

# THE GREAT COMMISSION AS THE CORE TASK OF THE CHURCH

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In the Bible, God reveals His love for lost people, His passion to bring these lost peoples back to fellowship with Himself and His desire to use His Church for that purpose. Mission is a commission which the Church received from the Lord Jesus. Because of its importance, scope and the person that gave it, we qualify it - the Great Commission. What then is the Great Commission and what are the dimensions of the mandate handed down by our Lord Jesus Christ to the Church? What is the Church and what does she exist for? Would it be correct to assert that reaching out to the world is the core task of the Church? What about Worship and Perfecting of the Saints? What is the relationship between the Church and the Great Commission? What is a right identity for the Church? Why are labourers in short supply to reap the harvest entrusted to the Church? How do we create a right environment in our local assemblies that would enhance the emergence of harvest labourers? If the effectiveness of the Church is hinged on Obedient Disciples, how can we multiply obedient disciples across our local assemblies? How can we step up our care for the dying and perishing around us? How can we mainstream the Great Commission as the core task of our local Assemblies? These are some of the issues we shall be engaging with under the topic: The Great Commission as the core task of the Church.

## ***What is the Great Commission and what are the dimensions and scope of the Mandate?***

It's the command given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church to make disciples of Him in every Ethne, Nation or Tribe of the World - *Mat 28:19*. It is preaching the message of repentance and remission of sins among all Nations, *Luke 24:48*. It is preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness to all Nations - *Mat 24:14* & *Acts 1:8*. The Gospel is called the gospel of the Kingdom since it is through the preaching of the gospel that the Kingdom of God is offered to men, and established among them. The Great Commission is the fulfilling of the covenant of God to Abraham to bless him and to bless all the families of the earth through him *Gen 12:2-3*. It is the continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth which includes preaching the gospel of the Kingdom; healing, deliverances, social action/good works and community transformation - *Luke 4:18-19*, *Acts 10:32*, *2 Cor 5:18-19*, *John 20:21*, *Eph. 2:10*, *Tit 2:14*, *Mat 25:34-40*.

In *Mat 24:14*, *Psalm 2:8*, *22:27*, we see **the two dimensions of the mandate; the geographical dimension** i.e. preaching in all the world, *Mk 16:15* & *Acts 1:8* - Go into all the world - world of the geographer and of the sociologist, and

**the cultural dimension** - Preaching to all the Nations, making disciples of all Ethne or Nations - *Mat 28:19* & *Psalm 2:8*. In *Psalm 22:27* - All the ends of the earth - geographical, and all the families of the Nation - expresses the cultural dimension.

**Goal of evangelism** is to get individual souls to repent and be converted while **the goal of Mission** is to establish a Local Assembly which would be God's agent and tool of transformation among the people. In evangelism we concentrate on individual souls, but in Mission we are concerned about the people as a whole. Evangelism is often a short term project while Mission is always long term. Evangelism is an important element in Mission but Mission goes beyond evangelism.

**What is the Church?** *Mat 16:18*. The Church is the body made up of people circumcised in heart, to whom the Lord commits the issues of the Kingdom of God. She is the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head and Christians are the members. The word church could mean an assembly of believers meeting in a house - *Rom 16:5*, or the whole body of believers - *Eph 3:10*. We note however, that it was never used to refer to a building or the place of gathering of the assembly.

**What is the Core Task of the Church?** A Mission Leader friend of mine contends that the Church exist for Up-reach, In-reach and Out-reach. **Up reach implies Worship of God** - *Lk 4:8*, *John 4:23*, *1Pet 2:5* & *9*, **In-reach has to do with Perfecting of Saints** - *Acts 2:42*, *Eph 4:11-12*, *Col 1:28* and **Outreach** has to do with *Preaching Christ* - *Acts 1:8*, *Acts 5:42*. While the Worship of Jehovah will continue in heaven, I observe that the purpose number 2 - in-reach, is tied to number 3 in that the perfecting of the Saints is for the work of the ministry which is outreach. On the other hand, reaching the lost, preaching and demonstrating the gospel is an activity limited to our sojourn on earth, the first two is like the springboard for the third, in that they create the necessary atmosphere for spirit led mission work. The teaching and discipleship program equip members to play their roles in Mission. **It would therefore be correct to say that reaching out to the world, outreach, is the core task of the Church.** The

**“The Church is the body made up of people circumcised in heart, to whom the Lord commits the issues of the Kingdom of God.”**

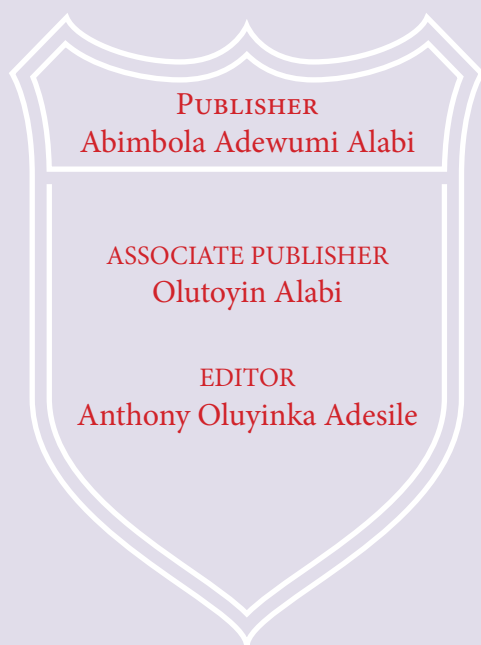
## IN THIS EDITION:

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Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?  
Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre went with me  
Human anger is never a legitimate tool to promote God's useful purpose  
We are debtors—not to the flesh

## Welcome to Panoplia.

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

It is published quarterly by City Of Refuge Ministries Inc. and is distributed free of charge.



Most quotations in this newsletter are from the **Holy Bible, King James Version.**

Feel free to write to us if you have comments, contributions, observations or reactions to articles published in this journal.

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evangelization of the World is the supreme task of the Church, in fact, it is her raison d'être, reason for being. Missions is the essence of Churchhood. So the body of Christ is Christ's agent for his Mission work and the local assemblies are the direct executors.

**Mission is not first what the Church does, it starts from who the Church is.** Mission has its

root in her nature! The Church's nature and her different functions are conceived in view of her missionary calling. The missionary calling of the Church predates her existence, it has its root in the call of Abraham *Gen 12:1-3*. She is the great nation that Abraham was to become v.2, and she is the nation through which God was to bless the other Nations v.3. **God's eternal purpose was to extend His redemptive blessings to all the families of the earth through the descendants of Abraham, which is the Church.** Israel was the starting point of God's program to reconcile the Nations back to Himself. Israel and by implications the Church has been given the stewardship of the kingdom of God on earth. All the special blessings which the people of Israel enjoyed were in view of the missionary task that the Lord committed to them. They were to Israel what miracles and the power of the Holy Spirit are to the Church - evidence of divine presence and empowerment in view of the missionary mandate. **Sadly many local congregations have much deviated from the conception of God, thereby ignoring the big burden in the heart of God and despising the essence of their existence.** What is the point in having a local Assembly so full, loud and noisy, yet our cities and communities are not reached? Our parishes are full but labourers are few!

## POSERS/ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Why has our acceptance of the missionary mandate not translated into a phenomenal thrust of men and materials into the neediest regions of the world like India, China, Pakistan, the Sahel and the Maghreb? *Rom 15: 20*. Why does huge section of our parishes exhibit serious indifference to the eternal destiny of millions of lost souls all around us? Why are labourers to work the harvest so few within our local assemblies? **How can the flame of evangelistic zeal and godly passion that worked through the early Church be recovered in our local assemblies today?** How can we as a denomination step up our care for the dying and the perishing around us? Can it be said of us that these Pastors and leaders of local assemblies have turned our cities right side up like in *Acts 17:6*? **Recently, the Church got a dirty slap from the world, the world was in chaos and confusion, and it needed to redefine its essential service providers for humanity, and the Church did not make the list! Did we get the message?**

## ACTION STEPS, - GOING FORWARD

As local Assemblies, we need to create an environment that would enhance the emergence of labourers so as to address the prevailing short supply of workers to reap the harvest entrusted to us. Labourers are not only members of our Missions & Evangelism groups, nor missionaries working amongst UPGs, every believer in our local assemblies should be a labourer with God in his harvest! **Sadly, many of our members don't have passion for the lost, nor the burden to be harvest labourers, their dream is to live well! How do we as Priests correct that? How do we revive a lethargic Church?** The Church cannot evangelize until she is sure of her Evangel, our witness must flow from evangelical experience and according to 1 John 1:1-3, we must not merely imitate a performance but share a reality! We therefore need to examine the quality of our teachings and move away from teachings that breeds a generation of self-centred and self-serving Christians: lovers of themselves, lovers of money, lovers of pleasures and ceremonies more than lovers of God.

Across our local assemblies, we need to recover an intense love for Jesus and compassion for the lost for whom He died. As Pastors, we need to address the prevailing ignorance of the missionary calling of the believer and of the Church, 2 Cor 5:18-19, ignorance of the spiritual state of the lost -Mat 9: 36, challenge harvest-blindness and nurture harvest-eyes- John 4:34-35, & Luke 15:4.

How do we move forward in the fulfilment of the Great Commission at such unprecedented times that we are in with the global COVID 19 pandemic? I observe that God has neither vacated His commission to the Church nor change His heart for the Nations. His verdict remains: The wicked shall be turned to hell, and all the Nations that forget God-Psalm 9:17 and Ask of me,





I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession. What new Mission initiatives and opportunities do we need to be sensitive to in a pandemic and post COVID 19 era?

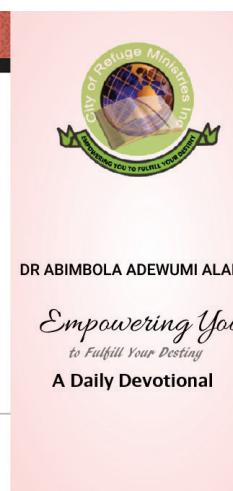
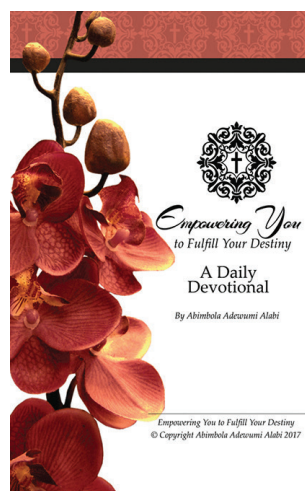
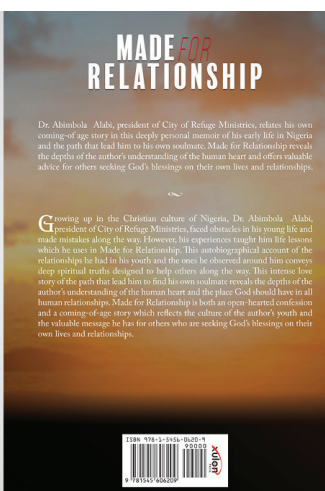
Since the Great Commission was committed to Disciples and not multitudes who were following Jesus for various selfish reasons that Jesus could not commit himself to them, we need to return to Obedience based discipleship. Beloved Pastors and leaders, the effectiveness of the Church would hinge on obedient disciples. Correct discipleship engenders brokenness, dethrones self from the centre of a believer's life and makes Jesus the centre so that such believers would no longer live unto themselves but unto Him who loved them and died for them. What is our discipleship curriculum?

Need to re-defined our priorities as a denomination and define our essence in the cities where God has planted us. Moreover, we need to disrupts our habitual programs and prioritize outreach to the lost, care for the poor and the dying as we deploy human and material resources to engage the lost. Get ready, some members may complain that there is departure from what they were used to and had been keeping them in the Church.

God is executing a plan on planet earth today and the Christian Church is at the heart of that eternal plan. In view of the above, how would you respond to God's call to you as a Church Leader and to your congregation, what definite actions would you take, what is going to change in the way that you do Church in view of God's call to Missions in places where Christ is not yet known? May God stir your heart to mobilize your Church for active engagement in the Great Commission.



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“Think of the bright future waiting for all the families of honest and innocent and peace-loving people. But not a trace will be left of the wicked or their families.” Psalm 37:37-38 (CEV)

What type of family are you raising?

What type of person are you?

What you become has an impact on your family and generations after you.

From the very beginning, God decided that the real influencing factor in this world is the family.

The Godly man is fast becoming extinct!!!

“Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.” Psalm 12:1 (KJV)

Don't just be concerned about yourself alone.

Think again today about your family's influence on your community and the world at large.

“But you can tell who are the blameless and spiritually mature. What

## Families of honest, innocent, and peace-loving people

a different story with them! The godly ones will have a peaceful, prosperous future with a happy ending. Every evil sinner will be destroyed, obliterated. They'll be utter failures with no future!”

Psalm 37:37-38 (TPT)

What type of legacy are you leaving behind?

God said of Abraham that he will guide his family right, and he did.

“I have chosen him to teach his family to obey me forever and to do what is right and fair. Then I will give Abraham many descendants, just as I promised.” Genesis 18:19 (CEV)

“Great blessing and wealth fill the house of the wise, for their integrity endures forever.” Psalm 112:3 (TPT)

What are you teaching your family?

Does your family have a future with God?

By Dr. Abimbola Alabi



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## YOUR OPPORTUNITIES WILL COME AGAIN

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By Johnson Joel

Have you missed or lost opportunities in the past? Take heart. They'll come calling again. Expect them. Just you be more observant to recognize them when they do.

You must be conversant with the adage, "Opportunity knocks only once." Well, that's true only in the sense that an opportunity usually won't come back dressed the same way or bearing the same appearance but, come back, it will. You need to understand that, because you grow older with time, and things around you change, returning opportunities have to keep up with the times and be up-to-date in relevance to your life. That's why they likely won't appear the same on their return. If the last time you missed an opportunity when it came on a motorcycle, the next time, it might visit in a car. If it was a little boy tapping your knee to get your attention, it could be him returning, now a little grown up, offering you a hand. If you missed it as a surface mail, an e-mail might be the way it checks back. One way or another, that opportunity will come calling again.

The reality of life is that opportunities do come knocking again. However, many miss their returning opportunities because they disqualify themselves from regaining those lost opportunities. It's common for a person in such a disappointing circumstance to declare in self-recrimination, "That's it. That was stupid of me. I'll

never have such an opportunity again." That, unfortunately, is wrong programming. You see, God has factored human imperfections into life's equations. He has prepared plugs and re-fills for the leaks of human misadventures. That's why you find words like "repentance," "reconciliation," "restoration" and the like in scriptures. That's the reason to always hope for a "second chance."

True, you must learn to seize opportunities. That's really, very important. You must be able to identify, evaluate and lay hold of the right opportunity at the right time. You also must learn, however, to recover fast in the undesirable but likely event of a lost opportunity, and deliberately expect and prepare for its return. No, it might not look exactly like the one you lost, presented the exact way it had been earlier - it most likely won't. You'll therefore need to be able to see beneath the make-up, pry under the costume or look behind the personality, to identify an opportunity when it returns.

Yes, yes, your opportunities will return to you because they bear only one name and address - yours!

## BE STRONG, ALERT, AND COURAGEOUS

By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

"Yet now be strong, alert, and courageous, O Zerubbabel, says the Lord; be strong, alert, and courageous, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, alert, and courageous, all you people of the land, says the Lord, and work! For I am with you, says the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:4 AMPC

In times and seasons like this, please remain strong.

"Say to those who are of a fearful and hasty heart, Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance; with the recompense of God, He will come and save you." Isaiah 35:4 AMPC

"Be strong, courageous, and firm; fear not nor be in terror before them, for it is the Lord your God Who goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6 AMPC

Don't be afraid.

"Have not I commanded you? Be strong, vigorous, and very courageous. Be not afraid, neither be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 AMPC

There are about 54 explicit occurrences that the phrase be strong and courageous in the Bible.

More than 1 per week for us to understand that God provides strength and courage for His purposeful assignment in our life

Don't give up.

Don't be stagnant, move forward.

Don't say, can I make it?

The red sea was an obstacle, but Moses, being led by God, moved forward.

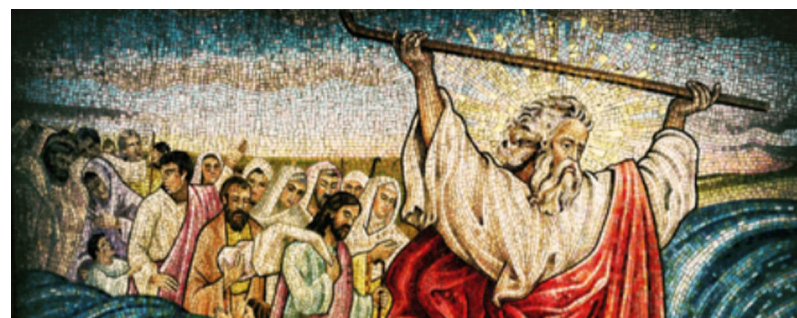
Yes you can

Yes you will

Whatever the challenge is.

Remember, You are on the Lord's side.

Be strong, alert, and courageous.





By Johnson J. Joel

# Harness each day

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The months of September to December have come to be known as “ember” months. Three of these months end with the five letters that form the coinage while October manages to fit in because it shares the three-letter ending, “ber” with the others.

Each year, in many christian circles, the tempo of prayers rises in the ember months. This, among other purposes, is meant to match the perceived rise in demonic activity that’s aimed at keeping people from witnessing the following year. Fasts, prayers and prophetic declarations during these months focus much on ensuring the devotees make it into the new year. The question must be asked, however, what’s special about these ember months.

January and February end with “ary,” making them ary months. June and July start with “Ju.” They are ju months. April, June, September and November are 30-day months. Call them 30th months. Each of these groups of months too is special in a way. The most unique month is February, the only one having less than 30 days. The 29-day February is particularly special because it comes around just once in 4 years. Ideally, this leap-year month should have a special significance in the world of evil spirits. Yet, it’s the ember months that the devil is believed to be most active in.

So, what happens after the 31st of December, when the people have successfully crossed into the new year? Does the devil withdraw his forces from the earth or reduce them drastically, having little or nothing for them to do anymore until the next ember months come around? The bible indicates otherwise. Here is 1Pet5:8: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” The danger that the devil and his cohorts pose is not limited to certain days of the year or specific times of the day. The threat the enemy constitutes is on-going; it’s continuous. So if you need intense prayer vigils and round-the-clock fasts to make it to 1st of January, be sure you’ll still need them again to survive till the 21st and 31st of this first “ary” month of the year as well. Whatever you have to do to keep alive till the end of December you must also do to survive the “ju” months too. The devil prowls everywhere he can everyday of every month of every year. March is as good a time for him to do harm as October. Whatever calamities he’s able to visit on people in the month

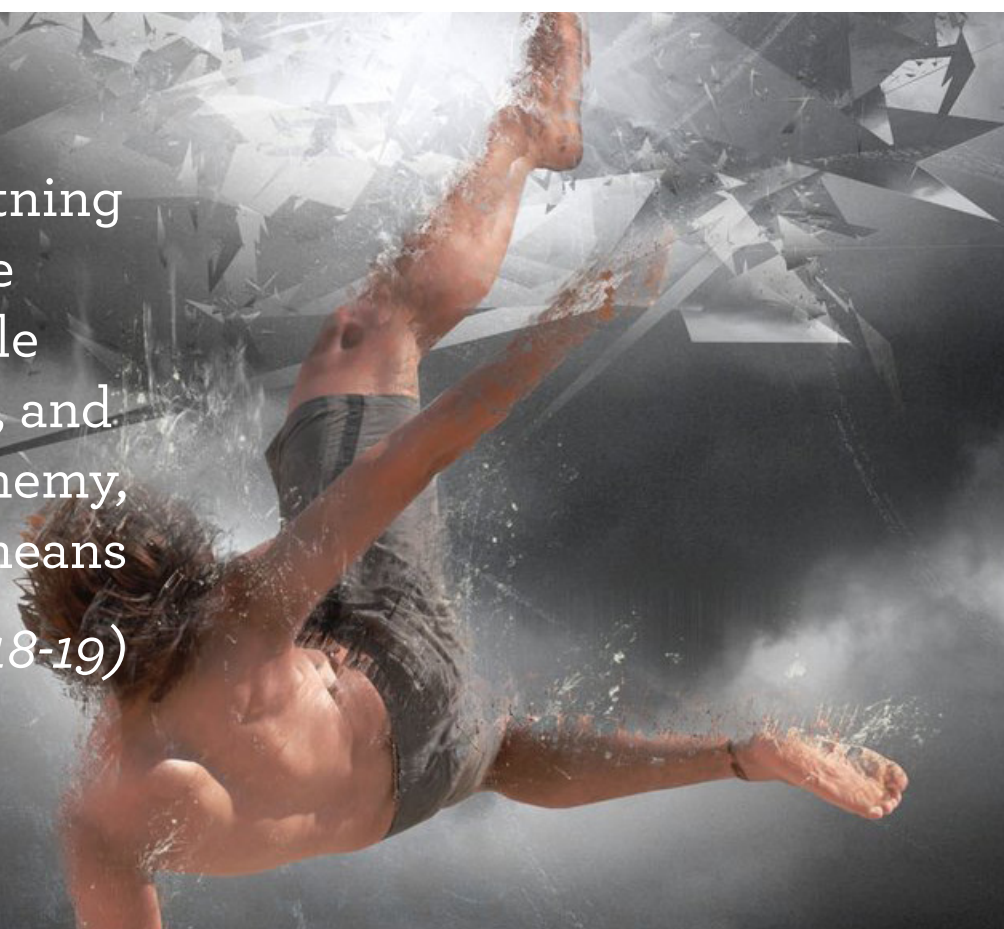
of May would be just as pleasurable to him as those in ember months. That’s why the instruction reads, “Be sober... be vigilant.”

Being vigilant of course doesn’t mean being fearful and restless. Eph6:11 reads, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Subsequent verses then feature key expressions that explain the “armour.” They are: “righteousness” (v14); “gospel of peace” (v15); “shield of faith” (v16); “salvation... sword of the Spirit” (v17). We can deduce from the context of these references and other new testament scripture passages such as 2Cor10:4-5, 1Tim6:12, 1Jn4:1-4 and the like that being vigilant is about being filled with God’s word, standing firm in faith and staying alert in spirit to avoid falling for the enemy’s tricks. That’s right; the devil has nothing but tricks because the Lord has assured us, “...I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Lk10:18-19). So, for the devil to get you, he must trick you out of your faith. Now, if you’re of the kind who tie “spiritual warfare” to specific times of the day or seasons of the year, you’ve fallen for a trick already. You’ve been sold a lie that will keep you busy with religious frivolities and distract you from your life’s purpose. Here’s what Paul the apostle has written to people who get fooled like that, “But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” (Gal4:9-11).

You therefore need to disengage yourself from such irrelevant seasonal religious activities that have been dressed up as spiritual warfare. Then, settle down to a personal walk with God, building your faith and pursuing your purpose. Those are what you should get busy with, harnessing each day’s resources and tapping the potentials of each month, without treating any day or month as special than others. Jesus is Lord everyday, every month and every year. He’s the same yesterday, today and always (Heb13:8).

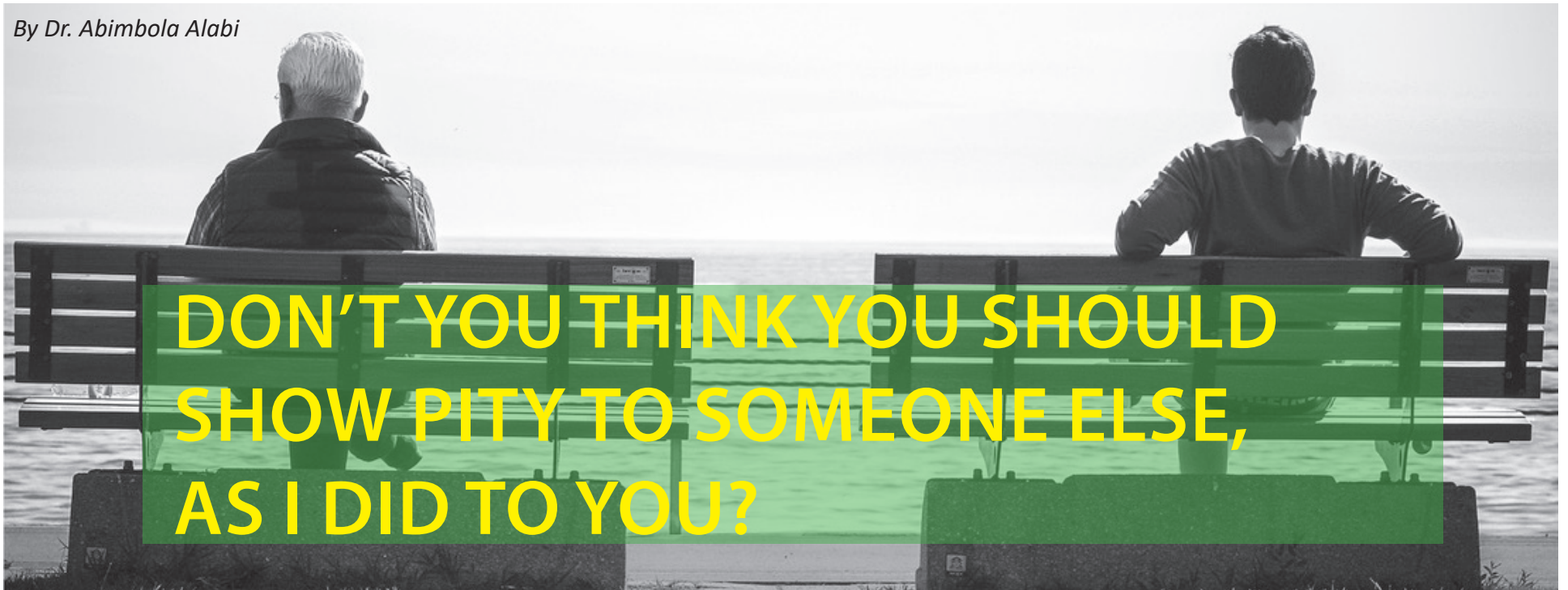
(Quotations are from the NKJV.)

“...I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”  
(Lk 10:18-19)





By Dr. Abimbola Alabi



“The king called the first official back in and said, “You’re an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. Don’t you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?” The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed. That is how my Father in heaven will treat you if you don’t forgive each of my followers with all your heart.” *Matthew 18:32-35 (CEV)*

Don’t you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?”

Should you not have had pity and mercy on your fellow attendant, as I had compassion and kindness on you?

Why didn’t you show the same mercy to your fellow servant that I showed to you?’

Why are you not easily forgiving that other person who offended you as God has forgiven you?

Sometimes we find it very difficult to release another person who has offended us in our heart.

Treat other servants of the Lord with the love and mercy God has extended to you.

Don’t fall out of the Grace of God through the “cold treatment” you are giving others that have crossed your path.

“You may discipline us for our many sins, but never as much as we really deserve. Nor do you get even with us for what we’ve done. Higher than the highest heavens— that’s how high your tender mercy extends!

Greater than the grandeur of heaven above is the greatness of your loyal love, towering over all who fear you and bow down before you!”

*Psalms 103:10-11 (TPT)*

You also need to forgive yourself too.

Don’t perpetually carry the guilt of what you have done wrong.

As you have fully confessed to God and completely turn away from that sin :

Walk in the newness of life that God has given you.

“Forgive us the wrongs we have done as we ourselves release forgiveness to those who have wronged us.” *Matthew 6:12(TPT)*

Please Forgive those who have offended you.



## ANER, ESHCOL, AND MAMRE WENT WITH ME

“Let my share be the food that my men have eaten. But Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre went with me, so give them their share of what we brought back.” *Genesis 14:24 (CEV)*

Abraham did not only fight the war that led to the rescue of Lot with only the 318 men in his house.

He also had three allies that fought the battle with him.

“At this time Abram the Hebrew was living near the oaks that belonged to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his brothers Eshcol and Aner were Abram’s friends. Someone who had escaped from the battle told Abram” *Genesis 14:13(CEV)*

Who are your allies that are by your side as you handle God’s assignments?

“People lose their way without wise leadership, but a nation succeeds and stands in victory when it has many good counselors to guide it.”

*Proverbs 11:14 (TPT)*

“Where no wise guidance is, the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” *Proverbs 11:14 (AMPC)*

Who are your counselors that fully buy into your vision?

“Ahithophel and Hushai the Archite were two of David’s advisors.” *1 Chronicles 27:33(CEV)*

Jesus Christ, even amongst the 12 disciples, had the 3 that were closer than the rest.

Jesus took the three to places He didn’t take the twelve!

“Your plans will fall apart right in front of you if you fail to get good advice.

But if you first seek out multiple counselors, you’ll watch your plans succeed.”

*Proverbs 15:22 (TPT)*

Let the Holy Spirit guide you in knowing who your real helpers of destiny are.



# HUMAN ANGER IS NEVER A LEGITIMATE TOOL TO PROMOTE GOD'S USEFUL PURPOSE

By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

“For human anger is never a legitimate tool to promote God’s righteous purpose.” James 1: 20(TPT)

Do you ever feel that God is not handling the situation, right?

Yes, you sometimes want to handle some annoying things on God’s behalf?

You have assessed the situation, and you are literally boiling?

Before you act as the representative of God, remember this:

If you are angry, you cannot do any good thing that God wants to be done.

For anger doesn’t make us useful.

An angry person doesn’t do what God approves of.

Cain was angry because he knew God rejected his offerings.

“Saul was furious with Jonathan and yelled, “You’re no son of mine, you traitor! I know you’ve chosen to be loyal to that son of Jesse. You should be ashamed of yourself! And your own mother should be ashamed that you were ever born.” 1Samuel 20:30

Saul was already out of God’s will because of disobedience.

As humans, you rarely see the complete picture at that moment.

When you speak out of anger:

You Yell

You use derogatory words.

You are not right because the anger has beclouded your sense of judgment.

. “anger comes from a clash in perspectives.”

Before you express yourself in anger, ask yourself whose view are you representing, God or man?

Holy anger of God does exist.

Provocation purely by God’s zeal sometimes occurs.

As Jesus did in correcting the use of the temple. ( Matthew 21)

God’s anger against sin. (Romans 1:18-20)

Human anger is purely from the flesh.

Road rage?

Never let it get hold of you.

Allow them to go away with their provocation.

You will surely get to your destination.

Before you react to that situation, ask yourself whose perspective are you conveying?



By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

# WE ARE DEBTORS—NOT TO THE FLESH

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” Romans 8:12 (NKJV)

“Its payback time. ‘

Definitely, you have heard that expression before.

Or someone tells you I owe you one.

Or much more, “you owe me one.”

We are all debtors to God’s Grace and forgiving mercy.

Do you sometimes reflect on how much you owe God?

Yes, Jesus Christ paid it all.

Pause and think of what man would be without the redemptive Grace.

Jesus said it is finished.

Can you imagine what it would have been without Salvation?

Definitely, you owe God, not just one but multiples.

Think of His Favor!

Think of His Protection over you 24/7

Think of His uncountable Blessings towards you in so many ways.

When as humans, we can say to one another, “I owe you one.”

Reflect on how much you owe God.

However, as our text emphasized:

The payback is not through your works of the flesh.

It is purely by Daily living right with God.

“O Lord, our God, no one can compare with you. Such wonderful works and miracles are all found with you! And you think of us all the time with your countless expressions of love— far exceeding our expectations! “ Psalms 40:5 (TPT)

You sometimes express that obligation to give back to the family, old school, community, and different places.

What are you giving back to God?

“So, my brothers, we must not live the way our bodies want us to live.

We must not be ruled by our wrong ways.” Romans 8:12 (WE)

Give back to God the way HE wants.

Let your life be a continuous thanksgiving to HIM.

# EMPOWERING YOU TO FULFILL YOUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY



*‘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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