



WHEN APPRECIATION BECOMES INFLUENCE

Honoring Christian Leaders Without Turning Honor into a Transaction

A leadership reflection for the Church

Abimbola Adewumi Alabi

Christian leaders need encouragement, and those who serve faithfully should be honored. At the same time, the Church must be careful that genuine appreciation does not become a system of influence in which gifts, titles, access, responsibilities, or spiritual attention are exchanged. The question is not whether appreciation is biblical. It is. The question is what happens when appreciation stops being a free expression of gratitude and becomes a means of gaining an advantage.

The Thin Line Between a Gift and a Bribe

Most people understand that a bribe is wrong. Scripture is equally clear. God is described as One who shows no partiality and does not accept bribes (Deuteronomy 10:17). Leaders who exercise judgment are warned against partiality and the taking of bribes (2 Chronicles 19:7). In the New Testament, the account of Simon the sorcerer is another serious warning: he attempted to obtain spiritual power through money and was sharply rebuked by Peter (Acts 8:18–23).

A bribe is not defined merely by the value of the gift. The deeper issue is the purpose and expectation attached to it. When a gift is offered with the expectation that the recipient will provide something to which the giver is not otherwise entitled—special access, a position, preferential treatment, a favorable decision, or spiritual favor—the gift has become transactional.

This distinction matters in Christian leadership because spiritual authority must never be placed on the market. No one should be made to feel that prayer, prophecy, ministry opportunity, recognition, church office, or pastoral attention can be purchased.

Appreciation is beautiful
when it remains appreciation.
It becomes dangerous
when it becomes a transaction.

— Abimbola Adewumi Alabi

Appreciation Is Biblical—But It Must Remain Honor

The answer is not to eliminate appreciation. Scripture teaches believers to honor those who serve faithfully. Paul instructs the church to regard elders who lead well, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching, as worthy of honor (1 Timothy 5:17–18). He also teaches believers to share good things with those who teach them the Word (Galatians 6:6). Giving itself is commended when it is offered willingly and cheerfully rather than under pressure or manipulation (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Therefore, a church may appropriately recognize a pastor, missionary, ministry worker, or other Christian leader with words of gratitude, a meal, a gift, financial support, practical assistance, or another expression of honor. Such appreciation can strengthen weary servants and remind leaders that their labor is seen and valued.

The problem begins when appreciation carries an unwritten contract: “Because I gave, I should receive.” That expectation changes the nature of the gift. Christian giving should not create a debt of personal loyalty that overrides wisdom, fairness, accountability, or the leading of the Holy Spirit.

When the Appreciation List Becomes a Power List

One danger arises when a leader begins to remember the people who give the most and unconsciously treats them differently from everyone else. The generous giver becomes the first person called when a project needs funding. That person may then receive unusual access, prominent responsibilities, a preferred seat, a title, or influence over decisions.

At that point, the issue is no longer appreciation. It is favoritism. James warns believers not to give privileged treatment to people because of their social or financial standing (James 2:1–4). The principle applies powerfully to church leadership: a person’s generosity must not determine his or her spiritual value, access to the shepherd, or standing in the body of Christ.

Leadership appointments should therefore be based on biblical character, spiritual maturity, gifting, faithfulness, and the needs of the ministry—not on the size of a person’s contribution. Money may support ministry, but money must never become a qualification for spiritual authority.

Leaders Must Resist the Pressure to Repay Gifts

This responsibility does not rest only with those who give. Christian leaders must also examine their own hearts. Peter instructed elders to shepherd God’s flock willingly, not for dishonest gain, and not by domineering over those entrusted to their care, but by being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2–3).

A leader who begins assigning responsibilities, making appointments, granting access, or changing decisions because someone has given generously risks allowing financial relationships to distort spiritual judgment. The leader may still call the arrangement “appreciation,” but the practical effect can be favoritism.

Faithful leadership sometimes requires a leader to disappoint a generous supporter. A donor may not be the right person for a particular assignment. A major giver may not be qualified for an office. A person who contributes substantially may still need to wait, submit to the same process as others, or accept a decision he or she does not like. Integrity means doing what is right even when doing so is financially inconvenient.

Do Not Build Ministry Around People’s Money

Another danger is designing church programs around the assumption that certain individuals will pay for them. A leader may begin a project because it is needed—or because it is desirable—but already have particular people in mind as the expected financiers. Over time, this can place an unhealthy burden on members and create an informal hierarchy based on capacity to give.

Church leaders should prayerfully discern ministry priorities before identifying funding sources. This

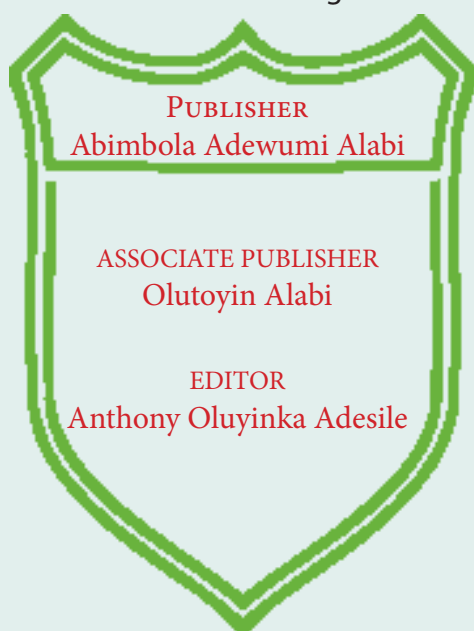
IN THIS EDITION:

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Welcome to Panoplia.

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does not mean ignoring wise budgeting, fundraising, grants, pledges, or designated gifts. It means refusing to make people feel that their relationship with the church or their standing with leadership depends upon financing the ministry.

Paul's teaching on giving emphasizes willingness rather than compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:7). Christian generosity is a response to grace, not a payment for influence.

Depend on the Holy Spirit, Not on a Donor Network

The original concern behind this article is ultimately a question of spiritual dependence. Christian leaders are called to be led by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 teaches that those who are led by the Spirit of God are God's children. That principle should shape decisions about people, positions, projects, finances, and ministry priorities.

A leader should be able to pray, "Lord, whom should I appoint?" without allowing the answer to be determined by, "Who gave the most?" A pastor should be able to ask, "What should we do next?" without first asking, "Who can pay for it?" And a church member should be able to give without wondering whether the gift will purchase influence.

Dependence on God does not eliminate planning or responsible stewardship. It puts them in their proper place. Prayer, wise counsel, transparent processes, sound financial practices, and Spirit-led discernment should work together so that ministry is not controlled by money.

A Healthier Culture of Appreciation

- **Honor without favoritism.** Thank people sincerely, but give honor and pastoral care without creating an inner circle based on wealth.
- **Give without purchasing.** Encourage generosity as worship and service, never as a means of obtaining a title, position, access, or spiritual outcome.
- **Lead without indebtedness.** Leaders should receive legitimate support gratefully without feeling obligated to repay gifts with influence.
- **Appoint by character and calling.** Use biblical qualifications, gifting, maturity, faithfulness, and ministry needs—not financial contribution—as the basis for leadership responsibility.
- **Plan without manipulating.** Build ministry budgets and projects responsibly without quietly targeting particular members as the expected source of funding.
- **Keep accountability strong.** Transparent financial procedures and shared leadership can help protect both leaders and members from conflicts of interest.

The Test of Genuine Appreciation

A simple question can help both leaders and members examine their motives: "Would I still give this gift if I received no special treatment in return?" If the answer is yes, the gift is much more clearly an expression of gratitude. Likewise, leaders can ask: "Would I make the same decision if this person had given nothing?" That question can expose hidden favoritism.

Christian appreciation should release gratitude, not obligation; strengthen service, not purchase influence; and honor people without compromising justice. The Church must never imitate a culture in which access and advantage go to those who can pay the most.

A Call to Christian Leaders

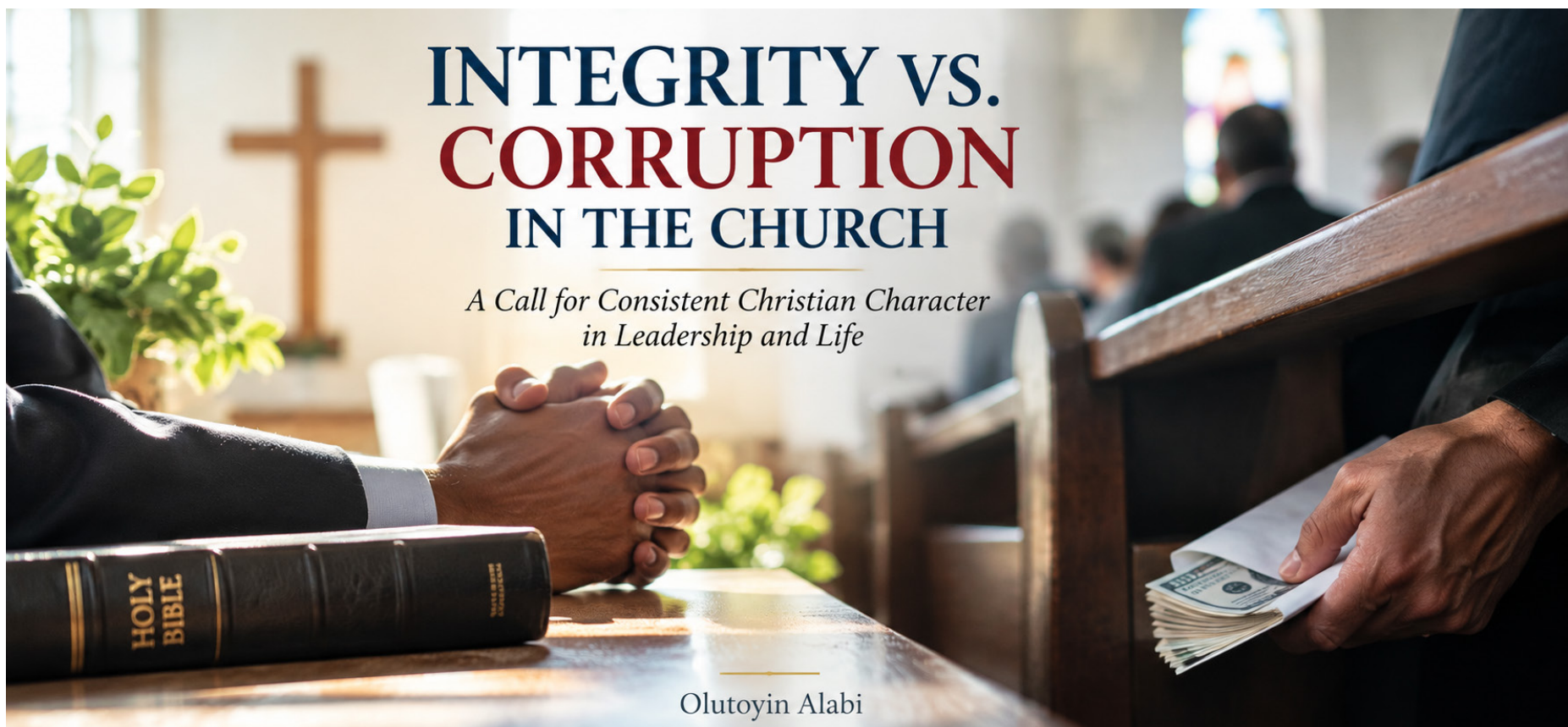
Let us recover the beauty of biblical honor. Let us appreciate faithful servants generously and receive legitimate gifts with gratitude. But let us also guard the altar of spiritual integrity.

Do not allow gifts to determine whom you favor. Do not assign ministry responsibilities because someone financed a project. Do not give titles to satisfy donors. Do not create an expectation that prayer, access, recognition, or spiritual blessing can be obtained through money. And do not burden people with projects simply because you know they have the means to finance them.

Instead, seek God first. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Lead with impartiality. Give people room to serve according to their calling and character. Establish transparent processes. Receive appreciation as a gift, not as a debt.

The Church does not need to choose between honoring its leaders and maintaining integrity. It can—and must—do both. Appreciation is beautiful when it remains appreciation. It becomes dangerous when it becomes a transaction.





INTEGRITY VS. CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCH

*A Call for Consistent Christian Character
in Leadership and Life*

Olutoyin Alabi

The Central Theme

Christian integrity is moral wholeness and consistency: our private lives, public ministry, relationships, stewardship, speech, and decisions are brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Corruption begins when we compromise truth for improper personal, financial, relational, or institutional advantage. For Christian leaders, integrity is not merely a personal virtue; it is part of the Church's witness to Christ.

Integrity Means Wholeness

Integrity means being truthful and consistent, rather than becoming a different person for the audience, location, or opportunity. Joseph remained faithful in his father's house and in Potiphar's house. When tempted, he refused because he would not commit a great evil and sin against God (Genesis 39:7–12). His character did not depend on who was watching. The leadership question is therefore not simply, "How do I appear before people?" but, "Who am I before God when no one else is watching?"

The Character of the God We Represent

The original manuscript rightly connects integrity with God's character. Deuteronomy 6:4 declares that the LORD is one, and Scripture repeatedly affirms God's faithfulness and unchanging character (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). These truths do not mean Christians possess God's literal "DNA." Rather, believers belong to Christ and are called to reflect His character. We are being transformed into Christ's likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18) and called to put on the new self in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22–24).

The Church Is an Open Book Before God

God examines the heart. David declared that God tests the heart and is pleased with integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17). The immediate context concerns willing offerings for the temple, but it also reveals an important leadership principle: God sees motives as well as actions.

A ministry may look impressive publicly while hidden dishonesty, greed, pride, or misuse of authority remains unaddressed. Christian integrity requires bringing the whole person under Christ's transforming rule.

The Bride of Christ Must Reflect Christ

The Church is portrayed as Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:25–27; Revelation 19:7–8). This calls the Church to holiness and faithfulness. Paul says believers have access to the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), and Philippians 2:5 calls them to the mindset displayed in Christ Jesus. This means that Christ's humility, obedience, sacrificial love, and submission to the Father should increasingly shape Christian leadership. Romans 12:2 adds that transformation occurs through the renewing of the mind.

Speak the Truth. Practice the Truth.

Zechariah 8:16–17 calls God's people to speak truth, practice just judgment, reject schemes of harm, and refuse false testimony. Jesus taught that a disciple's "Yes" and "No" should be trustworthy (Matthew 5:37), and James repeats this principle in James 5:12. A healthy church should therefore be known for truthful communication, transparent stewardship, just treatment, faithful promises, and refusal to manipulate facts for personal or institutional advantage.

Integrity and the Church's Witness

The original manuscript asks whether lack of integrity can drain the Church of God's anointing. That question needs careful wording: Scripture does not give a simple formula for attributing every decline in visible spiritual fruit to one moral failure. Yet Scripture clearly teaches that hypocrisy damages Christian witness. Jesus confronted religious hypocrisy (Matthew 23), and 1 John 1:6 warns that claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness contradicts the truth. The Church's credibility is strengthened when its message and conduct agree. Zechariah 8:23 gives a prophetic picture of people recognizing God's presence among His people.



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What Does Corruption Look Like?

Corruption occurs when moral responsibility is compromised for improper advantage. In church leadership, it may show up as dishonesty, misuse of funds, favoritism, manipulation, abuse of authority, conflicts of interest, false reporting, sexual misconduct, nepotism, or using spiritual office for personal gain. The underlying issue is stewardship: something God entrusted is used contrary to God's purposes.

Gideon: Refusing Personal Glory

When Israel asked Gideon to rule over them, Gideon refused and declared that the LORD would rule over them (Judges 8:22–23). This is a valuable example of refusing personal glory. However, the account later records that Gideon requested gold and made an ephod that became a snare to Israel (Judges 8:24–27). Gideon should therefore not be presented as an uncomplicated model of integrity throughout the entire narrative. His story warns leaders that resisting one form of self-exaltation does not make anyone immune to later compromise.

Saul: Selective Obedience

Saul's failure in 1 Samuel 15 directly warns against selective obedience. God commanded Saul to destroy Amalek, but Saul spared Agag and kept the best livestock. When confronted, he justified his actions. Samuel responded that obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22–23). Saul's failure involved disobedience, fear of people, rejection of God's word, insecurity, jealousy, and misuse of authority. His later pursuit of David shows how compromised leadership can spread into destructive relationships.

Ananias and Sapphira: Deliberate Deception

Acts 5:1–11 presents a serious warning about integrity. Ananias and Sapphira sold property but deliberately misrepresented the amount brought to the apostles. Peter made clear that the property and proceeds were theirs to dispose of; the sin was the deception and false appearance of generosity. Churches should cultivate a culture where people can give honestly and willingly, without pressure to maintain appearances, and establish transparent financial procedures.

Integrity Toward Government and Employers

Romans 13:6–7 teaches believers to fulfill legitimate obligations, including taxes, respect, and honor. This does not mean approving every governmental action; Acts 5:29 shows that obedience to God has ultimate authority. Christian integrity means lawful and truthful conduct while retaining the freedom to oppose injustice in a principled way. At work, organizational funds, equipment, supplies, time, and information are not ours simply because we have access to them. Ephesians 4:28 calls believers away from stealing and toward honest work and generosity.

Integrity Under Oppression

Jeremiah 29:7 instructed Jewish exiles to seek the welfare of the city where God had sent them and to pray for it. This was not an endorsement of everything Babylon represented. It called for faithful living in a difficult environment. Christian leaders can oppose injustice without adopting dishonesty, hatred, revenge, or corruption.

Integrity in Financial Stewardship

Second Corinthians 8:20–21 is especially relevant to church leaders handling finances. Paul took precautions concerning the collection so that the ministry would be above suspicion and honorable before God and people. This principle supports transparent financial procedures, accurate records, documented approvals, conflict-of-interest policies, appropriate separation of duties, and accountable oversight. Such safeguards are not signs of distrust; they are practical expressions of integrity.

Corruption Has Consequences

Scripture warns that dishonest gain and unjust power bring consequences. Zechariah 9:3–4 belongs to a prophetic judgment context and should not be turned into a direct prediction about a particular modern church,

government, or official. The broader principle remains: wealth and position cannot shield anyone from God's judgment. Proverbs 11:3 says integrity guides the upright, while treachery destroys the unfaithful. Corruption can also have institutional and generational consequences because communities often live with the effects of leaders' choices.

Integrity Is Consistency

1 John 1:6 teaches that claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness is a contradiction. Christian life is not public performance. Philippians 4:8–9 joins right thinking with right practice: believers are to dwell on what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise, and then practice what they have learned and seen in faithful Christian example.

A Call to Christian Leaders

Let our financial practices match our preaching. Let our treatment of the powerful match our treatment of the vulnerable. Let private decisions agree with public convictions. Let our promises be trustworthy. Let our use of authority reflect Jesus' servant leadership. Paul could point believers toward what they had learned, received, heard, and seen in him (Philippians 4:9). Christian leaders should pursue that kind of visible consistency—not because we are perfect, but because we continually submit ourselves to Christ and allow His grace to transform us.

When Temptation Comes

Great leaders are not exempt from temptation. Adam and Eve were tempted (Genesis 3); Abraham faced morally difficult tests (Genesis 12:10–20; 14:17–24); Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and remained obedient (Matthew 4:1–11). Paul also encountered a corrupt system. Acts 24:26 says Felix hoped Paul would give him money so that he might release him. Paul did not buy his freedom; he kept speaking about faith in Christ, righteousness, self-control, and coming judgment (Acts 24:24–26). Integrity may cost comfort, money, opportunity, or advancement, but Christian leaders must not exchange truth for temporary advantage.

Conclusion: Be Who You Profess to Be

Integrity is not merely the absence of scandal. It is the positive practice of truthfulness, righteousness, faithfulness, humility, and responsible stewardship. It is who we are when the microphone is off, the meeting is over, the account is private, and no human being will know what we chose. Let us examine our hearts, build accountable systems, confess quickly when we fail, repair what we can repair, and refuse the culture of "getting away with it." May the Church become increasingly known for truth, justice, humility, faithful stewardship, compassion, and courage.

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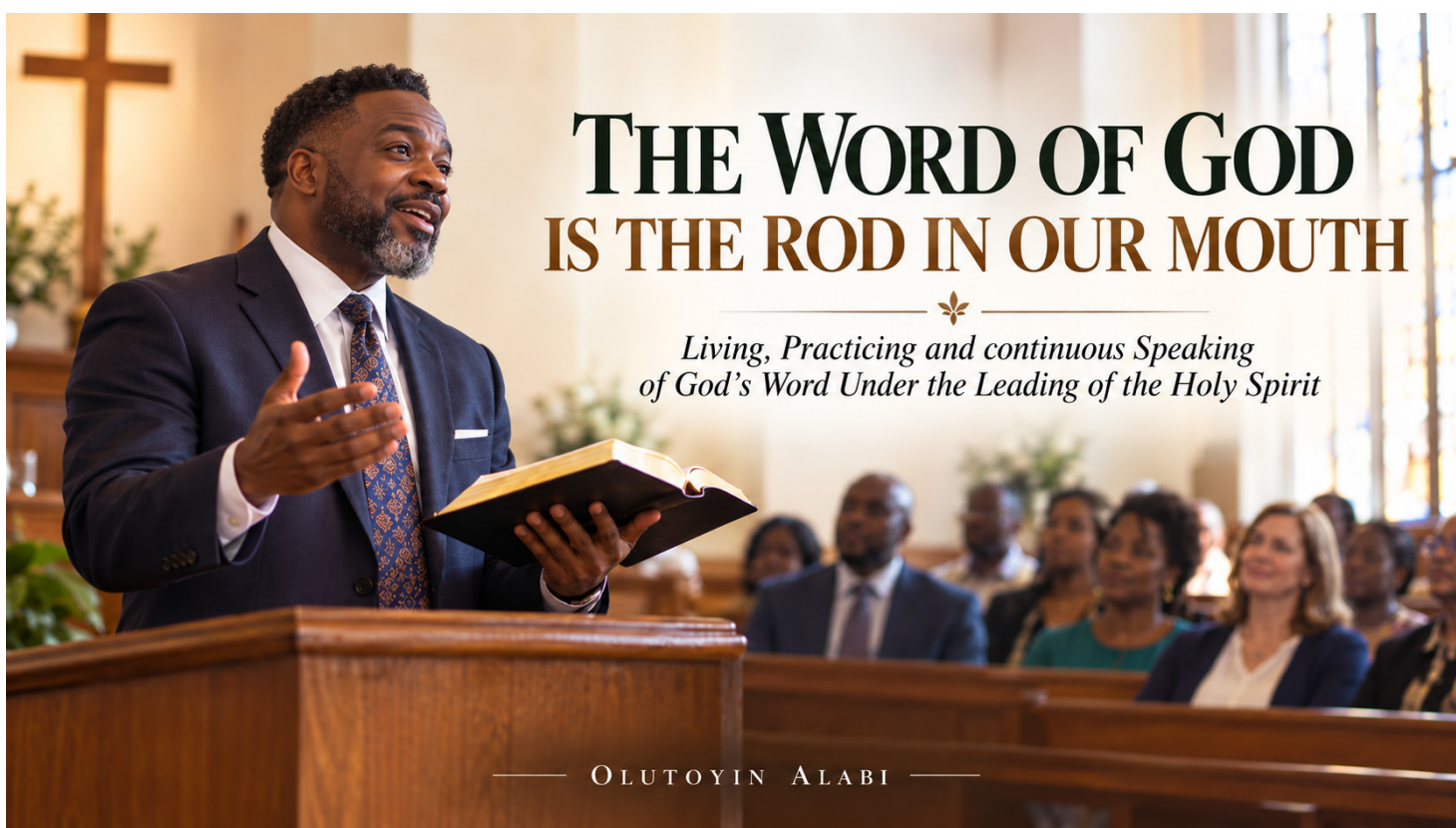
— Olutoyin Alabi

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The Central Theme

God's Word is not merely information to be stored in the mind; it is Truth to be received, believed, practiced, and faithfully SPOKEN. For Christian leaders, the Word provides the standard by which we discern God's will, the foundation from which we minister to others and the truth by which we confront error. When Scripture is joined with faith, obedience, prayer, and the Holy Spirit's leading, it becomes a powerful instrument of spiritual formation and ministry.

The Word as a Rod: A Biblical Picture

The original meditation connects the Word of God with the rod God placed in Moses' hand. Moses' rod was a physical instrument through which God demonstrated His power in particular circumstances (Exodus 4:2–5, 17; Exodus 14:16; Exodus 17:5–6). The rod itself was not the source of the miracles; God was. Moses acted in obedience to God's command.

This distinction is essential for Christian leaders. The Bible does not teach that our spoken words possess independent or magical power. Rather, God's Word carries divine authority because it is God's Word, and believers are called to speak 'The Word' faithfully. To believe it, obey it, and proclaim it under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The phrase "the rod of God in our mouths" is therefore best understood as a teaching metaphor. It reminds us that the Word we have received from God should also become the Word we faithfully declare and live by. Scripture itself uses several related images: Isaiah speaks of the coming Messiah judging with "the rod of His mouth" (Isaiah 11:4), while Paul describes the Word of God as "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). These images point toward the authority and effectiveness of God's Word, but they should not be collapsed into one identical symbol.

The Rod in Moses' Hand and the Word in Our Hearts

Moses did not manufacture miracles by his own authority. God instructed him concerning the rod and the actions he was to take. Likewise, Christian leaders are not called to create outcomes merely by speaking religious phrases. We are called to know God's Word and submit ourselves to the God who gave it.

The Word must therefore move from the page to the heart, from the heart to the life, and from the life to our ministry. Joshua 1:8 connects meditation on God's instruction with careful obedience. Psalm 119 repeatedly celebrates the formative power of God's Word. James 1:22 goes further: believers must be doers of the Word, not hearers only.

A leader who quotes Scripture but does not submit to Scripture is not demonstrating the authority of the Word. Biblical authority begins with personal obedience!

Jesus: The Word Received, Believed, and Spoken

The original article rightly draws attention to Jesus' use of Scripture in the wilderness. When tempted by the devil, Jesus repeatedly answered with the words of Scripture: "It is written" (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13).

His response demonstrates that spiritual resistance is not built on human bravado but on faithful submission to God's revealed truth.

Matthew 4:4 records Jesus' declaration that humanity does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The point is not merely that Scripture should be spoken aloud. God's Word is the believer's spiritual nourishment. We receive it, meditate upon it, believe it, obey it, and proclaim it.

Jesus therefore provides the clearest model for leaders: know the Word, submit to the Father, resist temptation with truth, and use Scripture according to its meaning rather than as a collection of formulas.

The Word Has Power Because God Is Faithful

The original statement that the Word "brings things, situations and people to life" expresses a legitimate confidence in God's life-giving Word, but it requires careful biblical framing. Scripture does not teach that human speech can automatically produce whatever outcome a person declares.

Isaiah 55:10–11 teaches that God's Word accomplishes the purpose for which He sends it. Hebrews 4:12 describes the Word of God as living and powerful, penetrating and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. First Peter 1:23 connects the new birth with the living and enduring Word of God. These passages place the emphasis where it belongs: on God's initiative and faithfulness, not on human verbal power.

This protects Christian leaders from a dangerous distortion. Faith is not a technique for controlling God. Scripture is not a formula for forcing circumstances. We speak God's Word because we trust God, and we submit the outcome to His wisdom, character, timing, and will.

The Word in the Mouth of a Leader

Christian leaders have a special responsibility to handle Scripture faithfully. The Word should never be used to manipulate people, silence legitimate questions, defend personal ambition, or give divine authority to human preferences.

Paul instructed Timothy to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, NKJV). He also charged him to preach the Word with patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:2). James warned that teachers will be judged more strictly (James 3:1). These passages remind leaders that speaking Scripture publicly is a sacred trust.

A leader must therefore ask: What does this passage actually mean? What was its context? How does it point to the larger story of Scripture? Am I proclaiming God's Word—or merely attaching a Bible verse to my own idea?

The Word and Spiritual Warfare

The Christian leader is engaged in spiritual warfare, but Scripture tells us how that warfare is to be approached. Ephesians 6:10–18 describes the armor of God and identifies "the sword of the Spirit" as the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). The Word is therefore central to the believer's resistance against spiritual deception.

Second Thessalonians 2:8 also speaks of the Lord Jesus overthrowing the lawless one by the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming. In context, this is a statement about Christ's final victory and judgment—not a general promise that every believer can destroy spiritual enemies simply by speaking words.

The distinction strengthens rather than weakens our message. Our confidence is not in the power of human declarations. Our confidence is in Christ, whose authority is absolute, and in the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit uses in the life and witness of believers.

Receive It. Meditate on It. Practice It. Speak It.

Receive the Word. Come to Scripture with humility, recognizing that God’s truth corrects as well as comforts us.

Meditate on the Word. Allow Scripture to shape your thinking, values, priorities, and decisions (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1–3).

Practice the Word. Obedience gives credibility to our proclamation. Leaders must first live under the authority they ask others to recognize.

Speak the Word. Proclaim Scripture accurately, graciously, courageously, and in its proper context.

Pray the Word. Bring God’s promises, commands, and purposes before Him in prayer rather than treating Scripture as a formula for control.

Depend on the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not replace Scripture; He helps believers understand, apply, and faithfully live out God’s truth (John 16:13; Ephesians 6:17–18).

A Word to Christian Leaders

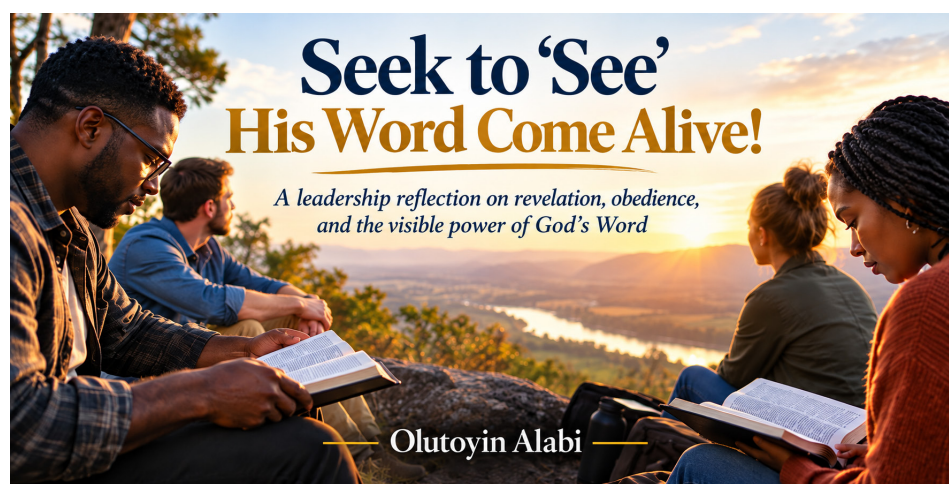
In an age filled with competing voices, Christian leaders must become people of the Word. Our congregations do not need more religious slogans; they need the truth of God lived out with humility, courage, wisdom, and love.

Let the Word correct you before you use it to correct others. Let it comfort you before you use it to comfort others. Let it search your heart before you use it from the pulpit. Let it govern your decisions before you ask others to follow your leadership.

The Word in our mouths must first be the Word in our hearts. When Scripture shapes the leader, the leader’s speech becomes more than religious language—it becomes faithful testimony to what God has said.

Moses held a rod in his hand, but Moses was never the source of the power. God was. Today, we have no need to imitate Moses by turning words into a formula. We have something greater: the revealed Word of God, fulfilled and embodied in Christ, preserved in Scripture, proclaimed by the Church, and applied by the Holy Spirit.

So let us receive the Word. Meditate on it. Practice it. Speak it. Pray it. Live it. And when we speak, may our words agree with God’s truth and point people—not to ourselves—but to Jesus Christ.



The Word Must Become Visible

God’s Word is not given merely to inform the mind; it is given to shape the life. Christian leaders therefore have a sacred responsibility to seek God’s truth, receive it through the Holy Spirit’s illumination, and allow that truth to become visible through character, conduct, service, and faithful leadership. The goal is not to make our own words powerful, but to let the truth of God govern our words and lives.

In the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. Jesus answered with Scripture: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4, KJV). This response, echoing Deuteronomy 8:3, reminds us that physical provision is not the ultimate source of life. Human beings live in dependence upon God, whose Word sustains, directs, corrects, and reveals His will.

Jesus did not use Scripture as a slogan or as a weapon for personal display. He submitted Himself to the Father’s will and allowed the written Word to govern His response to temptation. For Christian leaders, this is crucial: Scripture’s authority must be demonstrated not simply by quoting it, but by obeying it.

Life Flows from Words We Understand—and Obey

Understanding God’s Word involves more than collecting biblical information. Scripture must move from the page into the heart, and from the heart into daily practice. Paul explains that the Spirit reveals the deep things of God, enabling believers to understand what God has freely given them (1 Corinthians 2:10–15). The Holy Spirit does not replace Scripture; He illuminates its truth and enables God’s people to discern and live by it. That is why spiritual leadership requires both biblical faithfulness and spiritual dependence. A leader may possess theological vocabulary, ministry experience, public influence, or a strong communication gift, yet still fail to embody the truth being taught. Christian maturity is seen when revealed truth becomes practiced truth.

Let God’s Presence Make the Message Visible

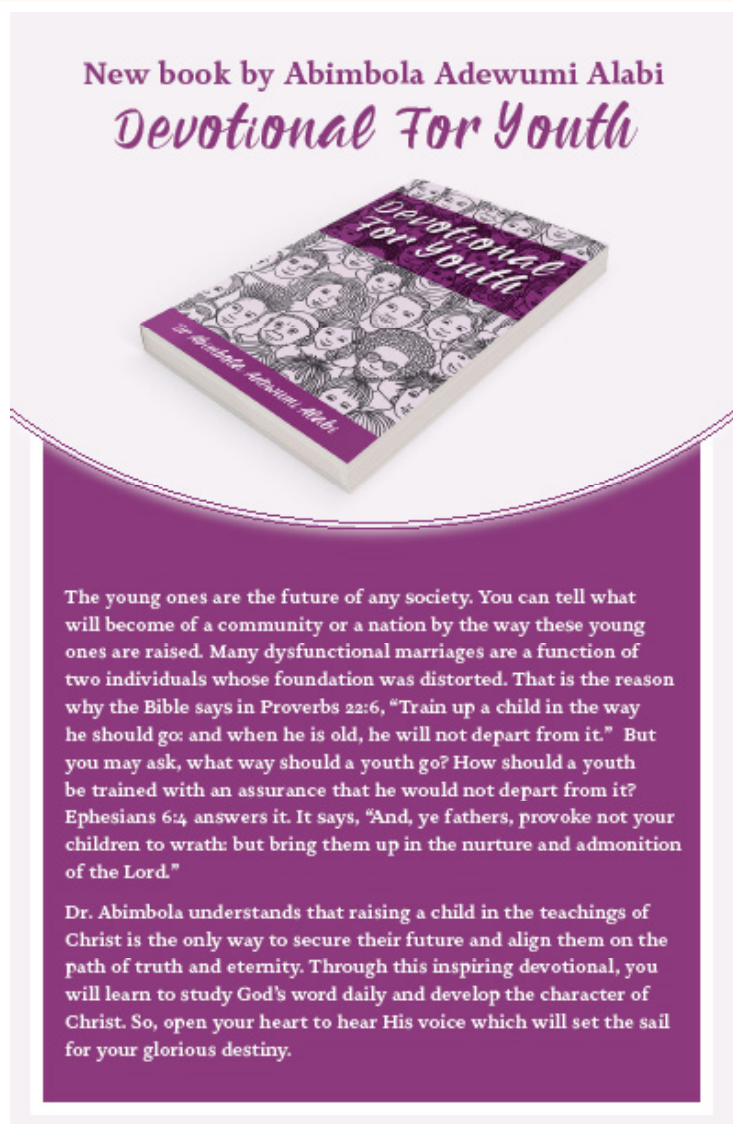
The original manuscript rightly connects ministry with the presence and power of God. Paul describes Christian leaders as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1). He then makes a striking distinction: “the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (1 Corinthians 4:20, KJV). In context, Paul is confronting pride and empty boasting in Corinth. His point is not that words are unimportant; rather, Christian ministry must be authenticated by spiritual reality, not impressive speech alone.

Paul makes a similar connection in 2 Corinthians 6:6–7, describing ministry through purity, understanding, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, sincere love, truthful speech, and the power of God. Notice the combination: character and power, truth and conduct, spiritual dependence and practical righteousness. Biblical leadership does not separate what we proclaim from how we live.

Your Life Is Part of Your Message

One of the strongest insights in the original write-up is that leaders cannot credibly call others to obedience while deliberately living contrary to the truth they teach. Scripture consistently places character alongside ministry. Paul instructed Timothy: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them” (1 Timothy 4:16, KJV). Timothy’s teaching and his life were not competing concerns. Both mattered.

Therefore, Christian leadership credibility is not created by charisma. It



is cultivated through integrity, repentance, humility, holiness, consistency, and perseverance. This does not mean that a leader must be flawless. It means that a leader must remain teachable, accountable, and willing to bring life into alignment with God's truth.

A pure heart and clean hands do not give human speech supernatural power as though holiness were a technique. Rather, integrity removes the contradiction between the message we proclaim and the life we live. God alone is the source of spiritual power; faithful leaders are vessels and stewards of what He entrusts to them.

David's Hunger for the Word

Psalms 119 provides a fitting picture of a leader who does not merely possess God's Word but longs to encounter it. David describes God's testimonies as wonderful, asks for understanding, and celebrates the joy, stability, and guidance found in God's commands (Psalms 119:129–131, 135, 140, 152, 162, 164–165, 169, 176).

The psalmist's posture is instructive for leaders. He wants the Word opened to him. He wants light. He wants understanding. He treasures God's promises. He recognizes the reliability of God's Word and repeatedly returns to it when he is in need of direction.

This is the heart behind the phrase "Seek to 'See' His Word Come Alive." We seek to see Scripture become visible—not because Scripture changes, but because our lives are changed by the truth Scripture reveals. When leaders allow the Word to shape their decisions, relationships, priorities, ethics, and treatment of people, others can see something of the reality of the gospel.

What Christian Leaders Should Seek

1. Seek revelation with humility.

Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate Scripture, while remaining anchored in the biblical text and its context (1 Corinthians 2:10–13; John 16:13).

2. Seek obedience, not merely information.

Biblical knowledge is intended to produce faithful action. James warns against hearing the Word without doing it (James 1:22–25).

3. Seek integrity between platform and private life.

Leadership credibility grows when public teaching and private conduct are increasingly aligned (1 Timothy 4:15–16).

4. Seek God's power rather than personal impressiveness.

The kingdom of God is not ultimately demonstrated by eloquence, status, or personality, but by the reality of God's rule and work (1 Corinthians 4:20).

5. Seek continual transformation.

A leader must remain a disciple. Romans 12:2 calls believers to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, while 2 Corinthians 3:18 describes ongoing transformation into Christ's likeness.

6. Seek to make Christ visible.

The ultimate aim is not that people admire the leader, but that they encounter the character and truth of Christ through the leader's faithful witness (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15–16).

The books are available at Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles and other leading Christian bookstores



A Word to Christian Leaders

Your greatest influence may not come from the words you deliver from a platform. It may come from what people repeatedly observe in your life: how you respond under pressure, how you treat those who cannot advance your interests, how you handle money and responsibility, how you respond when corrected, how faithfully you keep your word, and whether your private life supports your public confession.

Seek the Word until it becomes more than a message you prepare. Let it become a truth you practice. Seek the Spirit until biblical truth is not merely understood intellectually but discerned and applied faithfully. Seek holiness not as a means of earning God's power, but as the fitting response of a life surrendered to God.

When Scripture shapes the leader, it begins to shape the leadership. When truth governs the heart, it begins to govern decisions. When God's presence transforms the person, the ministry can become a living testimony that the Word of God is not dead information but living truth that still changes lives.

Conclusion: Let the Word Be Seen

Christian leaders are called to do more than speak about God's Word. We are called to live under its authority. The Word must be read, understood, discerned, obeyed, embodied, and proclaimed. That is how the truth we teach becomes visible in the lives we lead.

Paul's counsel remains timely: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them" (1 Timothy 4:16, KJV). Watch your life. Guard the teaching. Keep growing. Keep obeying. Keep seeking God.

May our prayer be simple: Lord, open Your Word to us. Give us understanding by Your Spirit. Cleanse our hearts. Align our lives with Your truth. Then let what we preach be seen in how we live, so that Christ—not the messenger—receives the glory.

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ACTS 10v 38

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