please I am a young man from Accra who wants your gods to help me succeed in life.”

The fetish priest shook his bald head several times and then tossed his staff. He said to me, “Young man, I cannot do anything for you.”

His words filled me with fear. By his expression, it was clear he was in no mood for any more questions from me. I walked out of the hamlet to embark on a long, wearisome journey back to Accra. You can imagine my state of consternation. Further visits to various “spiritual” churches did not help. They only stirred up more questions about life rather than answers. Though not yet saved, I began to have strong intimations that God was calling me.

However, my understanding of preachers based on those whom I already knew, was limited. To me, a preacher’s life was that of resignation, scorn and deprivation. Almost all the ministers of the Gospel I could think of, then, were barely making ends meet. Simply put, many of the servants of God wore no

decent clothing and presented a sorry picture of their position as ambassadors of the Most High God.

My father's ambassadorial position had given me a sense of what it meant to be a representative of a country. Therefore, even in my ignorance, I could hardly reconcile the "poverty is piety" theology with God's Word that His children were the Kingdom's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). The reason I decided to stay far away from God and His calling was to avoid becoming like "my preaching forefathers." I convinced myself that if God wanted to use somebody as His instrument, it certainly could not be me. But, dear friend, I did not know, nor had I ever read, the following scripture: *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, had God chosen yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."* (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

But at this time, I had never read this powerful piece of scripture, so I vowed to put God behind me and put the world before me. I prepared a discotheque attendance schedule, which I posted atop my bed, and dutifully committed myself to having all the fun and fame life could offer. Along with my friends, I went from cinemas to discos night after night. We graduated from lower degrees of sin to higher levels of iniquity.

Turning Points

Some of the evil spirits I had consulted in various places began to torment and haunt me every night. I could not sleep. I heard all kinds of weird voices tempting me to commit suicide. I lost control of myself. I needed help but did not know how or where to find it.

The year 1976 will forever remain indelible in my mind. It was the year of new beginnings. One night, I could hardly sleep because of the demonic attacks.

I was under great stress and I was suffering hallucinations. A voice commanded me to light a candle in my bedroom, so I did. The voice once again commanded me to stick my right palm upon the blazing flame of the candle. For some reason, I momentarily lost all consciousness of pain as my fingers roasted upon the candle flame. My senses became dull. Any reflex I might have had to withdraw my hand was lost as I yielded completely to the evil voices.

Then, suddenly, I came to myself and was deluged with agonizing pain. It was unbearable. I could not believe my eyes - my three right middle fingers were burnt like mashed meat. Blood oozed out profusely from the stumps of my fingers. With all the energy left in my body, I shouted from my room, "Help me! Help me! I am dying."

Through my excruciating pain, I heard the sound of footsteps approaching my door and heard someone forcefully flinging it open. At that point I passed out. When I awoke, I found myself firmly strapped to a bed in Ward 8 of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra. A nurse standing by my bed held my uninjured hand and said to me, "Nick, you narrowly escaped death."

Time for reflection

Four months in the bed of affliction offered me plenty of opportunity to reflect on my whole wretched life. My so-called friends, both male and female, were all gone. The disco life meant nothing to me with my heavily bandaged hand. All the questions that lay dormant in my mind resurfaced. What is life all about? Where does a man go to after death? Is this all there is to life? Are we all pawns at the mercy of blind fate and forces beyond our control?

My life was about to change forever. One day, an Indian woman by the name of Mrs. Rajj came to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to me. With her were the Acquah sisters and some Christian nurses at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, who boldly shared the Good News of God's saving grace and deliverance with me. As the days passed, a newfound peace flooded my soul. To my amazement, my restlessness abated. The Acquah sisters labored patiently to

explain the knotty questions I raised. When I was discharged on December 23, 1976, I knew beyond every shadow of doubt that I had become a new man in Christ Jesus. I spent hours searching the Word of God to understand the mysteries of His knowledge.

The Acquah sisters invited me to the Church of Pentecost where I graciously received baptism in the Holy Ghost. I devoted whole days to fasting and praying to know the will of God for my life. Now that I had finally accepted His Son, God was working rapidly on my behalf. I intended in my heart to be steadfast and faithful in my commitment to God and His church. I walked several kilometers every day to attend the Church of Pentecost fellowship meetings. The miles felt like mere yards as I sang and prayed in tongues all the way to and from church.

Bible School

Zeal for the Lord absorbed my life. Day and night, my mind was filled with evangelism and the things of God. As I sat one evening watching a “Redemption Hour” television program in Accra, the famous Nigerian international evangelist, Rev. Dr. Benson Idahosa preached a sermon inspired by the Holy Ghost, which he concluded with an invitation to Ghananians who wished to be trained in the Charismatic-oriented Bible School. The Lord said immediately to my heart, “Apply and go, for I have opened a door for you.”

I did, and so began my ministry. With a full scholarship from Archbishop Benson Idahosa, I spent my days knowing that I was in the perfect will of God. The Bible School in Benin City, Nigeria, offered me a great opportunity to revive my academic faculties, but, because of my lack of formal education, I had serious challenges coping with the rigorous academic work. What really sustained me was my dependence upon God in prayer and, of course, the personal encouragement accorded me by the Archbishop, who had then become my mentor. The lecturers understood my predicament and were very lenient with me. I survived the school and graduated in 1978.

Birth of C.A.F.M.

Upon my return to Ghana, I went back to the Church of Pentecost, where I had started fellowship after my conversion. I sought to be engaged as an evangelist with the church but the Rev. James McKeown, who was then the head of the church, turned me down and advised me to try elsewhere. He explained to me the negative experiences the church had gone through with evangelists and similar situations.

For some time, I felt discouraged and dejected. But one thing the Church of Pentecost and the Bible School developed in me was the zeal for prayer. Studying under the Archbishop meant that you did not give up on things easily. He succeeded in infusing into my very being an inner tenacity and resilience. I remained determined to work for God in spite of the apparent setback, so I consulted with a few senior ministers, like Brother Enoch Agbozo, the head of Ghana Evangelical Society, and Rev. Mensah of the Full Gospel Church. They both supported me as I pursued what God had laid on my heart to do.

I began to organize Saturday prayer meetings in my father's house at the Airport Residential area. Along the way, the Archbishop Idahosa sent Rev. J. S. B. Coker to assist me in the work I was doing. As the months passed, my ministry grew and I started Sunday services at the Association School. The church, which I later named Christian Action Faith Ministries, began to grow. We moved from the Association School to the Student's Hostel, then back to my father's residence. From there, we experienced sturdy growth, so we moved to the Trade Fair site, and finally to our present location at the Spintex Road.

As a result of the church's visible miracles, healings and great teachings on Faith and Prosperity, my ministry attracted many young people from the schools and colleges, as well as adults from the mainline churches. Today, many of these young people have also pioneered churches, with some already ordained as Bishops and General Overseers. By God's grace, my godly influence has gone far, both nationally and internationally.

One chronicler of Church History in Ghana, Susan Hanson, sums it all up in her book, *A Nation Touched By The Fire of Heaven*: “Today, the Christian Action Faith Ministries has churches in almost every continent of the world. [Rev. Duncan-Williams] is also the Presiding Bishop and General Overseer. The ‘mega’ church at its headquarters, attracts crowds close to 5,000 and above in a typical Sunday service. Many lives have been transformed, given purpose and direction, and God has used Rev. Duncan-Williams in several miracles, healings and signs. He has seen the power of God move in diverse ways. He also wields much influence in governmental circles. Affectionately called ‘The People’s Bishop,’ one can confidently say that Bishop Duncan-Williams is one Neo-Pentecostal minister who literally ‘junkets’ the whole world with the gospel message, holding several meetings outside the shores of this country.”

To God be the glory!

Chapter Nine

GOD'S MAN MUST SUCCEED

At this point, I am going to make some dramatic and challenging observations. They may seem so different from your present beliefs that you may question whether or not they are really biblical. Many people - and they are on every continent - believe that poverty and prosperity are both matters of birth and luck, that they are reserved for certain classes of society. They say that some people are meant to be poor and others are meant to be rich. Friend! That is certainly not what the Word of God says.

Dr. John Avanzini, President of His Image Ministries (HIM) and an acclaimed authority on biblical economics, has said, "God did not predetermine who would be rich and who would be poor. He simply created His spiritual laws and freely gave them to everyone. Every person then has a choice to implement the laws of poverty, or to implement God's spiritual laws of prosperity." Ministers of the Gospel are not exempt from God's prosperity plan. The unfortunate 'poverty is piety' concept has been with us for centuries. The devil has sold it from nation to nation and Christians have accepted it without testing it against the Scriptures.

Since God raised me in the late 70's, I have labored in the gospel of Jesus Christ, preaching, teaching and healing. I have ministered to tens of thousands of people in great crusades and in local church fellowships. My whole life is committed to God's calling to bring revelation and salvation, through His Son Jesus Christ, to the world.

It was tough and rough, my friend. To tell you the truth, there were times when I did not know what the next day would bring my family and me. I have seen want. I have known deprivation. I have experienced poverty. But, I did not surrender to pressures and fears. I was told tales of failure and defeat, but I strove on doggedly. I did not have any contemporary examples to follow, but I

have received God's revelation, and that was enough.

Has not God said in His Word, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). What did Jesus mean by "all these things"? Obviously the context reveals that He was referring to the earlier statement. He had commanded thus; "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:31,32).

The "these things" refer to the necessities that make life comfortable for mankind. They include the best food, clothes, shelter and all other material needs. And the good news is that your Heavenly Father knows that you need them, so He will give them as you seek Him first.

I have never approached the preaching of the gospel with a 'grabbing' or 'get rich' attitude, and I never will. I have done all that which the grace of God would do through me to affect and transform countless lives. It has been accomplished by a dint of sheer determination and by God's grace. It has been achieved through days, weeks and months of praying and fasting. I have diligently sowed the whole of my life as a seed in the Kingdom of God by ministering His Word. And I am not ashamed to say that God rewards faithfulness and hard work, regardless of who is involved.

Paul wrote in his second letter to the church in Corinth, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1). With God's help, I can say I have not received the Lord's grace in vain. I have labored. Yes, I have fought laziness and unbelief. I have aspired to succeed, by the grace of God.

The wisest man who ever lived among men had an admonition for us. In Proverbs 22:29, King Solomon stated, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men." Do you believe God's word? This is true! One of the errors of our generation is that

many ministers of the gospel feel guilty about receiving God's providence. I do not think I have to apologize for God's blessings merely because I am a pastor. No, I do not think so! After all, He has promised to give me "all these things," if I seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness.

God's hand has helped me to build a large fellowship of believers. Many, through the preaching of God's Word and, faithful application of divine principles have broken through barriers of poverty to attain great heights of prosperity and abundance. I say this to God's glory. We have come, a long way, together.

Many members of my church (and I mean a large number of them) drive some of the best cars in town to God's glory. What then are you saying? As the pastor and apostle of this great work God has established, should I continue to walk the streets of Accra merely to please men? That would not help anybody.

Friend, listen, what society says does not really matter; what God declares is the central factor. You cannot please society; therefore aim to please God.

Wrong Concepts

There are many wrong concepts which I have abandoned over the years. Honestly speaking, without my knowledge and insight into God's Word, the devil would have taken advantage of my ignorance to destroy God's work and me. But that will not happen!

For several decades Christians have felt that we should have just enough to eat, inexpensive cars to drive and the simplest of clothes. To many, that is the way to holiness! Somehow, just somehow, poverty came to mean a sign of true spirituality or some great love for God. But if God decides to bless you, He gives you nothing but the best.

Let me share some insights with you that will blow all the devil's lies from your mind. You see, Satan knows that if he keeps the saints shaking in holey shoes, in rented houses, with piles of unpaid bills and hardly enough to eat and get by, then he can effectively stop the spreading of the gospel through books,

equipment, international crusades and by satellite, radio, television and other means.

Now, I move to a strong point, which may be distasteful to a few folks. Do you know there may be thousands of Mercedes Benz cars in the nation? Among those who drive and own them are lawyers, bankers, gamblers and prostitutes. Others, like businessmen and diplomats, drive them every day. It may be of interest to note that many cocaine peddlers who have destroyed millions of human lives also drive them on the highways of the nation. Indeed, no one questions why they drive such “posh” cars. Yet society says that the servant of the Most High God should not be anywhere near them. Woe unto the preacher who dares to buy a Benz car or even receives one as a gift in appreciation for his labors.

The argument raised is that there are needy people in the society and so the man of God should not use the best things, but give them away to the poor. It sounds appealing, doesn't it? But listen. We cannot deceive ourselves anymore. In John 12: 1-8 we read an interesting episode. All of the twelve apostles were present, but surprisingly it was only Judas Iscariot who queried why Mary poured the alabaster oil on Jesus Christ. Judas asked, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag” (John 12:5-6).

The reaction of Jesus Christ to Judas' objection was a radical one. The Lord said, “Let her alone;...for the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always” (John 12:7, 8). In essence, the full implication of what Jesus Christ meant was that whether the alabaster oil was poured on Him or given to the poor, it would not make the poor poorer or richer, so stop bothering her.

This explanation should settle your worries about the preacher's car. He is building lives by God's Word. The pastor and the evangelist are transforming lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Many are they whose lives have been altered for good by the true Bible believing church and its ministers. Suicides

have been stopped by prayers and counseling. May God help us see the truth and uphold His Word!

The Missionaries of Old

I believe the other problem the church of Africa has had in relation to prosperity has to do with the approach of European missionaries who worked here in colonial times. There is no denying that they did - and are still doing - a tremendous job in evangelism, building hospitals, schools and other social services to make life better for the people. But, sorry to say, the missionaries erred tragically by not teaching the Africans God's Word on prosperity, especially where it had to do with the laws regarding sowing and reaping.

The reason is not hard to trace. Churches overseas, more often than not, support the missionaries who work in Africa and elsewhere. Monies, clothing and other essential necessities are frequently sent to them. Other missionaries have monies paid into their home accounts to guarantee a comfortable future. With this background, many missionaries did not have grounds to justify preaching the full counsel of God regarding prosperity through giving, sowing and reaping.

From another point of view, even those who were not supported by their home churches did not have the courage "to say it like it is" from the Bible. Africans generally consider every white man affluent, whether a missionary or not. This atmosphere also produced guilt in the minds of those who tried to preach the full gospel. As a result of this negligence to preach God's prosperity along with other revealed truths, Africans came to assume, erroneously, that to be a preacher was to be poor.

Thank God it all has to end! He has called us to declare His full counsel to our generation. I preach and teach prosperity like any other doctrine of the Bible.

Giving and Receiving

I have seen the Word of God change the course of my life and thousands of others. There is one principle I will recommend for you, if you want to receive

the miraculous provision of God, and that principle is Giving. God's law of Giving and Receiving is clearly stated in Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Again, in Proverbs 11:24-25 it is written; "There is (he) that scattered, and yet increaseth, and there is (he) that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

God's spiritual laws will not change, whether we like it or not. You may be saying right now, "Oh, Archbishop, you mean I have to start giving my money away if I want to be prosperous? That doesn't make sense." It does! The devil wrote an old concept and engraved it in gold. It says, "Get all you can get, hold on to it, and keep the lid tight on the can." God's spiritual law says if you scatter your money, it will increase and you will be prosperous. Hoard too much of it, more than necessary, and you will be poor.

You may read about these biblical principles in Deuteronomy 8:18; 3 John 2; Proverbs 28:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:9. Take a look as a scripture selection that has transformed the lives of many Christians who adopted God's spiritual law. It is Deuteronomy 28:8.

"The Lord will command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Verse 2 of the same chapter states that the blessings of the Lord will even "overtake" you. I love that! I have experienced it personally.

Remember this day, that no matter how far you are from God's plan of abundance now, when you begin to put God's Word into action, He will overtake you with His blessing. Let God be true!

That You May Prosper

The world's way of thinking has always baffled me. Now I know that Satan is firmly behind all the deception (Rev. 20:8). Just for a moment, ponder on the points I am about to make. Do you know that ticket fees for boxing tournaments go to pay the boxer's fees? Are you aware that gate fees for football matches help to pay the footballers? It may sound childish to you, but may I ask, who gave the hands to the boxer? It is God the Creator.

Similarly, it is God who gives the skills to the footballer to play with his legs and make a fortune. The Bible actually says, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor 4:7)

The intellectual makes a name and fortune from the gift of intelligence and the brilliant brain with which God has endowed him. So, what about the minister of the Gospel? God has anointed His servant and given him grace and wisdom to do the work of the ministry in any of the fivefold offices - apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher - or any other ministry in the church. The servant of God labors in God's Word and prays to succeed. But when God blesses His servant's ministry, the whole world rises in condemnation.

It is necessary to clarify a few points. The Bible says in Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." For the avoidance of doubt on ownership, God said in Haggai 2:8, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts."

By direct interpretation, what the two Scripture verses imply is that God owns the earth as well as the gold, silver, diamonds and everything else in it. Therefore, it stands to reason that all human beings, including doctors, lawyers, engineers and gold miners, succeed and prosper at the expense of God's created wealth and other natural deposits in the earth.

On this score, it would be unfair, unjust and a direct contradiction of God's Word for society or any group of people to deprive anyone of the fruits of his lawful labor. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:28: "Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good,

that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

Any individual who works hard, uses his or her God-given talents and resources, and abides within the limits of God’s law is entitled to receive the blessings of his or her labor. No one should be deprived of God’s blessings.

It does not matter what you think. God’s Word stands. I believe that God has raised me as a leader and as an example to my generation to demonstrate His goodness, mercy and prosperity. But, I always remember from whence God picked me. Like David, He took me from the backside and placed His grace upon me. This, He did so that I can be a reference point to those who need the grace of God. It does not matter what the world says, God will show you favor in due time.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ visit you with His power and prosperity in every aspect of life as you act on the words of this book. “Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that you do” (Deut. 29:9).

If you stand on God’s Word, God’s promises will stand with you, as He told Abraham in Genesis 12:3, “*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.*”

Remember, and let it be deeply entrenched in you, you are destined to make an impact. Only discover yourself in God’s plan for you and prayerfully depend on Him as He works it through your life, for His own glory.

About the Author

Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams the Presiding Bishop and General Overseer of Christian Action Faith Ministries Worldwide (Action Chapel International) with more than 100 affiliate and branch churches located in North America, Europe and Africa. Anointed in the ministry of prayer, healing and the prophetic, his teaching has touched countless lives in a dramatic and life-changing way for over two decades. What he is offering to the younger generation, as well as to well-established Pastors, is counsel, direction and opportunity, which can be categorized as mentorship. God has equipped him on countless occasions to run crisis-threatened churches and prophetically point them in the right direction.



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