



# Pulphe of DISCOURAGEMENT

AYOBAMI SALAMI

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#### RUBBLE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

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## Introduction

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." (NKJV)

Discouragement is a phenomenon that everyone will experience at one point in time or

#### INTRODUCTION

the other in this journey of life. Usually, it sets in when you are faced with overwhelming challenges; it is often caused by unexpected occurrence or experience in the race of life. We get discouraged when expectation and vision are delayed in coming to pass. Basically, discouragement happens when you give in your very best but yet, worst things happen.

The truth is that no matter how strong, educated or highly placed you are, you will definitely have to find enough courage, to wade through the rubble of discouragement at several junctures in life endeavours. It is something that is very peculiar to everyday life. In the passage above, by divine instruction, the Israelites were sent out of the land of captivity to the Promised Land. However, a time came when they were brokenhearted in the course of their journey to the land of inheritance.

Although, discouragement is not physical but psychological; it wearies your heart and sometimes blurs your vision; it aims at stopping you from achieving your set goals and aspirations. From the old testament to the new testament, you will see that God sent His servants and prophets to deal with discouragement in the lives of His people.

If you are broken-hearted, read the book of Ezra who was particularly sent to the broken-hearted. If you feel like doubting the authenticity of the

word of God, read the story of Gideon in the book of Judges. If you are gasping for air in the web of perplexity, check the account of Paul in the book of 2 Corinthians. If it seems your hope is being dashed or your dreams are not coming through, read the book of Nehemiah who was sent as the rebuilder of hope; of course, our Lord Jesus Christ was sent to restore lost hope and heal the broken-hearted.



No matter how strong, educated or highly placed you are, you will definitely have to find enough courage, to wade through the rubble of discouragement at several junctures, in life endeavours.

#### INTRODUCTION

In any life endeavour, it is not abnormal to come across discouragement but whenever the enemy stretches forth his hand of discouragement at you, the mighty hand of God will give you strength in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. God made His stand clear to us:

## "See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me". (NKJV) Isaiah 49:16

Our destiny is in the hands of God, but we are bound to pursue it on the field of life. As we do, the devil waves his hand at us not to cheer us up but only to either distract us or slow us down.

The hand of every human being normally consists of five fingers. In this book, I will be taking you through a brief exposition on the five fingers on the hand of discouragement. I am reaching out to you through this book with good news

While the hand of the enemy causes weariness and discouragement, the hand of the Lord strengthens and encourages His children.

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that while the hand of the enemy causes weariness and discouragement, the hand of the Lord strengthens and encourages His children.

## Chapter One

The Five Fingers of Discouragement

# Fainting B

#### The First Finger of Discouragement is Fainting

hen you have an ambition, a vision, a goal or a target but it is taking you too long to get there, you begin to feel discouraged. At this juncture, it is a common thing to ask God so many questions.

"Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."(NKJV) Numbers 21:4-5

The Bible says the children of Israel were going round the land of Edom. The land of Edom was a straight, shorter and nearer route to where the Israelites were going. Moses negotiated with the Edomites but they refused to allow the Israelites pass through their land, they therefore, had to go round. The business of the enemy is to deliberately elongate the journey of God's children so as to make them weary and faint.

When it appears as if things are not happening as fast as you expect or you are not getting close to your destination, then, you start to get worried and wearied. You then begin asking yourself how long it will take, when weariness begins to set in, your heart begins to faint. If you are at the verge of weariness and the enemy is pointing the finger of fainting at you, the Sword of the Spirit will cut it off in the name of Jesus Christ.

Who would not be weary when a journey that should take just a week is becoming a year? Someone once told me that "no matter how strong you are, when things don't happen the way you expect, you begin to have a second thought". Fainting sets in when things take too long to fall in place in one's life. Discouragement brings depression, despair, weariness and one begins to faint by saying "I am tired".

Gideon and his 300 men were pursuing the kings of Midian with the goal of having their heads, on a platter. Gideon received every assurance from God and one would have thought it was going to be like 100 metre sprint! The chase dragged longer than expected; they were drained of energy and food supply, and

many of them were even gasping for breath. By the time they managed to get to Jordan, they had virtually ran out of oxygen without achieving their goal. The logical or natural thing was to either give up or slow down.

Fainting does not necessarily lead to failure until you allow it. In fact, it may be a precursor to fulfilment.

#### But listen to what happened

"And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them." (KJV) Judges 8:4

Though they were fainting, they never gave up the chase. So, fainting does not necessarily lead to failure until you allow it. In fact, it may be a precursor to fulfilment.

As you continue to read this book, the Lord will cut short every elongation the enemy has brought or is bringing into the journey of your life in Jesus name. Just hold on to God who gives power to the faint and increases their strength (Isaiah 40:29).

### Frustration



#### The Second Finger of Discouragement is Frustration

the word "Frustration" also starts with letter 'F'. Frustration comes when one's goal seems unachievable after many trials and efforts; yet, nothing seems to change. Frustration comes when the resources available seem incomparable to the task ahead. Frustration becomes inevitable when the vision of glory that one has is turning to ashes of gloom right in one's very eyes. Frustration comes when all efforts are depleted and there is no reservoir for renewal. Frustration comes

when everything one has done yielded little or no result.

"Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall". (NKJV) Nehemiah 4:10

Consider the statement 'There is so much rubbish'. When something is not good, you say it is rubbish. Every rubbish coming your way of joy, fulfillment, satisfaction and celebration; the Lord will weed and rake them out in the name of Jesus Christ. The wall of Jerusalem was, at this point in time, broken and this made the children of Israel to be opened to various forms

of attack, marauding and insecurity. They could not sleep with their two eyes closed, their glory had been looted and their honour taken away, their self-pride was no longer there and their vulnerability was at the peak.

Frustration
becomes inevitable
when the vision of
glory one has is
turning to ashes of
gloom.

Just as Nehemiah was sent as the rebuilder of broken wall, Jesus Christ has been sent to rebuild our broken dreams, renew our shattered hopes and mend our broken hearts.

Judah was not a heathen but a child of promise; yet, frustration came on him and all he could say was that they were not able to build the wall. He wrote himself off but eventually the wall was built! Indeed the wall was raised from the rubble of the rubbish. That is exactly what happens when anyone is frustrated, he seems to write himself/herself off, lose hope and delete self-confidence. Anytime you find yourself in this situation, summon the courage to tell yourself and declare to the

Sometimes ago, a committed brother came to see me and was crying profusely. He said nobody had ever given him a

devil that you are a champion

awaiting the dawn of a new

day and beginning.

Jesus Christ has been sent to rebuild our broken dreams, renew our shattered hopes and mend our broken hearts.

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chance, that his life was worthless and didn't even know what to do again. His father was aged and would soon pass away; his mother was hypertensive and could not even feed herself. He was a university graduate but every effort to secure employment had yielded no tangible result. He told me everything that had happened and said it looked like nothing was ever going to work in his life again.

As far as he was concerned, he had tried enough; he had written himself off, gave up on life and was at the verge of committing suicide! I wish I could personally do something about his situation, but I was unable to. So, I decided to counsel him, exhort him, and pray with him. He left at least somehow relieved but with the problem seemingly unresolved. I am not even sure whether he believed in my prayer that day. To the glory of God and to the brother's utmost surprise, his breakthrough came within that same week.

He would have denied his faith and sent himself to early grave on an expressway to hell, when his

miracle was just around the corner. He never knew how close he was to his turn-around; frustration makes people to lose hope in themselves. Frustrated people often find it difficult to believe whatever a man of God says. Before Judah made that statement, Nehemiah had already encouraged the people and successfully built their confidence to start rebuilding the wall. Unfortunately, frustrated people rarely align themselves with the word of God or His promises. They believe that they have heard it over and over again.

Let me tell you this, when you are discouraged or frustrated, do not allow the enemy to push you to confess negative words. The goal of the devil is to make you agree with him on his own agenda, he simply makes his own agenda look

authentic and God's promises fake! Therefore, he brings frustration, making the journey appear longer than normal. Part of the terms of reference and job description

Frustration makes people to lose hope in themselves.

of the devil is the business of making people weary and frustrated; so, why should you worry that he is doing his job?

The duty of God's children is to disagree with the devil. For fifty-two days, the children of Israel had been building the wall of Jerusalem; but suddenly, the enemy struck them with discouragement and they confessed that they were not able to build it. This was fake news! This was after they had worked tirelessly for fifty-two days non-stop, thinking they were making progress, they suddenly lost hope. In every area where you are experiencing frustration, the Lord will deal with it today and remove it in the mighty name Jesus Christ.



#### The Third Finger of Discouragement is Fear

trepidation and apprehension. Little wonder, the Bible says that fear has torment. Fear itself looks more real than any other thing, that is why it is usually given the acronym 'false evidence appearing real'. Secret fear opines that things will not work out no matter the effort. The enemy starts with fainting, making the journey appearing longer and frustration later sets in. He then introduces fear and this begins a little at a time which later becomes a nightmare. That was

exactly Job's condition when he said what he feared most had happened to him. Prior to the devil's accusation of Job before God, he first introduced fear into his heart. This is the first foundation that the enemy lays! Remember that the devil is not a lion but he roars about like a lion, seeking whom to devour. Friend, don't fall cheaply to the antics and tactics of the devil; don't allow him to attack your heart with fear.

What are your secret fears? A brother once told me that nobody in his family has ever lived for more than 50 years. As at the time he was telling me this, he was already 49 years of age and that year, he was so afraid with a cloud of gloom enveloping his heart. This brother is a Pastor preaching the gospel of life but his secret fear was that he was going to die soon. Then I asked him, why is he a child of God?

I told him that the main reason he is in that family was to stop the evil trend! This brother was so apprehensive that he was already ruminating over what would happen to his wife and children after his demise. In fact, he almost

started preparing his will to avoid fight over his properties. To the glory of God, he lived beyond that year and he is even far more than 50 years now. You may be told that no one has ever made it in your family; so, 'why are you worrying yourself?' You are being reminded of your genealogical history and they asked 'why do you think yours will be exceptional?' I make bold to say that you are there to prove that your case is exceptionally special! Do not allow fear to discourage you from pursuing your dreams.

Remember the story of the four lepers in 2 Kings 7: 3-20 who were standing at the gate of Samaria fearing the army of Syria and dying of famine at the same time. Meanwhile, there was abundance where they were going but the enemy was telling them that death was in the city. What they needed to move forward was what the enemy said would terminate their lives. By the time the lepers overcame their fears, they became messengers of good news to the entire city. Instead of famine they had abundance; instead of death they had life.

When the enemy is dropping negative things in your heart, begin to confess positive. Fear is the devil's recipe for paralysis! When people are afraid, they can't do anything; even when they are asked to pray, they don't have confidence in the prayers. For a very long time, Goliath roared by bragging and terrorizing the children of Israel; thereby, putting fear in their hearts until David appeared on the scene. Just because of fear, the children of Israel were kept on a spot; the enemy uses fear to keep people on a single spot.

"The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, "What man is there who is fearful, and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart". (NKJV) Deuteronomy 20:8

This means that if you are fearful, don't bother to pray because you won't have confidence that your prayers are answered. In the old testament, the officer of the army of Israel told the people that if anyone was fearful, he should go back

home. The reason is that having a fearful soldier enlisted in the army is very disastrous and catastrophic. He would begin to spread that fear and weaken the army because fear is very contagious; even more than COVID-19. In fact, it does not require any body or fluid contact because it spreads like forest fire.

When I was admitted into the university, Mathematics was one of my compulsory courses at the 100 Level. I was told of how difficult it was and the high rate of mass failure in the course. I became so afraid because I believed the testimony of people about it. It actually became so difficult until I told myself that at least I passed Mathematics in secondary school, WAEC and JAMB examinations. So, until I believed in my heart that, since nobody

helped me to write Mathematics in those examinations, why then would I not pass it in the university? I started doing

Fear is the devil's recipe for paralysis!

well from the moment I told myself that

Mathematics is not difficult. Friend, you must recalibrate your mindset with strong faith! Be bold and courageous, fearing nothing and nobody except the living and the Most High God.

Many people allow fear to sink into their hearts due to the negative reports they have heard. There is need to take caution about what you hear, where you go and people you relate with. Instead, build your faith up in the word of God as you meditate on it, confess and apply it to your situations. Move with people of faith that can help you grow in faith and overcome the challenges of life.

# Failure

#### Failure is the Fourth Finger of Discouragement

ainting, frustration and fear are preliminaries to failure. Failure is the fourth finger of discouragement. When you have failed in certain things, then you lose confidence in yourself. The truth is that I have not seen people who made it in life without experiencing failure at one time or the other. The fact that you have failed in the past does not mean you cannot make it. The enemy introduces failure so that when you try certain things and you fail over and over again, you get discouraged. However, you need to know that

failure is a stepping stone to success. You must have heard about the story of Abraham Lincoln who failed several times in elections but kept on believing that he could make it to the White House. At the end of the day, he became one of the greatest Presidents America has ever had.

In which area of your life are you experiencing constant failure? Perhaps, as a result, the devil is telling you that you cannot make it again. Tell the enemy that it is just the Part 1 and your Part

2 is that of glory, celebration and rejoicing. Each time the enemy tries to remind you of your failure, shame, disappointments, shattered hopes; he wants to hold you captive by making you dwell on the past. Let the enemy know that though you have failed before, now you have been anointed for success, halleluyah!

Each time the enemy tries to remind you of your failure, shame, disappointments, shattered hopes; he wants to hold you captive by making you dwell on the past.

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The failure is to prepare you for the better package ahead; even, if you have failed God before, you can come back to Him now because He does not write anybody off. People can write you off but plunge unto God, He will draw you in. It does not really matter when and where you have failed or experienced disappointment; you can bounce back, so don't give up on yourself and don't give in to failure!

# Forsaken

### The Fifth Finger of Discouragement is "Forsaken"

ometimes, you feel deserted, abandoned or lonely and you think all is gone. In fact, momentarily; Jesus Christ felt abandoned and forsaken while on the cross at Calvary. You will recall that He said

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (NKJV) Matthew 27:46

But today, after enduring the pain and shame of the cross, we celebrate Jesus Christ as the Messiah of the whole world. At a point, Paul also felt forsaken to the extent that he exclaimed "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica". (NKJV) 2 Timothy 4:10

So, you have a good company in the Bible if you feel forsaken.

The only bad example of someone who was forsaken but didn't know was Saul, when he committed sin by offering the sacrifice he was not supposed to offer. When Samuel delayed in coming, Saul took up the responsibility of the prophet by offering the sacrifice and God abandoned him. Note that no matter how anointed a man is, he is still a man of God and not a God of man. I mean there are some times when a man of God behaves like an ordinary man. The greatest among the anointed is still a man.

When Samuel spoke to Saul, he spoke as a man of conviction but probably, the Lord later told Samuel the appropriate time that he should go and offer the sacrifice. Unfortunately for Saul, there was no technological means of

communication at that time, there was neither telephone nor internet to surf at that time. Simply put, he was not privy to the communication between the man of God and God. The man of God had spoken as a man but later when God spoke to him about timing, he knew he needed to follow God's specific instruction.

So, he decided to follow the calendar and the time table of God! Meanwhile, when Saul was waiting endlessly, he might have felt that maybe the man of God could even be insincere since he did not keep to his words. Consequently, Saul felt forsaken and did what he was not supposed to do. The devil wants you to do what you are not supposed to do when you feel forsaken. So many conflicting

thoughts do come to your minds at such moments in life. At that moment, he gives you a lot of justification; don't buy the argument of the devil.

The greatest among the anointed is still a man.

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Beloved, do you feel lonely and forsaken? I beseech you, don't do what you are not supposed to do! The aim of the enemy is to push you to do what you should not do. At times, you will hear some ladies say they have stayed too long; therefore, they will rather marry an unbeliever than to remain single. Regret usually follows their decision but they continue to endure the marriage or eventually back out. In fact, I have not seen anyone in that category who has not regretted it!

Do you feel things are not working well; therefore, you decided to take shortcut by getting yourself involved in fraud? Check the scriptures, from the old testament to the new testament, there was no man sent by God who did not feel forsaken, even our Lord Jesus Christ! Are you emotionally stronger than Christ? So, why should you worry yourself? You and I have to deal with the scourge of discouragement and not allow it to set in. There is nothing abnormal about discouragement, but the way it is handled is what separates the

winner from the loser and the victor from the victim.

#### THE FIVE FINGERS

# Chapter Two

Anatomy of Discouragement

# Anatomy of Discouragement

## I want to briefly highlight a few salient issues about discouragement

- 1. Everybody, at one time or the other, will experience discouragement. Age, social status, nationality, tribe, religion etc., cannot stop you from being discouraged. It is a normal phenomenon which is part of our day-to-day life and activities.
- 2. Anyone that has not experienced discouragement cannot grow and cannot enter into his or her destiny fulfillment. You cannot

yet be trusted with glory until you are confronted with discouragement and you don't bulge. You cannot be trusted if you are not tested! It is not possible because it is part of the training and the requirements that God allows His children to go through to get to where He is taking them.

- 3. History is never kind to anyone who gives up in the face of discouragement, but to those who keep pushing like Gideon, who was fainting but yet pushing in order to make a mark.
- 4. The devil does not want you to know that a day of glory is coming. Remember that Joseph did not succumb to discouragement despite all he went through in the hands of his own biological brothers. All these happened

The difference between a successful man and a failed

and a failed man is largely in their response to discouragement.

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because the enemy wanted his destiny to be aborted and forgotten.

"Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." (NKJV) Numbers 21:4-5

The people of Israel were on a journey and they got discouraged because of the challenges on their way. They thought the journey was going to be for a short time or that it would be an easy one. Unfortunately, it wasn't rosy for them and so they became discouraged. In the journey of life; from time-to-time, there is tendency for us to be discouraged. For a smooth ride on life's journey, you need the hand of God but the devil is also stretching forth his own hand too. Permit me here to say that the five fingers on the devil's hand represent fainting, frustration, fear, failure and forsaken. Everybody goes through

#### RUBBLE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

discouragement; what makes the difference in the outcome is how discouragement is handled. The difference between a successful man and a failed man is largely in their response to discouragement.

# Chapter Three

How Do We Respond? How Do We Respond?

### 1. Put the enemy on notice

When the devil confronts you with discouragement to make you lose your bearing, focus and confidence; it is not the time to cry, grumble or complain! Yes, you can do these sometimes but beyond grumbling, crying and complaining, you should stand on your feet and put the enemy on notice through aggressive prayers.

A newly married woman shared a testimony about her husband who was handling a job for a client. Unfortunately, an important file to complete the client's job got missing. This put the family into complete disarray because the client happens to be a soldier. She decided to put the enemy on notice by going on her knees, praying that it won't be when she just got married to her husband that his business would go down. Miraculously, the Lord intervened and the job was successfully completed!

In another instance, a sister prayerfully embarked on a journey after some initial premonitions but the vehicle she boarded had an accident and the driver died. It was said that the driver had been initially told that he would die. In fact, early that fateful day, he went to worship *ogun* (god of iron) to avert the evil. Unfortunately, he was the first to die on the spot but this sister put the enemy on notice by praying ahead and she survived the accident unhurt.

Anytime you are disturbed, the enemy does not want you to pray. Rather, he wants you to lose the appetite for prayer, but that is the time you must never underrate the power of prayer. The enemy will say you have prayed before, why do you want to pray again? But you have to be persistent and consistent in prayer. What did Nehemiah do?

"Hear, O our God, for we are despised: and turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before you; for they have provoked you to anger before the builders". (NKJV) Nehemiah 4:4-5

The people were building God's sanctuary and the enemy came to despise and mock them. They had worked for fifty-two days non-stop but at a point, the enemy came and got their spirit down. Like Nehemiah, when you are praying aggressively, you are putting the enemy on notice. You have to always be on the offensive, wipe your tears and stop complaining, stop being defensive, go on the offensive! Launch an attack at the enemy's gate, don't get angry with God, put the enemy on

notice. Fire back at the devil and let him know he cannot steal your peace.

While our church building project was going on, a brother came to my office on a Monday. He told me with enthusiasm that he came to remind me that I had announced to the church that we would be moving to the church permanent site the following year. Actually, it was not announced by me but by the guest minister invited for a programme and I aligned my faith with the pronouncement.

With this reminder, I went back home to cry unto God for help as I couldn't rationally fathom where we would get the resources to enable us move to the building within a year. However, I became more worried the

following day when the building contractor came and said the iron rods purchased with millions of Naira had all been stolen! While I was thinking of how we would



get the culprits and recover the stolen materials, some people with me were thinking of how we would get money to replace the stolen rods. To say the least, my heart got so troubled, worried and very sad.

Fortunately, I felt the Spirit of God moving within me and suddenly the anguish gave way to holy anger. I became so enraged that someone would have the effrontery to do that to a ministry that was just taking off ground. That night, my wife and I took the matter to the Lord in aggressive prayer and we told the Lord that we refused to look for money to replace the stolen materials. We requested God to do this to encourage our heart and as a symbol to honour His calling upon the ministry. We placed a spiritual embargo on the movement of the thieves and declared them fugitives in the spiritual realm.

Miraculously, those who stole the iron rods were apprehended and everything was fully recovered! We would have thrown in the towel and remained sad, but we decided to put the enemy on notice. Friend, the best time to put the enemy on notice is when you are discouraged! You should pray aggressive prayer holding on to the promises of God for your life. Why don't you just wipe away your tears, stand on your feet and fire back at the devil!



### 2. Stand firm in your faith

The ultimate aim of the enemy is to make you lose your confidence. He wants to make your confidence shaky and stop you from believing God; he wants to make you see how God has failed you and that God's power is limited, meanwhile His power is unlimited.

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (KJV) 2 Corinthians 4:16

Remember that one of the fingers of discouragement is fainting; but in the above

scriptures, Paul said we faint not. When you are discouraged and the enemy wants your head bowed, it is time to derive strength from the inner man. When people are seeing gloom all around you, look up to God and ask for grace. When there is desolation, cry unto God for restoration and stand firm in faith. The scripture says

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". (NKIV) Romans 10:17

Feed on the promises of God! Dig into God's word and know what He has said concerning your situation. Activate your faith, embrace God's promises and prophecies, believe He can and that He will do it. The enemy wants you to see your challenge as an exceptional one that God may not be able to handle, that is the time you should stand firm in faith. Get your inward man renewed

When people are seeing gloom all around you, look up to God and ask for grace.  $\rightarrow \infty$ 

day-by-day, it is a continuous activity and then your strength will be renewed in the name of Jesus Christ.

"You will keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You". (NKJV) Isaiah 26:3

Note the word 'perfect peace'. Are you disturbed and discouraged? Begin to focus your mind on God and His words.

### 3. Keep your dream alive!

Have you got any dream? Do not give up on your dream!

"After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, the children of Israel". (NKJV) Joshua 1:1-2

As the leader of Israel, Moses was the man who was giving direction; he was the man who could face Pharaoh and challenge him. Unexpectedly, Moses died and everybody got discouraged including Joshua. The visionary (Moses), whom God spoke with face-to-face died and everybody was afraid to step into his shoes. At this instance, God told Joshua to rise up and

keep the dream alive because He had not given up on the children of Israel. The fact is that God has no abandoned project! When you are discouraged, keep your dream alive and know that God is still in the business of

Your life is a project in the hands of God and there is no abandoned project with Him.

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making your dream a reality. Remember, your life is a project in the hands of God and there is no abandoned project with Him.

## 4. Make God's service your topmost priority

While going through discouragement, the enemy will tell you that serving or following the Lord does not really worth it. He will then ask you to withdraw your commitment and service in the house of God. The enemy will want to withdraw you from people who can help you when you are discouraged. He wants to separate you from where you can receive help, but that is the time you need to double your efforts and commitment to God's service.

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the

priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the

disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time." And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now

after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." (NKJV) Luke 1:5-25

Zechariah was a Priest and his wife Elizabeth was a daughter from the lineage of the Levites. Although, they had no child, Zechariah never gave up on serving the Lord. Can you imagine a church leader who prays for the fruit of the womb for other people and they receive miracles, conducting marriage and naming ceremonies for others but not having a child of his own? So many people would have made jest of him and asked him 'where is your God?' As a man, I think that should be enough reason to withdraw. But Zechariah kept on serving the Lord, he kept giving his best to the Lord and at last he became the father of John the Baptist.

There is a sister, far older than me, that my wife and I met while working outside Nigeria. She was fervently serving God but had no child. Personally, I thought she should just carry on in life like that, because she was already advanced in age, but she never gave up on God. I was pleasantly shocked to hear that she did not only get pregnant after passing the age of menopause but she put to bed miraculously through a normal delivery. Of course, I know about Sarah in the Bible, but her case was my first real life example that menopause does not mean *menostop*! In fact, in God's dictionary of time of life, it may even be *menostart*. Whose report do you believe - the world's system or God's?

Similarly, I know a man of God whose wife had a baby at the age of 65 years (not through IVF), after waiting for so many years. What would have happened if they had given up on the Lord? The enemy brings discouragement for you to nurse grudges against God directly or indirectly. If you give in to that, your zeal will become dry and your thirst for God will go down till you eventually lose interest. You will not be cut off from your source of help in the

name of Jesus Christ. Know that irrespective of your situation or circumstance, you have a ministry to fulfill. Ironically, your miracle may lie in the fulfillment of your ministry in your 'down moments'. Failure to fulfill it will make you forfeit your miracle or breakthrough. There is a demand placed on you by God to fulfill your ministry; and in fulfilling it, the Lord will attend to your needs.

### 5. Encourage yourself in the Lord

"And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." (KJV) 1Samuel 30:6

I could imagine the trauma David was going through, yet he pulled through and got himself encouraged in the Lord. You may not find encouragement in your situation and circumstances, but you will always find encouragement in the Lord. It is practically scarce to find encouragement in the situation you are going through except in God. If you are looking for encouragement in your situation or circumstances, you might be making a big mistake but, in the Lord, you can always find it. Find something in the Lord to encourage yourself.

# 6. Focus more on the Kingdom rather than the empire

The Kingdom is greater than your needs. Whatever your needs may be, they are all just for you to build an empire here on earth. Your focus on them will not make you go far, so focus more on the Kingdom. The empire is here but the Kingdom is with God! "Eyes have not seen, ears have not heard neither has it entered

into the heart of man..." No matter how positive-thinking you are, you can never fathom God's plan for you. The empire will collapse but the Kingdom



will continue to stand forever. Look for encouragement in the Kingdom and you would be blessed and satisfied that you did.



# 7. When you are discouraged, it is time to look for someone to encourage

It looks tough rejoicing with those who have what you don't have. A sister trusting God for the fruit of the womb took care of one of my daughters so much that she was staying more with her. Years after years, she had no child of hers but recently the Lord remembered her. Other people in her shoes would move around with contagious gloom. Don't be another Patrick Sawyer who came with *ebola* from Liberia to Nigeria and was bent on infecting innocent people with the disease. Don't bring people down when you are down; rather in your low estate and trying moments, look for someone to push up. If Joseph did not push the chief baker up when he was down in the prison,

maybe he would have died in the prison with his dream.

"But I would strengthen you with my mouth, And the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief." (NKJV) Job 16:5

Even while in discouragement, Job made the above statement as an encouragement to

somebody. Light up someone's darkness even in your own gloom. Don't concentrate on your situation and bemoan your condition, encourage somebody!

Light up someone's darkness even in your own gloom.

#### 8. Listen to God

Don't enter into dialogue with the devil! You need to know the mind of God in any situation you are passing through. What is God really saying concerning your case? What does He want you to do? The truth is that God still speaks today but most times we don't listen to His voice. Develop an intimate relationship

#### RUBBLE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

with God to the point of knowing when He speaks.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". (NKJV) Hebrews 4:16

#### HOW DO WE RESPOND?

# Our Ministry



## CEDAR GENERATION GOSPEL OUTREACH

### **OUR VISION**

To raise a **Cedar Generation**, who will be holy, healthy and highly successful; radiating the beauty and glory of God in this perverse generation.

#### **OUR MANDATE**

To build change agents, who receive anointing in the church, and make impacts in the world, as **Streetwise Apostles**.

### OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

7 Challenges of the Youth



Building Long-Lasting Relationships



Moving to the Top

