



# Panoplia

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By Pastor Anthony Adesile

## OF VALUE AND IN GOD'S HANDS

*Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin?  
And not one of them falls to the ground apart  
from Your Father's will? But the very hair of your  
head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore;  
you are of more value than many sparrows.*

(Matthew 10: 29-31)



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(Matthew 10: 29-31)

Events in the past months have put a spotlight on the value that man places on another man. Feedback from all over the world is nothing to write about. Man is devalued by another man, regardless of how much people try to right the wrong. It is obvious that man cannot look to government, justice system, social system or any system put together by man. Every system is a failing system.

In the midst of these systemic failures, what is the fate of the child of **God**?

The other day, I undertook the role of a barber when I cut my one year old son's hair. At his age, his overgrown hair had become so much of a struggle to comb. On reflection, it dawned on me that even his hair before and after were and are individually numbered by the **LORD. God** knew and does know every strand of hair. Not just of that little child but of every child of **God**. And you are not excluded.

Which brings us to the struggles we put ourselves through; the strivings, the fear, the quest to belong or accepted, and many more. As mortal beings, we do wor-

ry a lot about where we are today, what will happen in our tomorrow, how we can rise above prevailing circumstances, and many more. Needless to say that the absence of solutions to these issues add on to the pain, the heartache, disappointment and accepting of the status quo. Sadly too, these circumstances of life blind us from seeing the very solution we need to carry us through.

**Jesus Christ** in the passage above references the sparrows in order to demonstrate the extent of **God's** care and mindfulness of us. First was the price placed on the sparrows. They were cheap to purchase by man; two for a copper coin! Sparrows were readily available for anyone to buy, and their availability was taken for granted. Yet **God** accounts for each of the sparrows. But let's take a closer look at the passage to highlight on something quite notable:

*And not one of them falls to the ground apart from Your Father's will?*

These sparrows were accounted for by **God** and none could have been available to man without **God's** will. It was the will of **God** for man to access sparrows for meat. **God** does care for sparrows but He cares more about man whom He created in His own image.

Yes, the very fact that He who accounts for each of the sparrows is our own very Father makes this account much more enlightening to as many as would care to take a pause to reflect. If our own Father and albeit, your own very Father oversees the life and well-being of sparrows, how can He not do more for us His sons? Bear in mind also that we are not referencing our earthly father here but **God** Himself; *our Father who is in heaven*. We are not even thinking about fathers that have died and gone to heaven but the Father who is eternally present and never sleep nor slumber.

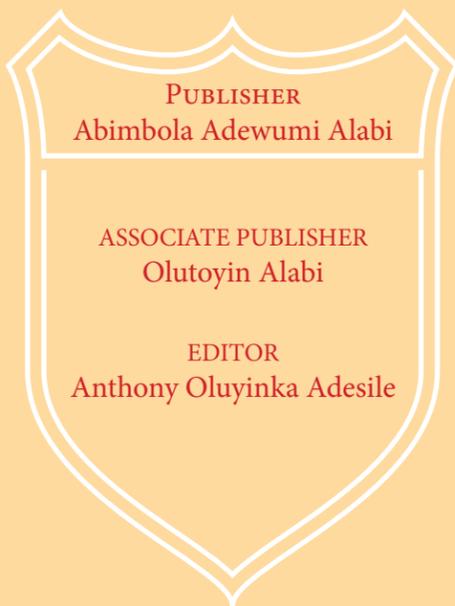
But it gets even more interesting. We are being introduced to **God** who is great in power and mighty in deeds. He is the **God** who created all things, can do all things and nothing is impossible for Him to do. We only need to think about the great-



## Welcome to Panoplia.

The mission of Panoplia is to help believers develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. It emphasises spiritual growth and leadership.

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## IN THIS EDITION:

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**The ABC's of Starting Over**  
**Before You Make that U-Turn**  
**What does Death Mean to You?**

ness of our **God** to appreciate that the limit of what we can imagine is infinitesimally lesser than what He is capable of doing. Apostle Paul had this to say about Him: Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20)

Consider then this from this passage of scripture. *Apostle Paul* in few words would have reflected on the many testimonies – accounts of the many great deeds that **God** did before his time and all the many great deeds that he himself had witnessed or experienced. In summarising these deeds, he noted that **God's** power is incomprehensible to man. Yet **God** is not only able to exercise these power in the past but also in the present and the future. Much more, He exercises these power in diverse ways for our own peace and good.

Which brings us back to where we started from; how we get so worked up over issues of life and fear for our lives and our tomorrow. We forget that **God** is always and forever on our case. He knows our future and cares about our tomorrow. He is the Father that is willing to step in and give joy and peace, if we let Him. So if you are currently in doubt about the Father's love and care, be rest assured that Your Father in heaven does care about you, is mindful of you and will give you peace. Why don't you just take a break from fighting a losing battle and let **God**, your Father help deal with your worries and troubles? Why not just hand over your life to Him and let Him keep it safe and secure from the evil one that seeks to steal, kill and destroy? Why don't you just stop thinking about how you can make your tomorrow better and let **God** help make it beautiful? He surely can and you will definitely find rest for your soul.

*For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the LORD. Thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11)*

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created by Mike Waters

# The ABC's of Starting Over

Another sermon challenge to start you off in the new year...

Is your life predictable? Do you do the same thing, day after day? Do you feel as though 2015 will be just as dull and monotonous as 2014? There is a wonderful passage that shows us a practical example of how one man changed his life. It outlines for you the **ABC's** of how to change your life.

## Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. [47] When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**" [48] Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "**Son of David, have mercy on me!**" [49] Jesus stopped and said, "**Call him.**" So they called to the blind man, "**Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.**" [50] Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to **Jesus**. [51] "**What do you want me to do for you?**" **Jesus** asked him. The blind man said, "**Rabbi, I want to see.**" [52] "**Go,**" said **Jesus**, "**your faith has healed you.**" Immediately he received his sight and followed **Jesus** along the road.

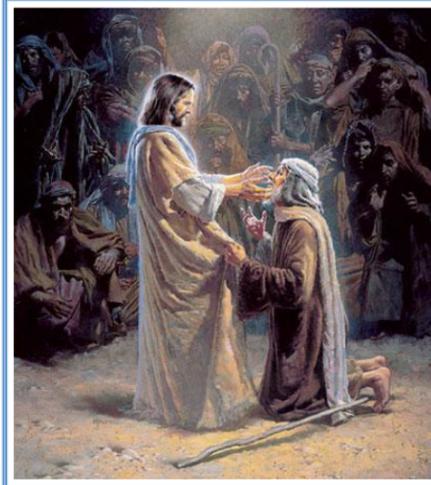
From this passage, we can discover the **ABC's** to help us change our lives...

### A - Assume Responsibility For Your Own Life!

(v. 47) *When he heard that it was **Jesus of Nazareth**, he began to shout, "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**"*

We live in a generation that tries to blame someone else for its problems. Teenagers blame their parents, Parents blame their children, Workers blame their co-workers or their boss. Things happen that you can't control - but you can control your response. Let me repeat that. Things happen that you can't control - but you can control your response. I hear people say all the time... "*He makes me so mad*" or "*She makes me so mad.*" Nobody can make you mad. You're the only person who can make you mad. People can do things that upset you, things you don't like, things that hurt you. But you decide how you're going to respond. Look back at the scripture. See what Bartimaeus did and did not do.

1. He didn't blame someone else. He didn't think that **God** or anyone else owed him something.
2. He did go to **Jesus**. He humbled himself and sought help and deliverance.



2015 can be totally different from 2014 if you'll...

- A - Assume responsibility for your own life
- B - Believe you can change
- C - Clarify what it is you really need.
- D - Decide to stop worrying
  1. Stop worrying what other people will say
  2. Stop waiting for the ideal circumstances
- E - Exercise Your Faith
- F - Follow Jesus!

### B - Believe You Can Change!

(v. 51) *"What do you want me to do for you?" **Jesus** asked him. The blind man said, "**Rabbi, I want to see.**"*

He believed he wouldn't walk away the same. He believed that he'd be **DIFFERENT**. So often people pray...

"**God**, if you'll just change my employer,  
if you'll just change my husband or my wife  
if you'll just change my children or my Friend,  
if you'll just change my boss, or co-worker, or relative

**God** never promises that he will change your situation. **God** does promise that he will change **YOU**. He'll change your attitude... your perspective... your outlook... Then you can change your attitude toward your situation.

### C - Clarify What It Is You Really Need

*Notice the question in verse 51 - "What do you want me to do for you?"*

Specific prayers get specific answers. How often do we pray, "**God** bless the missionaries overseas." **Jesus** already knew what the man needed. Jesus just wanted the man to say it. How often do we play communication games with each other? A wife will tell me, "*He doesn't meet my needs.*" "*Well, does he know what you need?*" "*Sure, he loves me, he ought to know.*" "*Maybe he ought to know, but that doesn't necessarily mean he really knows. You have to tell him what your needs are.*"

Another example: "I'm so mad at him." "Well, does he know why you're mad at him?" "Of course, he does. He knows what he did!" "How does he know? Did you tell him?" "I don't have to tell him. He knows." We do the same thing with **God**. We assume that since **God** knows everything, we don't have to tell him. But that's just exactly the opposite of the way **God** operates. He wants us to tell him what we need. Exactly what we need. **Jesus** will meet your needs when you tell him what your needs are. But sometimes He doesn't meet your needs because you never tell Him what you really want and how you really feel.

Notice his cry - "Have mercy on me." He was beggar. Yet, notice, he didn't cry out for food, or clothing, or money or housing. He was given sight that day. He was healed that day - because he realized that his most basic need was for mercy and grace. He needed what only **Jesus** was offering - and because of that, he was healed.

## D - Decide to Stop Worrying

### 1. First, Stop Worrying About What Other People Will Say

(v. 48) *Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more.*

What were they telling him? Shut up! Nobody wants to hear what you have to say! This isn't the right place... This isn't the right time... Nobody's ever done it that way before... You can't do that - just be quiet. We have to quit worrying about what other people think. In this particular situation, everyone else was wrong. Everyone else told him he shouldn't do it that way. He didn't care what the protocol was. He didn't care if all the people agreed that you just don't approach **Jesus** that way. He knew he needed help and he wasn't going to be denied.

*Have you prayed for something and **God** hasn't answered you yet?*

Keep on calling out to **God**.

*Do you have a need and **God** hasn't met it yet?*

Keep on calling out to **God**.

*Are you hurting and don't have an answer?*

Keep on calling out to **God**.

*Are people telling you to give up?*

*Are people telling you to quit?*

*Are people telling you that **God** doesn't care?*

*Are you worried about what other people think or what other people will say?*

*Are you concerned about how it might look?*

*Are you worried that other people will think you crazy or you're a fanatic?*

Stop worrying.

Don't quit.

Don't give up

## JUST CRY OUT EVEN LOUDER

One of the greatest attributes a *Christian* can have is persistence and perseverance. **Jesus** tells a parable about the neighbor who comes at midnight and is rewarded for his persistence. Someone once said, **God** doesn't answer shallow prayers, he answers desperate prayer.

### 2. Second, Stop Waiting for the Ideal Circumstances

(v. 46) *As **Jesus** and his disciples, together with a large crowd,*

*were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus was sitting by the roadside begging.*

*Bartimaeus* almost missed his chance. **Jesus** was on his way out of town. He was on his final journey to *Jerusalem*. This is the last time **Jesus** would come to Jericho. If he had missed **Jesus** this time, he never would have been healed.

We have to quit waiting for just the right time. We have to quit waiting for the right opportunity to come along. It may not happen. We have to do something NOW!

## E - Exercise Your Faith

(v. 50) *Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to **Jesus**.*

Sometimes, we have to do something different. We can't do the same old thing. If we're really going to change, if we want life to be different, we have to do something bold and dramatic. *Bartimaeus* did something unique and unusual for that day and time. It was not normal for a man to cast aside his garment. It was not the usual protocol for a man to leave his garment. Sometimes we have to do something totally out of the norm. Totally different. *Hebrews 12:1* says, let us lay aside every weight, every sin that so easily entangles us."

Notice those words, lay aside every weight and every sin. We know the sins. But what are the weights? Whatever is keeping you from keeping **Jesus** first in your life. Whatever is keeping you from running to **Jesus**. Whatever is holding you back from surrendering your life to the LORDSHIP of **Jesus** so he can do a miracle in your life.

## F - Follow Jesus

(52) *"Go," said **Jesus**, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed **Jesus** along the road.*

He was a beggar, he was blind, he had been healed. It would have been so easy to go into town and tell everybody what had happened - to show his friends and relatives, to let the whole town know that he had been healed - but that's not what the scripture says. It simply says, "*He followed **Jesus**!*"

2015 can be totally different from 2014 if you'll...

A - Assume responsibility for your own life

B - Believe you can change

C - Clarify what it is you really need.

D - Decide to stop worrying

1. *Stop worrying what other people will say*

2. *Stop waiting for the ideal circumstances*

E - Exercise Your Faith

F - Follow **Jesus**!

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# BEFORE YOU MAKE THAT U-TURN

Adewumi Alabi



I was driving on one of the interstate highways when I saw a red alert sign “*Danger!!! High Voltage Tension Wires*”. What I was expecting to see next was a diversion off that path of the suspended cable wires above. However to my surprise the highway continued and immediately I realize that many times, as *Christians*, when we hear about danger we stop right in our tracks and cowardly retreat - even finding a scripture to justify our giving up.

Danger may be on the path that you are going to achieve your dream but it does not mean that you turn back immediately. Just like those high tension cable wires were suspended far above the roads, you can pass on safely in the guidance that **God** has provided for you. Like *Paul* in the scriptures we can be aware of the dangers but yet we can say none of these things move me; “*I am going to stand strong and be obedient to the heavenly vision*”.

The three Hebrew children in the land of captivity saw the danger in standing for **God**, yet they stood firm in their faith. Daniel who was also the champion of faithfulness without compromising showed us that you may be aware of the threat of danger but **God** is faithful to see us through.

A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished (Proverbs 22:3).

The above passage of scriptures has often been used to highlight the need to make a U-turn rather than continue on a path that shows sign of danger. It’s similar to the lazy man’s ‘there is a lion outside (Proverbs 22:13)’ mentality. While caution is indeed necessary, making a U-turn should not be the first recourse in responding to danger.

We need to ascertain that what we are doing is in the will of **God** and then stick to it. Nehemiah was faced with a similar situation when he was rebuilding the temple. The enemy came to show him the dangers surrounding the assignment **God** has given him. He did not flee but rather stood firmly. Don’t panic when you see threats on implementing the blueprint **God** has given you. Like *Jesus’ project* for mankind the devil will show up too to tempt and frighten you away. Do as **Jesus** did; quote the WORD. When Isaac succeeded Abraham the Philistine came and piled up sand to fill the wells he inherited. He did not give up. Rather he continued digging. You may have businesses that **God** has opened up and some blackmailers will come to throw up some discouraging threats that want you to give up. Don’t.

**A prudent man  
foresees evil and  
hides himself,  
but the simple  
pass on and are  
punished**

Proverbs 22:3

David was anointed and had a guaranteed promise of becoming the king of Israel but dangers signs literally were the signposts that ultimately led him to the throne. The Sanbalat and Tobias will always be there to spread rumors about you to discredit you but if **God** be for you who can be against you?

Bad dreams could also show up in your dream. The Word of **God** will overwrite any bad dream designed by the enemy to stop you and even if it’s your inner fears that is bringing up the dreams remember that your **God** given dream will swallow up this discouraging dream. Ask the *Holy Spirit* the source of this dream and with wisdom and understanding declare what **God** has said rather than magnifying and describing the threats the enemy has shown. *David* standing before *Goliath* face to face was dangerous; he was courageous, focused and declared what **God** had said rather than gave in to Goliath’s threat. What are you facing now? Don’t run because of the signs of danger. Stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord like Moses and the Israelites did.

# WHAT DOES DEATH MEAN TO YOU?

Adewumi Alabi

**M**y first perception of *death* was as a toddler. My parents had a dog and a double barrel rifle gun because we had just moved to our new house in a relatively isolated area of our hometown then. The dog usually barked whenever it sighted any intruder animal or human around the house. The barking always alerted us to the presence of another being around. Then one day I sensed an unusual silence in the neighborhood and it dawned on me that I had not heard the dog bark. Curiously I inquired about the dog and was told it had died. From that age I identified silence with *death*.

Oyediran was a friend I met in the first day of my high school boarding enrolment. We both came from a successive polygamous home and we hanged out together a lot for the first year. As we resumed for the second year, Oyediran never arrived, never resumed. Upon inquiry I was told he died of food poisoning during the vacation. *Death* to me was no longer limited to silence but also to the non-arrival of a loved one to keep up with a scheduled plan. *Death* meant the 'no show' of someone to keep up with promises of adventures, and play some pranks with other friends, seniors, and even teachers.

One evening while home during one of those vacation days, one of my cousins came crying that my aunt's husband had died at the hospital. He was a very senior judge who had faithfully and with diligence, raised the children his late wife had left to the pride of everybody around. He was a father with foresight and planned for his children's future. My mother wept profusely all that night and from this I knew that *death* brings profuse weeping, almost endless weeping till one literally have no more energy to cry.

*Death* also makes one express grief out loud and maybe for the first and last time say things out about the person that died as he or she is being buried, though it's much more better that one says it to that person when he or she was still alive.

My mother took me along to the burial of this great man at her hometown and I could hear her speaking out her hearts' appreciation to this dead man as the coffin was being lowered into the grave. She was also sending him messages to her senior sister that had preceded him. The challenge and

lesson I took from this *death* is that it allowed one to be care free and say out your heart to the dead and the living that can hear you so that some can amend their ways.

Yes some need to amend their ways, and that was the lesson I learned from attending the burial of the father of a classmate of mine. He was a senior police officer and had quite a number of children with different wives or women at every working town station his career took him. Talk about drama at burial; it was a vintage one I had not seen since that time. We were encouraged at school to attend and stand by our classmate. When we got to the Church the Venerable Archdeacon in charge of the Church refused to allow the pallbearers to bring the coffin into the Church service unless the family paid all the Church dues this dead officer owed. When alive he never contributed to the Church building fund and rarely attended the Church services whenever he was around. The family members were told the service would be conducted outside the Church building. Quickly they contributed money and the casket was brought into the Church. During his sermon, the preacher outlined all the vices he knew that the officer had committed, which were also known to the community and asked everybody present whether he was going to hell or heaven. By *death* time he chal-



lenged all of us if the life we lived will challenge us to heaven or point us to hell? *Death* of a close person helps you to think about your own destination too as you evaluate whether the person you know when alive will really go to heaven or straight to hell.

*Death* of somebody you know could also put you in a shock for a while. That while could be a short or a long while. That shock could be like the glacier or just a block of ice that thaws. This was my experience when my mother passed away. There was no life threatening disease or major accident that happened. It was just supposed to be a simple procedure in the hospital that my parents both agreed to and the doctors also assured them that it was going to be alright. Spiritually I got it covered too. I prayed and fasted and intercessors praying along with me that the enemy cannot and would not sneak in at any time. But it happened. Unexpectedly she died. Medical explanation was that wrong blood transfusion was given; the wrong blood type was given after the procedure, which sent her into coma and she never gained consciousness. Like some people do, I asked **God** why that could have happen with all the precautions taken, both medical and spiritual. The answer I got back was quite unexplainable to me initially that *"All things work together for good for them that love God"* and secondly, *"nothing shall separate me from the love of God."* Over three decades now the shock like glacier has thawed. *Death* can throw you into a shock that only **God** can comfort but gradually the reality and comfort of the loss together would make your own living more focused and purposeful.

As a growing Christian I was privileged to be mentored and quite close to a man that belonged to the Great **God** that holds everything in place. The life of this man was an inspiration to all of us in the movement and we assumed that he was going to be around for a long time. When *death* came and translated him to heaven I realized that servants of **God** have their given assignments and time frame in which to do them. Somehow they may know and may not know the time of their departure. It makes *death* to be unpredictable and your idea of timing may not be **God's** idea of timing.

*Death* could also mean that you lose your friend and close companion that really knows you in and out. So it was when my childhood friend Lanre was taken away by *death*. We knew each other so well that we could easily bounce off each other anytime, any day and we felt comfortable with counsel from each other since both of us were also privileged to be born again and had known each other for almost 50 years. *Death* makes you identify with David when he lost Jonathan his bosom friend and encourager. The *death* of a friend closer than a brother could throw you into the hands of the Holy Spirit who actually knows you better than your bosom friend. Only that you can identify with me who talked more with my friend when he was alive than asking the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus told us knows everything about us and will always be there for us.

What is your experience with the *death* of a person known to you? The person could be quite close and with different levels of relationships. Your reaction

could range from that of silence, to uncontrollable tears, to heart felt grief, to unfulfilled promises, continuous absence at places where you had been together, to almost a shock of not accepting that the person had really gone. *Death* is a window opportunity for you and I to see an aspect of life we had not really paid attention to till now.

What is the *death* of that person exposing you to right now? How can you use your experience to make life more meaningful?

As for me, I now understand that I need to appreciate all the people I know that deserve such and let them know that I do. I realize now that they may not be there forever.

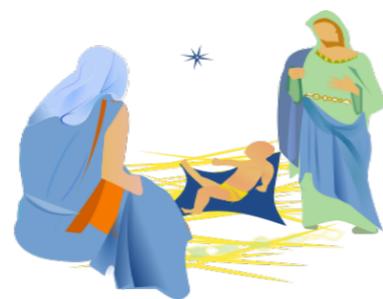
Knowing that life is meant to be purposeful and focused I now live my life purposefully each day and not sweating the small stuff; also enjoying the moments and stopping to smell the roses.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was here for only 33 purposeful and focused life. It's not really about how long but how you are living your life in line with **God's** will.

When we lose someone, let's look at it from the perspective of how **God** had purposed that life to be and what life lessons we can personally learn to make our own lives more meaningful and very rewarding.

I was privileged to speak at the home going of a young Christian footballer who died suddenly while practicing for a match. **God** made me to understand in that message that we are written epistles whose lives are read by all around us and those we come into contact with. However just as the Bible contain various books, chapters and verses- long, medium and short, but has its message to man, so also our lives. As books of the Bible have their significant messages, so also our lives should have its impact on those we have been sent to. As the books in the Bible varies so also our purpose and length of life varies.

As you encounter the *death* of a known person, what is the message that comes across to you? Solomon in the scriptures said we are wiser when we visit the house of the dead. Are you wiser today with all the knowledge of those who have gone beyond? Enrich your purposeful life by your life lessons of their *death*.



## EMPOWERING YOU TO FULFILL YOUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY



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*'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.'*

**ACTS 10v 38**

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