

DR. D. K. OLUKOYA



**CAN
GOD
TRUST
YOU?**



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Contents

[Title Page](#)

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[Chapter 1: Can God Trust You?](#)

[Chapter 2: A Trusted Vessel](#)

[Chapter 3: Can God Trust You With Time](#)

[Chapter 4: Can God Trust You With Your Talent?](#)

[Chapter 5: Can God Trust You With Your Tongue?](#)

[Chapter 6: Can God Trust You With The Gospel?](#)

[Chapter 7: Can God Trust You With Influence?](#)

[OUTLETS OF INFLUENCE](#)

[POWER OF INFLUENCE](#)

[YOUR INFLUENCE](#)

[Chapter 8: Can God Trust You With Prosperity And Health?](#)

[PROPERTY](#)

[HEALTH](#)

[Chapter 9: Can God Trust You As A Leader?](#)

[LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE: THE GOOD AND THE BAD](#)

[Chapter 10: Can God Trust' You With Money](#)

[PRAYER POINTS](#)

[Other Publication of Dr. D. K. Olukoya](#)

Chapter One

CAN GOD TRUST YOU?

A distressed lady once said "when I see the Lord, I will ask Him a lot of questions." She was disappointed in fellow human beings and wished she could see the Lord to field some questions before Him. Her experience typifies common feelings among men. Generally, men feel the Lord owes them an explanations. Many people do not know however that the Lord Himself has a list of questions prepared for them.

If you think there are questions the Lord must answer, I want you to know at once that He has more questions for you in return than you can ever imagine. One of the crucial questions the Lord is asking you in this book is "Can God Trust You?"

Don't get surprised that the Lord is looking for whom to trust among men. Many times, men express their trust in God and praise Him for His kindness, goodness, steadfastness and other attributes of His. The issue here is that, God is not satisfied as a Father being the only one manifesting such attributes. He wants to see the same things demonstrated in the lives of every believer. His children should be identified only by the kind of attributes they demonstrate. In other words, as God is kind, He needs your kindness as well. As He is good, He needs your goodness. He needs every bit of His quality in your life.

You wonder why? If those things are found in you, unconsciously, you will have provided a very good environment for Him to operate to reach the lives of others He wants to save, strengthen and bless. He needs you as a medium for His operations. Anything in you that, contradicts His attributes will hinder Him. Therefore, the Lord wants to know right now, if, indeed, He can really trust you..

The title of this book is not the only instance the Lord is asking you a question. He has been asking men questions from the beginning. When you read some of His questions, you will discover the burden in His mind. You think all you need is God's help in every situation of your life, but God needs you more than you ever can imagine. He needs you more than you think you need Him.

The question comes again. Can God Trust You? He is looking for whom to trust, rely upon and into whose hands he can commit His very serious affairs.

Can God trust and rely on you? You have been looking for God, but He's looking for you more desperately than you think. He wants to know if He can trust you.

When Adam sinned, as well as his wife Eve, God sought the couple. He called out to Adam and asked: "Where art thou?" (Genesis 2:9).

You may have to answer this question first before you rush to conclude whether God can trust you or not.

Where are you in His kingdom? If you are not yet there, He is giving you the opportunity to do so. The first step you need to take is make yourself available to Him. Leave the world and accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour to become a member of His family.

When you take that step, you will have answered the question "where art thou?" You don't answer every question only by words of the mouth. Your attitude and actions to the question will speak louder than your words. Where art thou?

It does not make any difference if you are already born again. You still have to answer the question "Where art thou? Have you discovered your purpose in the kingdom? Where art thou? Are you lost within the crowd thereby not fulfilling the purpose for which you have been born? Today, you have to answer the question "where art thou?"

Are you supposed to be a member of a group in the local assembly? Where art thou, that you have not joined the prayer band yet, you have not

joined the choristers, and any other group? You must answer the question today. 'Where Art Thou?'

Many people concern themselves with what should not bother them at all. Peter was unfortunately caught in the act. He had just been recovered by the Lord. He earlier met the master but backslided. Immediately Jesus brought him back again from his futile fishing venture, he was given a 'specific responsibility to carry out. But Peter was more bothered about what another disciple should do. He was actually bothered with the affairs of John, the beloved. He shifted his focus from his responsibility and asked the master a question. God in His response asked a question too hard to be answered. Some questions from God are meant to silence us permanently so that we can do what God wants us to. Read the story in John 21:20-22.

Many people behave like Peter. While God is concerned about whether or not He can trust them, they are rather concerned about whether God can trust the next man or woman or not. Jesus asked Peter: "What is that to thee?" In other words, Jesus said, "Peter, how is what you asked me your business?" The apostles just asked the Lord about John: "What shall this man do?"

Meanwhile, His love for the Lord has just been examined against food and fish. He had just been told what to do; "Feed my lamb: feed my sheep." The man that had both the lamb and the sheep of the master to tender was bothered with what another man should do.

The Lord is asking you, what is your business with worldly Christians? You have to separate yourself from the world as Jesus is saying "follow me" like He said to Peter. How does it bother you that some people don't want to become born again? Are you born again yourself? Leave others, concentrate on yourself. That is what the Lord is saying. The Lord has just asked you if He could trust you or not, instead of you to be so bitter about people, pastors, denominations, ministries, etc. How does that concern you?

Another area people usually ask questions from God is concerning the time of life. They want to know what time God is going to execute His projects. The questions either take the form "how long?" or when?" The two still mean the same thing. Are you surprised to hear me tell you now that

God is not always disposed to your "when?" or answer the question "how long?" When you bother Him too much about such things, His silence would mean you are not supposed to know or His frank response can quieten you at once. Our inquisitiveness sometime, drive out our carnal nature. God is not bound by any law.

The disciples "again had it tough with Jesus.

Acts 1:6-8 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you- and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Juduea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

They were very specific in their request, will God "at this time...." They wanted to know about time. Jesus promptly interrupted their query and said "It is not for you to know" meaning that "You are not supposed to know" what you are inquiring about. How many people spend so much time waiting to know what they are not supposed to know? You cannot force God to speak. Can God trust you?

Man's questions are unlimited, especially when God is the person to answer them. If God gives you an opportunity to ask Him questions, how many questions would you ask? Unlimited questions. Yes, you can build a catalogue of endless questions before God, He is more concerned about whom He can trust. Can God trust you?

Moses asked God questions. They were unlimited. One of the many questions he asked God is the type many people are still apt to ask today.

God told him he was going to provide meat for the children of Israel in the wilderness.

The mind of Moses, the great man of God, pounded the issue very critically. What came out of this deep meditation on what God said was just an answer "impossible." Prepared with a mind that God probably did not think very deeply about what he said He would do.

Moses approached God with a question. But God was also ready to de'fuse the tension of his question with another question.

Numbers 11:21-23: And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shall see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

The Lord is asking the same question. Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' Have you not known that there is no impossibility with God? If God has told you about His agenda for your life, why are you thinking it is impossible for Him to carry out? Can God trust you? He is looking for men and women that are ready to take bold steps and carry out the work of His great kingdom. They must be men and women He can trust.

Can God trust you?

If God has called you to work for Him in a difficult area, why are you reluctant to obey His call? If God has promised to provide for you in a situation most unlikely for any provision to be experienced, do you think He can not do it? As far as Moses was concerned, God has just spoken the most impossible thing to do. Maybe Moses thought God did not consider the circumstances on ground very well before He issued His word. How possible is it to feed so great a multitude with meat for as long as a whole month? The problem is never with God. You are the problem because God is looking for a heart to trust.

Can God trust you?

You must remember that the angel from God's presence knew better and had said it all in Luke.

Luke 1:37: For with God nothing shall be impossible.

God's questions are sometimes difficult to understand. When they are simple enough, they are difficult to answer. Many people whom God asked

questions in the Bible either did not understand or find them difficult to answer. Apart from asking man questions in response to His own questions, God asks questions to challenge man.

When you are dwelling at one particular level for too long, God can question your position. When you seem to remain in the same spiritual state for too long, God can ask you questions to awaken you to your status. His question may sound like expressing surprises but they are never so. God can never be surprised at anything in the real sense of it.

Jesus asked Philip a question He is asking many people today. Philip had been too long with the Lord as not to know Him as a complete embodiment of the Father. The Lord did not spare his ignorance.

John 14:9: Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

The Lord is asking you a similar question. Have you been this long in the church and you have not received eternal life? Have you been this regular in prayer meetings and have not yet become a dynamic warrior? Have you heard so much message on the new birth and you have not been born again yet?

Have you read so much of God's promises and yet you are full of doubt? Have you heard so many testimonies of God's power and doings, and you have not believed? Have you spent so much of your life and time and have not had time for God? Has God been so good and you have not been appreciative?

Can God really trust you?

When you look at some other questions the Lord asks, they are meant to rebuke man's forgetfulness and bring him to remembrance of this that should not be forgotten. Isaiah documented some of such questions.

Isaiah 40:21: Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Look at how many questions the Lord is asking you all in one verse of the scriptures. Have you not known? Have you not known that God can do all things? Why don't you present yourself a vessel He can trust?

"Have you not heard?" Have you not heard that God rewards the faithful, the obedient, the humble, etc. and answers prayers? Why do you not prove yourself to Him a vessel He can trust. "Has it not been told you from the beginning?"

Since you were young, have you not been told that God is able, good, kind, mighty, etc.? Why do you still avoid Him? Can he trust you for all you have heard about Him? Have you not understood?" You have read his word in different languages and versions of the Bible; you have read many good Christian books, you have received dreams, visions and abundance of all manner of revelations, promises and prophecies about His agenda for you. Have you not understood?

Can God trust you when you attach too much importance to your life as if you can do without God, the Almighty? Here is a question for you.

James 4:14: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

"What is your life?"

When you are concerned about your life as though you have power over it, God is asking you, what is your life? People talk to you and your reply to every challenge is "leave me alone. Let me live my life as it pleases me."

God is asking you, what is your life? God can ask you some questions and answer them Himself almost immediately, He has provided an answer to the question "What is your life?" "It is even as vapour that appeared for a little time, and then vanished away." The greatest life you can live is a life that God can trust.

The question of God for man is endless in the Bible. You think you have questions for Him to answer, but he has more than your entire life can stand. You wonder why God asks many questions? He wants to get you

committed by making you to hear your own self when you answer His questions. People that are afflicted ask God why he doesn't just heal them at once. They often say "God knows what my sickness, distress, silence, etc. is; why doesn't he just heal me at once?" God does not always heal that way. When he wants to know what you want about your situation, He asks the question below: -

John 5:6: When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

"Wilt thou be made whole?"

Chapter Two

A TRUSTED VESSEL

Since Bible days, God has been looking for vessels to trust. Of course, all the people He used, He first trusted. Jesus taught many parables on the importance of faithfulness as to be trusted by God. Read the following:

Luke 16:10: He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 19:17: And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

The deep lesson the Lord is teaching is on the faithfulness that even God can trust. A song writer understood this and expressed it in 'the lyrics below titled. "May the Lord Depend on you."

May the Lord depend on you
In the warfare that is raging,
For the truth and for the right
When the conflict fierce is raging,
With the powers of the night
God needs people brave and true,
May He then depend on you.

God found a man like that many years ago. His name was Job. The Almighty God vouched for him so much that, he invited satan to consider his integrity. An argument for and against broke out between God and satan over Job. God maintained that Job could not deny Him. Satan argued to the contrary in his own debate against Job. He maintained that Job's integrity was conditional upon God's providence, goodness, blessings and security he was enjoying. God disagreed with satan on this point. The Almighty insisted, saying 'No', Job's fidelity was unconditional. For the first time ever

in the recorded history of mankind, there was a debate between satan and God, Job was the subject and the angels of God were the audience.

Can God trust you?

God depended on Job.

Job 6:1-12: But Job answered and said, O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder? Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg? The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat. Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?

Job 2:3-6: And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

Job stood through his trial. He won the victory of a test, such like no man under heaven had ever been made to pass through. His wife advised him to die was better than to continue in that experience. The most intimate person

in man's life ought to be a woman. The closest of all partners advised him to compromise his stand, but he never did.

The whole experience of his trial was a puzzle to him. Irrespective of whether he understood 'the what', 'the why,' or 'the how long' of the experiences, he maintained his ground. The only thing he understood was that he could not compromise for any reason. He passed the test. And heaven rose to applaud him.

Can God depend on you? Can the Almighty trust You?

Job 1:13-22: And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and thinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Job 2:7-10: So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the

ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips:

Chapter Three

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH TIME?

I will assist you to assess yourself thoroughly. Upon this, I will give you some specific areas where God can trust you or otherwise. Examine yourself critically on these points and know it for yourself if God can trust you.

TIME

The time is free. That is why it is also the most wasted of all the gifts of God.

Time is wasted not doing anything. Time is wasted doing the wrong thing. Time is wasted as spending too much of it on something that should have taken less of it. Time is wasted when you over do things.

For example, time is wasted when you over-sleep, over-cat, over-dress and over-decorate. The worst form of time wasting is in sin. Unfortunately, many people are guilty of this.

For God to trust you, your use of time must be acceptable to Him. Time is valuable. You have only one life to live. The wasted minutes of your life will soon become hours. The wasted hours will become days. The wasted days will soon become weeks. The wasted weeks will soon become months, which in turn will soon become years of total waste. If you waste your time, you will waste your life because life is made up of time.

The Lord requires, at least, a tithe of your time per day. You will give an account of your time to God. The long hours of watching television, the endless period of chatting and the precious time spent in pursuit of a venture God did not approve for you will all be accounted for.

Stealing time in your office means stealing money. Time is money. Accepting money for the time you did nothing is stealing. One day, you will stand before the judgment seat of the Almighty to give an account of your life, while the remaining part of the whole world shall be watching as spectators. Your secrets are open to heaven. You cannot be smart when the issue is God. He knows all things. Everyone shall be rewarded according to his or her works.

God is expecting to depend on you in your place of work. He wants you to be His representative right there where you are. If others are stealing, you cannot do the same. If they are wasting time, killing and stealing it, you cannot do like them. Can God trust you with the use of time in your school, office and that engagement that absorb your life?

God is looking for who to trust. How God gets disappointed when we fail Him where we should have fully represented Him! The only gospel some people will ever hear and receive all their lives is 'whatever they read in our lives.

There was a time a very terrible man came to a revival meeting. He was so terrible that children were warned to avoid passing in front of his house. The guest preacher delivered a hard message followed by serious prayers. During the altar call, the man was the first to respond. He took the lead of those that went out and surrendered his life to Christ.

The preacher was surprised and wondered what part of his message could have changed the man. But he was more surprised when the man said it was not the message, but an old woman lifestyle, living opposite his house. The man confessed: "I have been watching her for years. I have tried to upset her several times to no avail. I have used my evil powers against her without success. I therefore made up my mind to attend her church. That's why I came." Your life is a living epistle that is read by all men.

A minister of God ran into a terrible accident while going for a revival programme. One of the victims was terribly injured. He was losing so much blood that he needed to be rushed to a hospital in twenty minutes. This minister of God picked him up and started driving at the most terrific speed he had never driven his vehicle.

On the way to the hospital, the victim kept asking the minister in a low and fainting voice: "How much time have we got more? He had the premonition of death. Time was the most important element ever to save his life. However, the minister finally arrived at the hospital, but the man died right at the entrance.

Some people arrived at hell fire suddenly because they woke up so late to the issue of their souls' salvation. Some leave this world in a moment for the simple reason that they are a minute late to safety. Time is the most tangible wealth that God has given to man. He is the owner of time. He has only entrusted it in your hands. You are answerable to God for every moment of your life. Eternity will demand a recount of your time on earth.

Can God trust you in the use of time?

You are a steward of time. You will not always have it for the reason that there is an end coming to the phase of time.

Rev. 10:6: And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

There is a moment fast approaching, when time will cease to exist. Eternity will close the door against time and timelessness will swallow time. Men's calendar, time and records will melt away in eternity. When the chapter of your time closes, eternity begins its introduction. From that point, you will continue to dwell upon its endless pages from timeless to timeless.

If God searches your hidden aspects and exposes the hidden things you engaged in especially with your time, where do you think you will spend eternity. Think about this in a moment.

From today, will God decide to trust you? Or will He close the door of His trust from you once and forever? Stop annoying and disappointing God with the valuable material He has given you.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

Eccles. 3:1-8: To every there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing! A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

There is a time suitable and appropriate for everything under heaven. It is wrong for you to say you don't have time. If there is no time to do everything you are supposed to do in life, it means you have been mis-managing your time.

Your entire life is supposed to be regulated by a deliberate division of time. There is a time to start learning. There is a time to acquire special skills and experiences. There is time to grow. There is a moment to rest from all activities on earth. You don't rest when you should be in the battle front. You don't kill at the time of peace. Many are guilty before the Lord in the use of their time.

Some people in the days of the Bible used their time appropriately, while others never did. Some of them faced divine punishments that the rest of their lives could not stand. Others went in to eternal regret at once.

Look at some examples below.

David- When David sinned with Beersheba, the wife of Uriah, the clement responsible for the occurrence of that grievous error was time. The warrior king was supposed to be at the battle field, issuing commands, instruction and direction to the army of Israel. He rather chose to be in his chambers when his country was facing eternal aggression.

It was in the pleasure of rest, that this great king strolled around in his chambers and caught the sight of Beersheba, having her bath. The king sent for her and slept with her, thus committing the gravest errors of his entire

life before God. The divine judgment that followed kept resounding like a never-to-end echoes.

To prove the point that it was a wrong time in Israel for anybody in the army to indulge in pleasures, self-gratification and lightness of mood and mind; when the king advised Uriah to go and sleep with his wife, that man refused on the ground that it was wrong time to be wrapped in the arms of his woman, leaving the battle at the gates of his country. There is a time suitable for everything, Uriah knew it. Swords never departed from the lineage of David forever for that single error of mis-use of time.

The same amount of time which he spent strolling around his magnificent house could have been used to inspect his soldiers to avoid the snare.

2 Samuel 11:1-11: And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down unto his house. And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? Why then didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my

lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

The error of David was summed in the sentence "But David tarried still at Jerusalem." Tarrying is an expression of time. In other words, David waited a little longer in Jerusalem. During this period of waiting, he ran into the snare of adultery that permanently stained his righteous garment.

Where are you tarrying and why? The time you spend, waiting a little longer, can either save or sentence you to eternity in hell. Can God trust you with the use of time?

Children of Israel- The experiences of the children of Israel with the Lord teach many lessons that time won't be enough to exhaust. In their journey to the promised land, Moses sent spies to search the land of Canaan. God had assured them that He would go with them.

On hearing evil reports from ten of the twelve spies that went on that mission, they got discouraged. The time they were supposed to cry out to God was spent in murmurs and bitter complaints. The time they were supposed to advance to Canaan in the strength and support of God was used to gather stones with which to stone Moses and Aaron their leaders.

God intervened suddenly on the scene. He was so provoked that he swore to punish all the murderers and complainers among them. When they heard about God's reaction they made up their minds to go ahead and take the land.

Meanwhile, God had withdrawn His support from them. While His support was there, they did not act. God turned back for a while and they presumptuously went out to battle against the Amalekites and the Canaanites and Israel suffered terrible defeat.

Now is the time to go out to battle, when the assurance of God's support and victory is real. There is a time suitable to throw the arrow of great prayer points when the Lord builds the burdens and thoughts irresistibly on your heart. Some people won't act at such time of His providential moves.

After God has withdrawn his grace, burden and resources, they become empty vessels, rushing out to battle only to suffer a great defeat.

Numbers 13:30-33: And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Isreal, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Numbers 14:1: And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

Numbers 14:6-10: And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

Numbers 14:40-45: And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.

But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

Time of salvation: The Lord's salvation is free, cheap and easy to obtain, but it is not available to everybody all the time. That may sound strange to you. There is a time of God's move towards a particular person to save him. The Bible calls that time "Today" and recommends that the time to respond to the salvation it brings:

Hebrews 3:7: Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

"Now is the time ..."

If your experience is such that you have been hearing the message of salvation, but have not been saved, you may be sealing your agreement with hell. If God has been moving towards you to have you, but you have not been saved by not surrendering to Him, you are running a risk of eternal consequences.

There is a time to be saved. The Lord will not always talk to you about it. Whatever His voice is telling you now, do it. The Lord will not talk all the time. When He keeps silent, your greatest problem has just begun. There is a time suitable for everything.

Can God trust you with time?

Isaiah 55:6: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Proverbs 1:22, 24-25, 28: How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? ... Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: ... Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

Mary and Martha: These two sisters had a great opportunity with Christ. The Lord, during His earthly ministry, did not hide His love for them. They shared many things in common as sisters, but their use of time was responsible for the differences in their ratings by Jesus.

Mary spent her time imbibing eternal life, words of wisdom, doctrines and knowledge at the feet of Christ.

However, Martha was more of a cook. She therefore spent her time always wanting to cook for Jesus. When Jesus scored them on the use of their time, Mary excelled above her incomparably for choosing "the good part."

John 12-1-3: *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

Luke 10:33-42: *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was-' and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said. Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful*

and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

The better thing Mary chose was in the use of time at the feet of Jesus. When you appear to meet the Lord in the church, how do you spend your time? At His feet in prayers and worship? Or strolling around, chatting and making business out of everything?

Mary's use of time at Jesus' feet distinguished and positioned her above her sister in the things of the Lord. On the occasion of Lazarus' death Jesus was talking about raising Lazarus at once, Martha thought He was talking about the general resurrection of the dead. She wasn't too familiar with spiritual things and deep truths from the Lord's mouth. The greater proportion of her time was spent on food, catering and kitchen management. These are good qualities, but not at the expense of your spiritual qualification and desire before the Lord.

Mary knew Jesus better. She had earlier anointed His feet.

John 11:1-2: Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Luke 7:27-37: This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine: and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking: and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a

winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

You find a clear difference between these two sisters because of their time relationship with Jesus. Martha was the first to meet Jesus when He arrived where Lazarus died. The Bible docs not say more than she met Jesus. Although she seemed to express faith in Jesus, her faith was not the kind that believes in "now" for an answer.

That's why she believed Lazarus would rise again, not that day, but "in the last day."

John 11:20-24: Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

When the news of Jesus arrival got to Mary, she arose, met Christ like her sister, but unlike Martha, she added worship at Jesus feet to that encounter. From the day she broke the alabaster box of oil to anoint Jesus' feet, she had learnt the secret and the benefits of tarrying at the Lord's feet. She is always found, bowing, worshipping, weeping, or sitting at Jesus feet. Whenever she was there, if she was not kissing the feet according to Jewish tradition of honouring and showing humility to another, she would be wiping and anointing the feet.

Like the right person, Jesus had been waiting for, when Mary fell at his feet, apparently weeping, the heart of Jesus melted. He groaned and was troubled. What followed was action. Then a command that brought back life into Lazarus. That Martha didn't have as much faith and spirituality was clear in her last reaction to Jesus' instruction.

John 11:28-29: And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

John 11:32-33: Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

John 11:39: Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Judas Iscariot: Here was a man that repented at a time the eternal door of pardon had been closed against him. He spent so much time with Jesus as a disciple and later, as an apostle, the highest calling anyone can ever receive from the Lord. He also spent an equal proportion of time with those seeking to arrest and kill Jesus. His time was divided between the kingdom and the world, between the Master and satan, between fellowship with other apostles and messengers of Jesus' enemies, between keeping money and stealing it, between the meeting places of the chief priests and the cool resorts where Jesus often retreated.

He was caught asunder in this ungodly divide of his time. He looked at the monetary gain to result from the inconsistent way he was spending his time and agreed to betray the Master. The negotiation was settled. It took him some time to agree to take thirty pieces of silver as the price for betraying the Master. He collected it. By the time it dawned on him that he had missed it, the time to repent acceptably had passed. He committed suicide in his frustration.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Matthew 27:3-5: Then Judas, which had betrayeth him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty

pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Some people are like Judas Iscariot in the church. They divide their time between fellowship with brethren and the world. After shouting Hallelujah in the kingdom, they recite anthems of occultism in secret. Can God trust you with time?

The Lord ministered to a sister to go and pray for a sick woman who was a member of her church. She was reluctant to go. For about six days, the Lord kept dealing with her urging her strongly to arise and go to the sick woman, but she would not respond on time. In the end, she made up her mind to take what she thought to be a bold step of faith and went straight to the woman's house.

When she got there, she met many people gathered. The woman died in the morning of that same day. She never could free herself from the feeling of guilt for that lost soul.

Can God trust you with time, or will you respond to his prodding, too late?

Joab: In the kingdom tussle between David's leadership and Saul's, the army of Israel became divided in two bands. Joab was the captain over David's loyal soldiers and Abner belonged to the side of Saul as commander of the second band of army loyal to king Saul.

When Saul was destroyed at last and God began to restore the kingdom to David's control, the king was quickly reconciling all warring factions in Israel. It was a time of peace and reconciliation. But Joab defiled the time and killed Abner and Amasa, two great captains in Israel, he actually did that to avenge the death of his brother, Asahel.

Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Amman, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

2 Samuel 2:24-27: Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Amman, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said. Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

Joab used his military intelligence in a wrong way, at a wrong time. After God has restored peace, he went ahead and shed blood. It was hence counted against him as a great sin. He died for that same offence and all his heroic deeds in the past were forgotten. There is a time of peace, different from a time of war. When you war at the time you ought to follow peace, you will become guilty before the Lord.

2 Samuel 3:1: Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

Chapter Four

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH YOUR TALENT

A lot of people do not know that they don't own their talents. Some discover their talents, develop and use them to honour self. Great talents have been used,, even in Bible days to fight against the course of God. Do you realise God as the source of your talents? Are you serving Him with them?

From the parable of the talent, it is very clear that God is the giver of every talent. The receiver is to use them to honour and profit the course of God. Finally, every talent shall be reckoned for on the last day.

Matthew 25:14-30: For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability: and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant'- thou hast been faithful over a few things, I shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Everyone has, at least, a talent from God. Whatever you do with your talent will count at the brink of eternity. There are great writers who use the

power of the pen to discredit the work of God. Some great poets write nothing but love verses to send many souls to hell. Some have uncommon voices, yet they sing to stir the passions of the flesh. Skilful hands that should play musical instruments very well are engaged to promote Satan-inspired music. You will give an account of the use of your talent to God.

Can the Lord trust you with talent?

Read the account of the people below and consider how terribly they used their talents against God. Their ends should serve as a warning to deter you from the error of their ways.

Theudas and Judas of Galilee: These two men had similar talents. They possessed leadership abilities. They rose at different times as individuals and were able to later draw follower-ship after them. It is not everybody (hat can spearhead a course and have follower-ship. If you think it is easy, take a cause and you will discover that without leadership talents, you will become the leader and follower of yourself.

These two men that should have been great revivalists, evangelists and pastors of local churches drawing souls to the kingdom used their talents to draw souls after them. They fell and perished. The fruit of their labour also wasted away.

Acts 5:36-37: For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

King Herod: Herod was a crowd mover. He had the power of speech delivery that was esteemed equal to God's. His audience could not compare his speech with that of any man. When he spoke, it was unanimously said of him that his voice was of a god and not man's.

With such a voice of strong listening appeal to the people, Herod would have been one of the greatest gospel crusaders of all times. He accepted the

honour due to God because of the uniqueness of his voice. His end was that he was eaten up by maggots because he did not use that talent to glorify God.

Acts 12:21-23: And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

Ahithophel: His was an outstanding gift in counselling. The scriptures say to consult him was like consulting an oracle for the accuracy and timeless relevance of his counsels. It was that same gift that brought him into the high cabinet of king David. He was the king's special adviser.

When troubles broke out upon David, Ahithophel compromised with conspirators. He started to use his gift to counsel David's enemies on how to destroy him. This man became a disgrace as David's prayer intercepted the execution of his counsel, he became one of the few people that committed suicide in the whole Bible.

2 Samuel 17:1-5: Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night: And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only: And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace. And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

2 Samuel 17:14: And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

2 Samuel 17:23: And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to

his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

Jonadab: Jonadab was a friend to Ammon, one of the sons of David. He was a quick planner. Ammon loved Tamar Absalom's sister who was a Virgin. Carnal passions to have her by all means drove him to share his heart with Jonadab. Ammon had been worried, not knowing how to go about having Tamar. But when Jonadab knew of it, a quick plan and the method to follow occurred to him almost immediately.

A man like him should have been of tremendous assistance in the kingdom, drawing good and quick plans and devising methods to execute them. He abused that talent and taught Ammon to commit two grievous sins: rape and incest. The talent he exercised was the beginning of all the bloodletting that followed in the house of David.

2 Samuel 13:1-5: And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her. But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man. And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.

2 Samuel 13:8: So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

2 Samuel 13:11-14: And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in

Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

Absalom: The handsome young man, was highly diplomatic. He wouldn't say his intention directly. He knew what he wanted at any point in time. He would rather go about it indirectly than being confrontational. The story of Absalom's deeds is replete with many diplomatic moves he made.

Through his gift of diplomacy, he stole the hearts of Israel from following after his father David. He didn't say he was a bad ruler. He did not directly condemn his judgment either. Instead, Absalom reviewed the case files of all the judgment brought to king David his father. He began to say he could give them a better, fair hearing and justice if only he was king soon. He won a group of conspirators and David was deposed from the throne.

2 Samuel 15:1-10: And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord. And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

Nothing is wrong with diplomacy. It is only when it is employed to perpetrate evil that it becomes evil itself. Look at the text above again.

The diplomatic way Absalom went about to steal the heart of nearly a country was amazing. He put on courtesy. He rose in the morning to meet people and was very kind and courteous in dealing with them. The diplomacy, that enabled him to rise early, greet people warmly and indirectly presented his requests to the point they could say no was enough to make him the greatest soul winner in the whole of Israel. But for using his gifts wrongly, all the souls he won were conspirators.

An earlier move of this prince of evil design, still attests to his skills in diplomacy. He didn't show any bad feeling as to arouse suspicions when Ammon raped his sister, Tammar.

But within his heart he had a plan to revenge. He knew that he could only rely on his gifts of diplomacy to hatch the plan. His first reaction to the incestuous rape was that he advised Tammar to overlook what happened to her.

Two, he got the king's permission to host a party and one guest that must be there compulsorily was Ammon. At the merriment, he launched revenge and killed Ammon after two years of the offence; Only diplomacy could organize such things. Absalom was killed. He did not know old age.

2 Samuel 15:20: Whereas thou earnest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

2 Samuel 15:23: And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

2 Samuel 15:28-29: See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. Zadok therefore and Abiuthar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

Aaron: Aaron combined the ministry of a high priest with the talent of a sculptor. If it was in the modern world, Aaron would rank as one of the

greatest artists the world has ever known. Within a short time, the children of Israel pressed him to "provide" gods to lead them to the promised land. Moses was away to take the tablet of the law from God.

Aaron told the people to bring earrings and what came out of the huge donations was the golden calf. Aaron's talent was obviously corrupted because it led the people into idolatry. The glory of that talent should have been reserved till the days of building the tabernacle when complex art works, sculpture, etc. were required. Aaron died, not entering the promised land.

Exodus 32:1-6: And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Jezebel: If you think Jezebel had no talent, then you are wrong because, the evil woman was greatly talented. Strongly supported by demonic inspiration, she used her talents successfully against even the king.

Ahab the king of Israel. Her talent was rested in her being influential. She was so influential that hundreds of prophets of Baal were feeding from her. Her influences betrayed her. She got what ever she wanted in the land of Israel where the king was struggling to make his presence felt.

The influence of Jezebel would electrify every flesh. It was part of her being a nationally and internationally influential woman that Elijah,

the/prophet of fire ran for his dear life when it was Jezebel that spoke. Many influential men and women today are using their talents to win souls to hell through their lifestyles. If God has made you an influential personality, why don't you influence positively, to attract people to doing God's will? Jezebel was eaten by dogs.

1 Kings 21:1-3: And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

1 Kings 21:5-11: But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money! or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it-' and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people-' And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles, who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

Demetrius: Like Aaron who made a golden calf from golden earrings, this man was a silver smith, his talent was found in making silver shrines for an idol called Diana. The worship of this goddess was so strong and

wide spread that with the headquarters shrine in Ephesus, branches were spread across Asia and the rest of the world.

Demetrius was in the business of using his talent to build silver shrines for the goddess, any where a new branch for her worship was opened. These man should have employed his craft to be creating silver, brazen and special pulpits for the sermon of Lord Jesus.

Tertulus: Tertulus was an orator. His talent in oration gained him access to the governor. The content of his speech and his peculiar use of word show the height of his oratorical gifts. In the trial of Paul before governor Felix, he was a leading voice against the great Apostle.

He used the strength of his talent to ensure Paul was imprisoned. What do you do with your talents? Has your ability to speak good and smooth language become a thing you are using against the gospel? Can God trust you? You will surely give an account of yourself to God.

Acts 24:1-9: *And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.*

Are you using your talent to praise God or the devil? Are you hiding your talent? One thing that can get a born again, sanctified and spirit filled

Christian to hell is burying of the talent. Consider it thoroughly. Is your talent an asset or a liability?

Can God trust you with talents? Or is it a privilege to serve the Master. God can always find somebody better than you are. Nobody is indispensable to Him. You are hindering your own blessings by not using your talents to God's glory.

Chapter Five

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH YOUR TONGUE?

Men use their tongues with the feeling of liberty. They don't realise that every word they speak has a record. The use of the tongue is one other crucial area where the Lord wants to 'test your trustworthiness and discipline.

I was in the US sometime ago for a crusade. A handsome man and a beautiful woman came forward in response to the altar call.

During prayer, the man moved near me, got hold of my right hand and pulled me towards his beautiful wife. He position my hand on the wife's head and said: "Pray for my wife". I asked the woman what she wanted God to do for her. She opened her mouth, but did not speak a word. I urged her to speak, but she did not. The man then said to me that I just saw the reason why she wanted me to pray for her. He told me that she woke up suddenly some two years earlier and lost her ability to speak. The importance of the tongue became closer to me on that day.

It would have been different if the woman never spoke all her life. But she was not like that from the beginning, She had children and was speaking until the evil day struck. She couldn't talk to her children and husband anymore.

Can God trust you with your tongue? Some use the tongue to bless. Others do so to curse. Some use their tongue to build up. Others use them to tear down. For whatever use to which you put your tongue, you will certainly give account of it on the judgment day.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TONGUE

James 3:1-2: My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

James 3:5-8: Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Perfection - A perfect man is one who has the ability to control his tongue. Mastery over the use of the tongue is one Of the evidences of Christian perfection

A little member - Of all the members of the human body, the tongue is one of the smallest.

Boastfulness - Whenever you listen to a boaster talk, the tongue is the member of his body doing the job. It boasts great things that the man cannot even achieve.

Fire - The tongue is a little member that kindles fire. It is like a stick of a match lighted to a heap of dry papers. The little fire will kindle a great one.

A world of iniquities - The sins committed with the tongue alone are so many that the Bible describes it as a world of iniquities. Human memory cannot retain all the errors the tongue commits in a day.

Defilement - The tongue is a member of the body that can defile the whole body.

Incapable of being tamed - Outside God's grace, no man can be careful enough not to sin with the tongue. Only God's grace can help you use your tongue in a way, acceptable to God's standard of godliness.

Evil - The evil tongue is evil personified.

Poisonous - The tongue of an unregenerated person is poisonous.

Matthew 12:36-37-' But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Your words are on record. If you know when and what to speak, you will become a power house for God. Your mouth is the door of your soul. A fool is known from his words and a wise man cannot be hidden through the words of his mouth as well.

Some researchers in communications have said that a personality is known from his speech. You are what your speech is. If you allow your/tongue to be spirit controlled, you will be a vessel of honour whom God can trust.

A white man had an experience he shared with me. He was on board a bus and there was another man carrying a baby, on board too. They were on a journey along with other passengers. The baby was crying, making so much noise. Somebody close to the man with the baby reacted and advised him to keep the baby quiet or take the baby to her mother. He obviously couldn't bear the nuisance anymore.

Suddenly, the man carrying the baby broke down and was sobbing bitterly. He told who cared to listen that the mother of the baby was in front in a coffin. She was dead. Her corpse was being taken for burial. The man broke down for the first time since he lost his wife just because of what the other fellow passenger said. Can God trust you with your tongue?

Chapter Six

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH THE GOSPEL?

The gospel is God's package of eternal trust. In these days of many compromises, can God trust you with the gospel of salvation to redeem souls from hell? Even in the days of the apostles, some corrupted the words of God, but a few, like Paul, distinguished themselves through sincerity of purpose. If God must trust you with the gospel, you cannot compromise with sin, satan and the world.

As a lady, if the mirror in your bag is bigger than your Bible, it shows your priority is in looking at your face. If you have what you call church dressing and outfits for other occasions, you are compromising. Every compromise is a step towards backsliding. Some Christians hide their Bibles to avoid being branded fanatics. Can God trust you with the gospel of truth?

A man of God lost his only son. This boy had been warned severally against many luring dangers in a wayward life. He wouldn't listen. One day, he was shot dead in a gang fight. The man of God felt very bad about it. He complained to God so much. Later, he made up his mind not to preach again. He went and consulted a necromancer to call up the spirit of the boy so he could talk with him.

The arrangement was perfected. He was to meet his "son", speaking to him in a hotel room. When he got there, he truly heard his "son's" voice. The minister of God was excited by asking the "son" whether he was already in heaven or hell. The voice said he was in heaven. But just before the man of God left there, he asked a few questions more about faith in the blood of Jesus, His birth by virgin Mary etc., and the "boy" assured that in that heaven he was, they don't believe in such a thing.

At that point, he knew that a familiar spirit was lying to him. He was very inquisitive. He commanded the spirit bound. And the spirit made more confessions to him that it was just lying. That experience drove the man back to his preaching ministry.

The gospel business is a serious business. Nobody who wants to make heaven at last should compromise it for any reason. He that is committed with the gospel work to save souls and he who fails to do so is guilty of murder, if the souls go to hell.

Can God trust you with the gospel?

A friend of mine went to minister in another church. The host pastor hinted him that a businessman in the congregation just made a profit of four hundred thousand naira. He told the guest minister to give a "word of knowledge", about the profit, instructing him to bring half of the amount or be ready to die within seven days. The guest minister said he couldn't do that.

The man promised him a fair share of the money between them. "You will take a hundred thousand and I will take the remaining hundred thousand he said. My friend took his Bible and quickly ran away from there. He declined to minister in that church even though his face already appeared on the poster to invite people. The minister of the gospel carries tremendous responsibilities.

Something happened to me that really scared me. A brother and a sister I'd never met wanted to marry. The brother was from another church, but the lady was in MFM. He wrote to me and said he would like to marry a lady in my church. He explained that the lady said she wouldn't marry anybody without my approval. He was urged to come and show me his face if he was really serious about marrying her.

That was the condition the lady gave him. Whatever I said about it, according to her recommendation, would be taken as the final verdict. He then wrote to request if he could come and show his face to enable the sister marry him. I was really scared because the lady I had never met was willing

to marry anybody I approved for her. There is a great responsibility on gospel ministers that must not be mis-used. The gospel is the highest calling in life.

Somebody once phoned me, inviting me to join politics to run for Presidency. I responded and said "with due respect, Sir, what you have just told me is a demotion." The gospel calling is the highest calling in heaven and on earth. Paul knew this and made a deep and total commitment of his life to its course.

Can God trust you with the eternal gospel?

1 Cor. 9:19: For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

Chapter Seven

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH YOUR INFLUENCE?

Influence is another litmus with which your trustworthiness will be tested. Your life is influencing somebody whether you know it or not. The way you live and conduct yourself privately and publicly is either winning souls or damning them. You have influence on people you may not even know about.

Can God trust you with influence?

Your circle of influence is still smart, yet everybody who comes under its aura is negatively influenced, and you are desiring another sphere of influence from the Lord. Bible references on the impact of influence tell us how grave an influence can be on another's life.

"Let not your good be evil spoken of." "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." "Avoid every appearance of evil."

If your influence constitutes a stumbling block to others, Jesus says it's better to sink you in the sea with a great stone tied around your neck.

Matthew 18:6-7: But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

There are many outlets of influences. But I will just give you seven of them below. Following this seven, you will find some specific cases of people who influenced others in one form or another. You are not living in isolation. Your life is impacted on somebody, whether you know it or not.

Can God trust you with influence?

Matthew 5:14-16: Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

OUTLETS OF INFLUENCE

Position: People holding the position of leadership stand a greater chance of easily influencing others. As water flows from the fountain down its course with ease, so leadership position sends down its followership structure a great influence that is difficult to change. When there was military government that instituted influencing the populace with leadership example, everybody became conscious of the need for neatness, decency and discipline.

Hosea said, the nature of leadership determines the kind of follower-ship. Leadership, has a great capacity for good or bad influence on its follower-ship. What's the impact of your leadership position where you are?

Hosea 4:9: And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.

Jeremiah 23:10-11: For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.

Career: The record of your career is influencing a good number of people. You cannot take their careers more seriously, thus preparing for a great future through the excellent records of your academic endeavours. Similarly, there are great scholars and outstanding geniuses whose minds are towards atheism.

Take your career seriously in the fear and admonition of the Lord. You are unconsciously preparing yourself a vessel to minister to great intellectuals in future.

In the same way, you are influencing others to build a responsible future through the pursuit of excellence in their careers or vocational activities. Every Christian student in the world today wants to be ten times better than his or her mates because of the influences of Daniel Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in their careers in Babylon.

Daniel 1:17-20: As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Spirituality: Your spirituality or lack of it is another outlet for influence to be exerted on people. The disciples looked at the deep, unfathomable spirituality of Jesus and suddenly realized their own shallow spiritual experience. They requested of the master: "Teach us to pray."

Luke 11:1: And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Ministerial work: The kind of ministry the Lord has given you and the way you run it constitutes another major outlet of influence.

Your ministerial work can influence people negatively or positively within your local environment and throughout the world. You will never see or meet many people here on earth whose lives shall have been influenced through your ministerial works.

Environment: It is either you influence your environment or it influences you. Environmental influences result from collective influences from

individuals and things in the environment.

The influence fuses into a flux, strong and powerful enough to positively mould or negatively damn souls. You are an ambassador in your environment. Influence it positively so that the environment can transmit your own good and positive influence on others.

Practical life: There is hardly any outlet of influence that goes with man everywhere like the practical life that is lived. You can relocate from your environment, change your ministerial duties, run a different career, become more or less spiritual, retain or give up a position; but you can never run away from the practical life you live.

Like your own shadow, you cannot run away from it anywhere. Wherever you are found, it immediately begins to give expression to influences coming from you. It is a strong and inescapable outlet of influence.

Social: The world is in a state of constant social interaction. You cannot live in isolation on this planet. If you don't meet people, they will meet you. The social disposition you carry into the general interaction is an influence on its own. That is why in the same church, people prefer and appreciate some better than others because of their good, acceptable social influences.

POWER OF INFLUENCE

Jeroboam: He was a servant that God promoted to become a king in Israel. He used his position of leadership to influence Israel into idolatry that lasted many generations of succeeding kings.

1 Kings 12:26-30: And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go lip to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go lip to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee lip out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel,

and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

1 Kings 14:16: And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

Lot's daughters: Having lived in Sodom and Gomorrah all their lives they contacted the moral decadence of the cities and became corrupted in their minds. When they left the cities, the influence that environment already induced on them began to express itself in sexual pervasion. They both made their fathers drunk and have a generation of children that could not become part of God's covenant people.

Genesis 19:30-38: And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night-' and the firstborn went, in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of your father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: anti the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. [38] And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

John Wesley: This great founder and father of the Methodist was known for his strict practical holiness. This man was influenced by John Fletcher of Madelyn concerning whom Wesley said he had never seen or known any

man living a higher practical holiness life than Fletcher. Wesley influenced a host of followers in the holiness movement.

Gamaliel: He had a doctorate in law. He was a member of a council of the Pharisees. He used his reputation and professional influence to refrain the children of Israel and Elders from persecuting the apostles of Jesus Christ in their gospel errands.

Acts 5:34-35: *Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.*

Acts 5:38-39: *And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

Timothy: This young pastor's faith was birthed, developed and influenced through a lineage of those who had faith in God. From his grandfather to young Timothy, undiluted faith in the holy God became a heritage that family passed on to posterity. Here, the power of influence is found in Timothy's family background.

2 Tim. 1:5: *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

If your influence is a stumbling block to innocent souls, then you are committing a sin, punishable by death in hell. Influence is very, very strong, up till now, it is still very difficult to estimate the influence of Television, newspapers, magazines and other media on people generally.

Negative media impact on the society can cause great havoc. What kind of influence do you have on people around you?

I was invited to be chairman of a very big meeting to decide on some contracts to be awarded. No sooner did we sit down than somebody rose

and delivered an unsolicited speech.

In essence, he wanted the meeting to agree on what percentage of money to take and share in the process of awarding the contracts. The first called it an opportunity to better our lots. The second speaker explained further that it could also be called a kick-back. They wanted us to have a formula for sharing the reward of unrighteousness.

I opposed the motion on the grounds that I am a child of God. My position sent jitters down their spines, causing a great uproar. They claimed to be Christians like me, yet they wouldn't see anything bad in a deal like that.

Some of them even boasted that they would get to heaven before me even after sharing that kind of money. I simply closed the meeting for the day, exercising my chairmanship power. Wherever you find yourself, your influence counts. You will either add to or reduce the moral standard of your environment.

YOUR INFLUENCE

If your manner of dressing in your place of work epitomizes sexual appeal, you have reduced the moral standard of the people in the office.

There is power transmission through your kind of influence. Even where ladies dress moderately and decently enough, some men are still in emotional trouble talk less of when ladies are dressed in outfits like body hugs, spaghetti, jumpers, mini and micro-mini skirts, bikinis, cello-phone-transparent dresses, knickers buckers, show me your tummy, back, laps etc dresses.

Whether you want it or not, influence is something you will always exert on people and things around you. Even animals respond to the power of man's influences.

The white man is more animal-friendly, and animals respond harmlessly to that influence. In the black man's world, the hostile influence towards animals makes even the domestic ones potentially aggressive.

Your influence on people around you will go beyond where you can ever reach all your life. Christians rescind on their vows and promises to God to a degree God does not take their words seriously anymore.

It's like the story of two warring people I heard. The one losing the battle devised a method to possibly regain the victory. They raised a white flag to their enemies, signifying peace and surrender. But by the time the enemies drew nearer, they attacked them massively. The enemies quickly re-grouped and also fought back their victory.

For the second and third times, this people repeated the deception of raising the white flag again and again. After the third time, the enemies refused to be deceived because they no longer could determine whether the other people were serious about their claim to surrender or not. They descended on them, defying their usual symbol of peace and surrender, which they had not lived to keep.

Some Christians have promised God a hundred things and have not fulfilled one. Can God trust you? God is looking for people like Jephthah who would keep their words and vows, even at the risk of the dearest person or thing to them.

Judges 11:30-32.Â And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them! and the Lord delivered them unto his hands.... So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them,

God does not joke with whom to trust. He drove satan and his cohorts from heaven because He could no longer trust them.

Chapter Eight

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH PROPERTY AND HEALTH?

A rich man relished in his wealth, pointing in all the four cardinal directions to where he had property and belongings while he was standing before a wise-old man of God, who was a father in the Lord. When this rich man finished his geography of property identification, he lowered his hand. The man of God then raised his own hand, pointing a finger to heaven and asked him how much property he had there. The bitter truth is that you really don't own anything. You are only a steward of God's property on earth.

Psalm 24:1: A Psalm of David. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

PROPERTY

Whatever you have is what God has entrusted to your care. You can only be given what you can be trusted with. You better manage and use all that God has put in your care to do His pleasure because the day of reckoning is very near. Even if the world does not end in your generation, you won't live to see every generation.

It is a shame, that many Christians are not trustworthy. You have been bought with a price. God owns you and all you have. It is only what you use for God that will last. Many people are becoming very wise now. They build houses and create apartment for house fellowships to hold under their roofs. That is wisdom from above.

Can God trust you with property?

HEALTH

Your health is a gift from God. He is the one that heals and keeps you healthy. You are not supposed to use your health and vitality in a way to dishonour God's name and glory. Some people steal, rob, commit all manners of crimes simply because they are healthy enough to carry out such activities.

Some people's good health only serve them to promote immorality. God knows why some people are not healed yet. Jesus healed a man of thirty-eight years of infirmity. But when He later found this man in the synagogue, he warned him against the implication of wrongly using his health.

John 5:2-9: Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

John 5:19: Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

There was a blind man who was healed miraculously under the ministry of man of God. He couldn't believe his eyes. He ran straight to the cemetery where his father had been buried.

When he got there, he began to thank the spirit of his father for being kind enough to heal him of his blindness. While he was giving God's glory to the spirit of the dead, he was struck again with another experience of blindness. It is very difficult to believe that it is better for some people not to see, walk around and do all other activities other healthy humans do.

I taught a brother in 1998, he was very lean at that time. I asked why he was that lean and he said it's because he went into what he called "prayer task force". He prayed ten hours non-stopping just to bind sickness with the fetters of prayers. I asked him again if he would pray that long if he was healthy. He confessed and said no.

Your problem may be to your advantage. Some people are holy, faithful, committed, etc only because they are not well. If God trusts them with good health, they will go astray. A good number of people don't sin, they now live a compulsory holiness life because of the impact of sickness and diseases.

As you are strong and healthy now, use your good health to serve God and His purpose. If you fall sick later on, and you are calling out to God to heal you, the Almighty will ask you what you have used your good health to achieve for Him. There are people whom God have healed that have backslided. They have taken the good health from God back to the world to waste away.

Many people are most spiritual when on their sick bed. Some behave like Samson. Each time God blesses them, they expend their, good health on sin in the camp of the evil. When they lose their health again, they remember God.

Can God trust you with a good health? What are you using your good health to do right now?

When God gives you a good health, you need to do more than just sitting down and watching programmes on television. You need to cry out in the words of a songwriter:

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to thee,

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Chapter Nine

CAN GOD TRUST YOU AS A LEADER?

The bane of many countries and societies today is bad leadership. The calamities in many churches and ministries today are traceable to terrible leadership. It is a privilege to hold any leadership position. But many people have made God to regret. He sure does. From the beginning of all beginnings after He created man, God has never hidden His regrets.

Genesis 6:5-6: And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

I met a policeman. I had never met his kind before. We parked our car in a wrong place, so, he approached us, carrying his gun on him. He got to me and said; "Good afternoon Sir. I am under instruction to keep this place free of traffic jam. Therefore kindly move your car, sir."

That was the first time a Nigerian policeman talked to me with courtesy and good sense of responsibility. Usually some other policemen would challenge anyone insultingly and abusively. They don't realise they are misusing their authority in so doing.

A gun in the hands of a six-year-old boy is too much power committed to him. It can be mis-used. God does not give power to many people praying for it because He knows they will use it wrongly. We have sent pastors on mission fields many times, only for the work to prosper and they would just claim that God has asked them to start off an independent ministry.

Many times, they just take off from that assignment we sent and supported them from the headquarters to do. If you are young and given a responsibility you can not handle adequately, who will commission a more serious thing to your hands later on?

David and Moses first managed sheep before God called them to manage His own flock. If you are using your authority and leadership position to be making money instead of winning souls, God knows about it. If all the members of your church were like you, what would the church look like?

The history of the children of Israel is full of good and bad leadership experiences. The kind of leader they had, determined their spiritual, moral and general state of affairs. As much as possible, I will take and look at some of these examples and others below.

LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Gideon: Gideon was a back-to-square-one leader. The problem that sold the Israelites in to the hand of the Midianites for seven years of servitude was idolatry. They sowed, but the Midianites reaped the fruit of their labours. They lost their liberty and hid in caves, mountains and strong holds.

Judges 6:1-4: And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.

The coming of Gideon was to stamp out oppression of the enemies. It was to lead Israel back to the worship of the true God. Gideon was raised as a deliverer. And God gave him the victory.

When the battle was over and the weapons of warfare were laid down, Gideon made an ephod of gold, from the large jewellery donations of the children of Israel. He just wanted it as a piece of artwork to be admired. He forgot that the greatest evil that most easily beset Israel was idolatry. They would worship any image at all. That ephod became a snare to Israel.

Once again, from immediate deliverance from the consequences of previous idol worship, Gideon led them back into a new form of idolatry. So, they returned where it all started.

Judges 8:22-27: Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you. And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) and they answered. We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast I therein every man the earrings of his prey. And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

Nebuchadnezzar: The God of heaven trusted this man with the largest and greatest empire in the whole world at his time. This monarch used the opportunity of having other nations as part of his subjects, tributaries and colonies to popularize the idol of Babylon. He made himself into a demi-god and celebrated idol worship with all the riches of his kingdom.

Daniel 3:14-17: Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Look at verse fifteen again. Are you not surprised to have that collection of musical instruments put together on the order of a leader, just to worship an idol?

How many country's resources are wasted by leadership on a self-gratification? Many governments in the poor regions of the world would rather use their country's resources to promote culture, traditions, policies, etc. that run contrary to God and His glory. There is still a handful of people in the world whose leaders are the all-in-all.

Joshua - Joshua led Israel at a time they had more battles in those days. That should have been enough reason for the leadership to collapse and Israel to go, every man has his own way. But it was not so. Joshua maintained the worship of the true God all through his days, irrespective of the battle he fought.

This is where many leaders fail. They claim their eras are besieged with more problems, battles, disturbances etc. to the point they justify their going astray from good examples and governance.

Eli - A priest that corrupted the priesthood, he compromised with his children's lewdness and succeeded in making worshippers to hate the services of God and blaspheme. There was never a time the name and services of God are detested and blasphemed as there is nowadays, through the compromise of men of God or Christians with their children's unscriptural living.

They make it look like they are exeemeted from obeying the word of God. Some of their female children get pregnant while under their parent's guide. The male children run after girlfriends with impudence, right in the holy place. The kind of signal these compromises generate is horrible. What results is a church as terrible as its leadership.

1 Samuel 2:12, 17, 22-23: Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord. Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the

congregation. [23] And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

Solomon - The leadership example of Solomon was in two phases. The first good phase of seeking the Lord, upholding justices, equity and righteousness. The second phase was a total contradiction to the first. What had been built in the first phase was destroyed by the latter.

With his uncountable strange women, the legacy he left behind was to encourage and provoke the men and women of Israel to go into wrong, abominable marriages. If you ask how many leaders marry according to God's will in the church, you will weary your zeal to serve God and do His will.

Asa - His leadership had no respect for anybody. So long as keeping God's laws was concerned, he reigned for forty one years. The first person he wielded his good and revolutionary leadership power against was his own mother, Maachah. The old woman was not different from the rest apostate Israel because she was a leading queen in idol worship.

As he looked away from the tradition of compromise. He upheld the worship of the true God with fiery jealousy. What a good leadership example he showed!

1 Kings 15:8-13 And Abijam slept his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it the brook kidron.

How the church needs Asa and women with his kind of influence today! There is a need for the likes of Asa to overhaul the evil influences of idolatrous, immoral, worldly, carnal, backslidden and wayward influences

of so-called queens, deaconesses and mothers - in Israel. What kind of leadership quality.?

Can God trust you with such a leadership? Are you ready to be an Asa?

Ahab

1 Kings 16:30: And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.

Ahab was a record breaker in evil. All the evils ever done by leadership before him were but a small thing. Like he made up his mind to go past his predecessors in evil reign, he committed the worst of evils and provoked God in the most dangerous manner.

The Bible talks about Jesus Christ who loves righteousness so exceedingly that he was anointed "above his fellows". We read about Paul who was the least among the apostles though, but laboured "above the" other apostles." In the history of record breakers in the Bible, Ahab's name was enshrined in the diary of wickedness "above those" who lived before him. Some pride themselves in how many bottles of beer they can drink "above all men".

Others boast of how much immorality they can commit "above all men". Such a pride and boasting are qualifications for doom. Leadership as ordained by God is sacred. Those trusted with it ought to walk in fear and tremble.

Can God trust you with leadership?

Chapter Ten

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH MONEY?

The last piece of litmus to judge your trustworthiness in this book is money. Needless to say that it is one area where there are more cases of failure than the rest. When money gets to your hand, will you remember to do all you have promised God? Many people vow, making commitment to the things of God. They would want to build this or execute that project in the kingdom of God. They bombard heaven's door with the hardest prayers of their lives. But when God opens the door of financial prosperity for them just a little, they forget their promises. What used to resemble humility in them takes the real look and appearance of pride and arrogance both in their voices and appearances.

People have seen just a little money and they can't exercise patience anymore. People have seen money and suddenly they realised they have self-esteem. People have seen money and they suddenly woke up to the call to do so much business that they cannot be found in the church anymore. Money has sunken many souls into perdition. The greatest problem in the world today is the pursuit of money.

In people's desperation to make money, there have been more cases of natural toiling. Herbalists are having more customers.

Native doctors are enjoying a boost in their consultancy services. All is about money. Those that cannot wait for God's method to have financial prosperity go astray to strange gods. Even those that wait but lack the patience to collect the manual of how to spend God's given money, rush to join their erred colleagues in the dark regions of perdition.

You will answer how you spend every dime before God's judgment scat. If the prosperity you are looking for is to boost your ego, the church is a wrong place bother yourself with praying. God doesn't supply that kind of

money. If you are looking for money to church projects so that you can become elected into the church management committee, to dominate the pastors, you are wasting your time praying.

Many people have forgotten God because they now have money. Righteousness is only important to them to receive the financial breakthrough from God. With money available now, all the godliness principles are burdensome to many. They buy so much food at home, so they can't fast anymore. All the juices in the fridge will grow sour if they don't break their fast earlier than scheduled to drink them. Even, they don't see anything wrong in having alcoholic drinks in their fridges now, because of the calibre of guests they entertain. They build what they call a bar in their house and at first look, bottles of beer and abominable drinks stare you in the face. In the days of their poverty they were faithful in fasting, praying and paying of tithes.

In the days of war to break loose from the fetters of poverty, they would not miss any church service. The pastor-knew them when poverty made them humble. They would sit where the man of God could see them, at least, to always remember them in prayer.

The moment money comes, they shuffle their feet sluggishly to churchservices, open the doors of their latest flashy cars, stylishly, conduct themselves with an air of class, wear a high look that disdains the poor and the needy, dress in clothes of which values are worth to feed and sponsor many poor people. They sit in the most remote parts of the church or look around proudly to identify their class of the rich. They advise those they know as poor to be coming to church early, sit in front so that they can pray poverty removing prayers to God.

They never recommend the names of pastors and deliverance ministers to others. They don't have business with those ministers of God any more because poverty drove them to the men of God, but now prosperity has demarcated them.

Hell will be full of surprises. Many people will perish with their money like Simon the sorcerer, called Bar-Jesus.

1 Tim. 6:17-19: Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Can God trust you with money?

There was a brother whom God raised from poverty to prosperity. From having nothing, He got an apartment and filled up everywhere. His class of friends changed. Those who did not know him when he was poor became his friends when money came. To entertain and satisfy them, he stocked his fridge with assorted drinks. He didn't realise he was pitching his tent near Sodom.

Later, he began to replace some of the soft, harmless drinks in the fridge with strong, alcoholic ones. His fellowship with brethren dropped. His fellowship attendance showed his steps away from the kingdom to a far country of sin. Well, God took his prosperity away from him.

The last time I saw him, he was trying to eke out a living from selling firewood in a remote part of Lagos.

Can God trust you with money?

Hosea 1:8-11? Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

I have told this story before many years ago; about a fox was outside a garden. It was very, very hungry, but could not get into the garden where

there was a poultry of beautiful and well-fed chickens. The fox was dying of hunger, but its ears stood straight to the clucking and crowing of the birds in the inaccessible garden, it found a very small hole through which it got into the garden.

Happy as it was, it began to feed on the chickens. It was not in a hurry anymore. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were already available, all chickens. Soon, the fox got very fat.

Meanwhile, the owner of the garden noticed that the chickens were reducing in number and he could tell that there was a predator in the farm. The farmer then bought a gun and determined to shoot down the fox wherever he found it.

The fox heard the message and threat of the farmer. It was very sad and tried to escape. It went back to the *former hole* through which it came, the only option for the fox was to get out through the small hole.

As the fox fasted for days, it was trying its head against the hole to see if it had lost enough weight to pass through. In the end, the fox slimmed down through loss of much weight and managed to wriggle itself out through the hole. It lost everything it got in the garden. How true are the admonitions of the scriptures that-

1 Tim. 6-7- For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Can god trust you with money?

This is a very solemn moment. You cannot but discover areas where you have failed God. It is time for you to recover. You will need to go to God in prayers to reconcile your life. Every way in your life which has been at variance with God needs to be reconciled. You know where you have failed him. If your own case is that you have never given your life to christ at any time, this is the time to do so.

The bell of His call is tolling in a low, solemn tone, calling you to turn around to him. Eternity is near. Make your ways right before God. Ask Jesus to come to your rescue, now.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Every arrow of divine disappointment, blood of Jesus, wipe them away from my life, in the name of Jesus.
2. I will not come to the world in vain, in the name of Jesus.
3. Every area of my life, that is making heaven unhappy, oh Lord, have mercy, in the name of Jesus.
4. Oh heavens, don't replace me with stones, in the name of Jesus.
5. Every Delilah, sitting on the laps of my break through, die, in the name of Jesus.
6. I command every spiritual contamination in my life, to receive cleansing by the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus.
7. Let the brush of the Lord scrub out every dirt in my life.
8. Every rusted spiritual pipe in my life, receive wholeness, in Jesus' name.
9. I command every power, eating up my spiritual pipe, to be roasted, in the name of Jesus.
10. I command every blockage in my spiritual pipe to be removed, in the name of Jesus.
11. Command the hole in my spiritual pipe to be closed, in the name of Jesus.
12. Let my spiritual pipe receive the strength of God against any contamination, in the name of Jesus.
13. I receive heavenly flushing in my spiritual pipe, in Jesus' name.
14. I confess that my spiritual pipe shall be effective through-out my life, in the name of Jesus.
15. Every evil spiritual padlock and evil chain, hindering my spiritual growth, be roasted, in the name of Jesus.

16. I rebuke every spirit of spiritual deafness and blindness in my life, in the name of Jesus.
17. I bind the strongman behind my spiritual blindness and deafness, and paralyse his operations in my life, in the name of Jesus.
18. I anoint my eyes and my ears with the blood of Jesus.
19. O Lord, restore my spiritual eyes and ears, in the name of Jesus.
20. Lord, anoint my eyes and my ears that they may see and hear wondrous things from heaven.
21. I send the fire of God to my eyes and ears to melt away satanic deposit, in the name of Jesus.
22. Let my spiritual eyes and ears be wide open, in the name of Jesus.
23. In the name of Jesus, I capture every power behind my spiritual blindness and deafness.
24. Let my spiritual sight and ears receive healing, in the name of Jesus.
25. You spirit of confusion, loose your hold over my life, in the name of Jesus.
26. I will not loose my calling, in the name of Jesus.
27. Let the water of life flush out every unwanted stranger in my life, in the name of Jesus.
28. You the enemies of the gospel in my life, be paralysed, in the name of Jesus.
29. I reject, every spiritual pollution, in the name of Jesus.
30. Lord, put into my hand, the gift that will elevate my calling, in the name of Jesus.
31. Holy Spirit fire, ignite me to the glory of God, in Jesus name.

32. Oh Lord, let the anointing of the Holy Spirit break every yoke of backwardness in my life, in the name of Jesus.
33. Let the blood of Jesus, remove any unprogressive label from every aspect of my life, in the name of Jesus.
34. I reject the spirit of the tail, I choose the spirit of the head, in the name of Jesus.
35. I reject, any demonic limitation on my progress, in the name of Jesus.
36. Oh Lord, give unto me the key to good success, so that anywhere I go, the doors of good success will be opened unto me.
37. Oh Lord, establish me as a holy person unto You, in the name of Jesus.
38. Oh Lord, let the anointing to excel in my spiritual and physical life fall on me, in the name of Jesus.
39. I declare with my mouth, that nothing shall be impossible with me, in the name of Jesus.
40. I reject the anointing of non achievement in my handy work, in the name of Jesus.
41. Oh Lord, let Your favour and that of man encompasses me this year, in the name Jesus.
42. Holy Spirit, control my ability to frame my words.
43. Let satanic scorpions be rendered stingless in every area of my life, in the name of Jesus.
44. Let demonic serpents be rendered venom-less in every area of my life, in the name of Jesus.
45. Let the camp of the enemy be put in disarray, in Jesus' name.
46. Let all my Herod receive spiritual decay, in the name of Jesus.
47. Let evil worms in any area of my life die, in the name of Jesus.
48. Let all evil handwritings against me be paralysed, in Jesus' name.

49. Let all those circulating my name for evil, be disgraced, in the name of Jesus.
50. Let all evil friends make mistakes that would expose them, in the name of Jesus.
51. Let the strongman from both sides of my family, destroy themselves, in the name of Jesus.
52. Let not Your peace depart from me, O Lord.
53. I refuse to wear the garment of tribulation and sorrow, in the name of Jesus.
54. O Lord, let the spirit that flees from sin, incubate my life.
55. Let the secrets of hidden and open enemies, be revealed, in the name of Jesus.
56. I command every satanic net to receive destruction, in the name of Jesus.
57. O Lord, create in me a clean heart by Your power.
58. O Lord, renew a right spirit within me.
59. I renounce my rights to my anger, in the name of Jesus.
60. O Lord, remove from me the root of irritation that keeps anger alive in me.
61. I reject all thoughts that I will never change, in the name of Jesus.
62. O Lord, produce in me the power of self-control and gentleness.

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