

THE POWER OF INTERCESSION

...The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].
James 5:16, AMPC

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A POEM OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Oh Lord, You are a sovereign God,
And Your sovereignty reigns over all the earth.
Your sovereignty is till eternity;
Your sovereignty loves humanity.
Oh Lord, You choose to use humanity
To express Your sovereignty;
How wonderful You are,
Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God.

By Yinka Oloyede, 2005

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the Holy Spirit—my Instructor,
to every intercessor and to those who will answer the call to Pray.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, my acknowledgement goes out to the Holy Spirit through whom I was given the revelation of the scriptures to write this book. I will always be ever grateful to Him.

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Last, but not the least, My love goes out to my brothers and sisters in Christ, who at one point or another have read parts of this manuscript and then applied it to their daily walk with Christ—and were able to see a positive result in their situation.

Thank you for believing in me.

In His Service,

Yinka Oloyede

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PREFACE

I want to introduce this book by stating that there is a difference between praying believers and intercessors. Intercessors go beyond daily prayer requests to God. They listen to the voice of God in prayer to know what His will is on the earth at a particular time or place. It could be His will for a person, or a group of people or a nation. I refer to this as praying the heartbeat of God and not the prayers of our own heart's desires.

An Intercessor will now pray according to God's will for that person or nation and sometimes carry out specific instructions given to them. In many cases, praying believers don't understand this concept, so they disapprove of the intercessor's obedience to God. For instance, you pass by a particular building, and the Holy Spirit tells you to walk back to that building and pray around it even though you don't even know a single occupant living there.

I used to think I was nuts when God gave me a call to pray for specifics. But, when I disobeyed, I saw the negative consequences. However, when I obeyed, there were positive effects. After I read some books on intercession, I was more than happy that there were other people like me hearing from God and being obedient to the Holy Spirit for God's will to be evident on earth.

The keys to successful intercessions are obedience and faith, and I mention Biblical examples in this book. I believe that all intercessors should be flexible in their call to pray and not just be adamant about their prominent calling. You might be the only one available hearing the heartbeat of God at that time. For instance, if God has called you to pray for the nations, that doesn't stop you from praying for evangelism within your community. He is just searching for a man to build up a wall of faith so that His Will can be done in the earthly realm.

Jesus was described on earth as a Shepherd to His people. We know Him to be the chief Shepherd, but we also know He functioned as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, and teacher and in the Gifts of the Spirit. But the primary ministry attached to Him right from the Old

Testament was Intercession. In the New Testament, He interceded for all who would come to Him and right now, He is still making intercession for us.

None of the previous gifts mentioned went back with Him to heaven except intercession, so why has it been overlooked? I firmly believe it is God's desire for the body of Christ to embrace it, but instead, we have ignored it because we are looking for a word-for-word verse in the Bible to say it's a ministry. Since we can't find it, we deny its power and existence. The only way that every knee shall bow before the Almighty God is to pray the prayer of intercession for the lost of every nation and spread the good news of salvation.

This book is strictly Bible-based; my intention is for people to realise that intercession began in the book of Genesis and was Jesus' last act on the cross. In Luke 23:34a, Jesus interceded for those who crucified Him on the cross and said, "*Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*" But this is still what Jesus is doing right now at the right hand of the Father (Romans 8:34).

Our level of understanding this ministry depends upon our intimate relationship with God. Every intercessor in the Bible had a close relationship with God, and they had three things in common: obedience, faith and a humble heart. Modern day intercessors are not exempted from these critical factors.

The ministry of intercession also enables us to live a peaceful life in the turmoil around us in these last days. I believe it is a great privilege for anyone who God has called to be a part of this ministry to know that we are doing what Jesus is doing right now in heaven. While Jesus is interceding for every believer in heaven, we are interceding for the lost on the earth.

May God bless every intercessor in the world today—especially the ones who have encouraged me in my call to pray and inspired me to write this book.

Yinka Oloyede

INTRODUCTION

THE POWER OF INTERCESSION WHY PRAY?

“First of all, then I admonish and urge that petition, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be offered on behalf of all men, For Kings and all who are in position of authority or high responsibility, that [outwardly] we may pass a quiet and undisturbed life [and inwardly] a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way. For such [praying] is good and right, and [it is] pleasing and acceptable to God our savior, Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] truth.”

(1Timothy 2:1-4, AMP)

This passage above seems so vague, spiritually, but has a powerful impact on human existence and our living on earth. Let me put it in my own words:

First and foremost, I strongly advise that you should by any means possible talk to God on behalf of everyone and every form of government or leadership. So we can live the life promised to us as in the Garden of Eden—quietly and peaceably with everything God created for our benefit, having a constant fellowship with him day to day. God’s first creation, Adam, broke this relationship through disobedience, but God still loves us, He sacrificed his only son to die for our sin, to mend our relationship with him.

Let us all, therefore, express gratitude and appreciation to God for what he has done for us, but also plea on behalf of the sinner, even if it makes us go down on our knees. The benefit is for all of us to live peaceably; this is what God loves; it pleases him so much that he will hear our prayers, and the sinner will come into the understanding of knowing the reality about him.

We know praying is communicating with God. Most of the time we talk to God about what we want, thank him for what He has done and appreciate Him for who He is—but rarely do we see Christians making prayers of intercession for all men a top priority on their prayer list. The main focus of this book is:

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION HAVE A POWERFUL IMPACT IN THE WORLD WE LIVE TODAY.

Intercession is mentioned more in the Old Testament than the New Testament; This is because Jesus is identified as the greatest intercessor—a mediator between man and God. God also gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is our intercessor, too, (John 16:7, AMP) and has empowered us to do great things for the Kingdom of God.

This unique ministry (it's a ministry because it is a service to the nations and all people) of intercession has been birthed out in some Christians, and the only thing they want to do is pray the prayers of intercession. As you develop and grow in this ministry, you will find yourself having a very close relationship with God. In fact, there will be times when you will feel strange and odd amongst people. On the other hand, your relationship will be growing stronger with God. God will be talking to you at different times. "Wake up and pray!" He will say to you in the night, "Something terrible is about to happen." When you are obedient to the call, you will see the powerful impact of your prayers.

The prayers of intercession can work anywhere in the earth realm. You might be living in a small village in Germany and be called to pray against a bomb blast somewhere in Israel. A name of a person might even come into your spirit, and when you pray, it has an effect. God is not limited by borders. He needs us to work with Him in the earthly realm.

Sometimes Christians can be so selfish in their prayer lives and do not think of the sinner. They forget that it was someone's obedience to pray that brought them to the knowledge of the truth about God. My prayer is that through this book, more ministries of intercession will be birthed in the body of Christ—so that we can all live in harmony and more sinners will come to true repentance.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MEANING OF INTERCESSION

According to Nelson’s Bible dictionary, **intercession** is “the act of petitioning (a formal request or earnest prayer) God on behalf of another person or group.”

From the Vines Expository dictionary, it is known as *huperentunchano*, which means “to make a petition or intercede on behalf of another.”

Intercede means “to act as a peacemaker; to plead in favour of one; to mediate or plead one’s case for justice or mercy” (Nelson’s Bible Dictionary).

An intercessor is a mediator or pleader or the one who is the go-between for two parties.

WHY DO WE NEED TO INTERCEDE?

In the Beginning

After God finished the work of creation, He placed man in the Garden of Eden to be responsible for it according to Genesis 1:26;

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

According to Genesis 1:28 breaking it down from the Amplified Bible, it says God blessed them, and God said to them,

1. Be fruitful and multiply
2. Fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]
3. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth.
SIN enters the human race, and God regrets He made man.

When Adam and Eve sinned, it broke their relationship with God. They became afraid of the God they once had together a perfect relationship. Not only did they lose the relationship but also the dominion over and responsibility for what God had created for their benefit. God had to put them out of the garden because He could not stand sin; this is what separates man from God. SIN had now entered the human race through Adam.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry He made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. (Genesis 6:5-6)

God regretted he made man because they were full of sin. He got tired of striving with man, because He had to address and judge sin endlessly.

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Our God is holy; therefore, He cannot excuse sin as though it does not matter. Sin cuts people away from God and forms a wall of isolation between Him and the people He loves. In Genesis 4:16, it states that Cain, Adam's son, left the presence of the Lord after he killed his brother. God's nature is righteousness. It was, therefore, necessary for God to look for righteous individuals to intercede on behalf of His fallen creation.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight. (Proverbs 15:8)

The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15:29)

Confess your sin to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results. (James 5:16)

God sends Noah to a wicked generation to preach repentance of sin (Genesis chapter 6)

Now the earth was no longer the perfect paradise God had intended it to be. Man was full of sin and had forgotten about God. They preferred sin to obedience. God found Noah to be the only man in his generation walking in obedience. Verse 9 in the Amplified Bible says, “Noah was a just and righteous man, blameless in his [evil] generation; Noah walked [in habitual fellowship] with God.”

“Walked in habitual fellowship” means Noah was obedient and faithful to God. For this reason, God saved him and his family but destroyed the rest of the earth. It took Noah 100 years to build the ark in the way God instructed him. During this time God waited patiently, giving people a chance to repent from their wicked ways.

Peter called Noah a “preacher of righteousness”. Noah was the first man God sent to preach the message of repentance. 2 Peter 2:5 says,

“...and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.”

Since the days of Noah, man had lost his divine relationship with God. Noah was the first preacher of repentance to his sinful generation—pleading that they would turn from their wicked ways and be saved from the flood of destruction about to come upon them. But, they stood in defiance of the message. Then the whole earth was flooded with rain, and only Noah, his family, and all the animals God had instructed him to place in the ark were saved.

CHAPTER TWO

IMPORTANT OCCURRENCE OF INTERCESSION

A Reverse of Communication (Genesis Chapter 4)

We know, in the beginning, the LORD was the one talking to His people. He communicated to Adam in the garden. After Adam sinned, the LORD also asked Cain why was he angry that his sacrifice had been rejected. After the fall of man, sin broke this communication, and now man had to do the talking.

In Genesis 4, Eve acknowledged God's help in conceiving her first son Cain. Also, when she had her third son Seth, she admitted that God had given her another child in place of Abel; This was the first time recorded in the Bible that men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

Eve was a humble woman and knew that she had her children with the help of the LORD. She showed gratitude by thanking and praising Him for her children and seeking Him out of a sincere heart even though she was cursed in the garden. Because of her humility, God still restored mankind by this same woman through the lineage of Seth.

The Message Bible puts it this way, *“that’s when men and women began praying and worshipping in the name of God.”* (Genesis 4:26)

The world was now in such a sinful state that the minds of people were full of evil, but God still loved mankind because He created them in His own image. God had to continue to look for righteous and faithful people who would carry out His Will and intercede on behalf of the sinful world.

Now we will look into some important examples of when intercession took place by a faithful man so God would not pass judgment on mankind.

Occurrences of Intercession

Using biblical examples, this section explains the powerful effects of intercession and what could have happened if God had been unable to find anyone to intercede. Anytime God is calling us to intercede; He is calling us to play an important role in the peaceful existence of the world we live in today.

Bridging the gap between the living and the dead

So Aaron took the burning censer as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation and made atonement for them. For the plague was begun among the people; and he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stopped. (Numbers 16:47-48)

The Israelites rebelled against Moses and Aaron; God became tired of these rebellious people. He told Moses and Aaron to leave the congregation so that He could put an end to the people. Moses asked Aaron—the priest—to quickly burn incense before the Lord, which would be as a sweet aroma of smoke going up before the Lord. This

signified the prayers of intercession going up before God. Aaron stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.

Building up a wall of faith to resist evil

“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord.” (Ezekiel 22:30-31)

At the beginning of Ezekiel 22, it explains all of the atrocities the leaders and the people were committing. The whole land was full of sin. Even the prophets and priests had no reverence for God anymore. God was looking for even just one man to build up a wall of faith and intercede for the city and lead the people back to God, but He found none. The city was destroyed by God’s wrath. God is still looking for people who are willing to build up the wall of faith through prayer to resist the evil in the world we live in today.

God needs us to pray on behalf of the nations

First of all, then, I admonish and urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all men. For Kings and all who are in positions of authority or high responsibility, that [outwardly] we may pass a quiet and undisturbed life [and inwardly] a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way. For such [praying] is good and right, and [it is] pleasing and acceptable to God our Savior. Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4, AMP)

For a very long time, we’ve seen government and world powers trying to convey the message of peace to the world, but yet still there is no peace. It is only the church that has the power to revive the world. If only she will stand up in her rightful position and have a

desire to intercede on behalf of all nations, the world would be a better place for all of us.

If intercession played a major role in the days of Moses when sin was judged on the spot, how much more so in these days when we live in an era of mercy and grace, it is through our prayers of intercession that God can work in the earth realm.

Our prayers ignite God to act in the heavenly and the earthly realms: *When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.* (Revelation 5:8)

And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. (Revelation 8:4, AMP)

In both of the scriptures above, it is noted that the prayers of the saints accumulated in bowls in heaven. Before the lamb opened the scroll, the prayers were mixed with incense, and the smoke ascended to God. They sang a new song and the scroll was opened.

Before the seventh seal was opened, there was silence in heaven for half an hour (Revelation 8:1). Then an angel burned incense with the prayers of the saints, and it ascended unto God. The angel took some of the burning incense and threw it down on earth, and there was an earthquake (Revelation 8:5). In heaven, our prayers ignite the opening of the first and last seal. How much more will our prayers accumulating in bowls in heaven, act in the earthly realm.

INTERCESSION AND PRAYING

We earlier defined intercession as seeking God's presence and hearing His heartbeat on behalf of others—or to make a petition or “intercede on behalf of others”. It is our duty to plead to God on behalf of this sinful world. Jesus is ever interceding for the church or all those who believe in Him. However, we must reconcile unbelievers to Him

through prayers of intercession and evangelism (witnessing to others); This is the responsibility He has given to the church. No man can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Prayer (supplication) is how believers communicate with God and receive guidance and directions for their lives.

The effectiveness of prayer depends on one's level of faith and right relationship with God. Eve recognised that it was because of God that she was able to have a child to replace Cain. Because of this, she expressed gratitude to the Father for His blessings. We also express gratitude and appreciation to God. Because we recognise our dependence upon Him as the creator and sustainer of all things on earth and in heaven, we acknowledge Him for who He is (adoration).

The most meaningful prayer comes from a faithful heart that trusts in God for his or her needs. Answers to our prayers depend upon the condition of our hearts.

Solomon's prayer answered with four conditions

If My people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. (2 Chronicles 7:14-15)

God appeared to Solomon one night after the completion and dedication of the temple and gave Solomon forewarning that He had the power to bless and curse the land. But even if the people went astray, if they came back to Him, their prayers would be honoured in the temple. However, they had to meet the following four conditions. (We can also be assured our prayers will be answered if we meet these conditions.):

1. Humble yourself by confessing your sins.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

To be humble is to be free from arrogance and pride or to have a spirit of submission (humility). We need to confess our sins with a humble heart by admitting our wrongdoings and not denying them out of pride.

2. Pray to God and ask for forgiveness.

To him all the prophets testify (bear witness) that everyone who believes in Him [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Him, giving himself up to Him] receives forgiveness of sins through His name. (Acts 10:43, AMP)

3. Seek God continually by being a hearer and doer of His word.

Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) are they who keep his testimonies, and who seek, inquire for and of Him and crave Him with the whole heart. (Psalm 119:2-3, AMP)

We should seek God's face continuously through a lifestyle of worship—and not only when we are in trouble; This builds an intimate relationship with God and allows us to trust and obey His word.

4. Turn from sinful ways.

No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for God's nature abides in him [His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him]; and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God. (1 John 3:9, AMP)

We have to renew our mind so that we are conscious of what we do. We have God's spirit in us to direct our life. We also have the comfort of the Holy Spirit and His conviction to warn us of sin. Therefore we cannot just habitually keep on sinning like it doesn't matter to God.

Paul said, “*Shall we continue in sin and ask for God’s grace to abound, God forbid!*” (Romans 6:1)

God’s grace is spiritual empowerment to prevent us from sinning and helps us to live a holy life.

When we understand the above four conditions and apply them to our daily walk with God, we can be rest assured that our prayers will be answered. Then He promises us that He will do these three things:

1. He will hear from heaven; He will listen to your request.
2. He will forgive you your sins; cleanse you.
3. He will heal the land; He will bring both health and wealth back in to your life (restoration). Now, He will listen to your earnest prayers made in this temple.

We are now the temple of the living God. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says, “*We are God’s temple, and God’s Spirit lives in us.*” God does not live in temples built by hands anymore (Acts 17:24). We are now the temple of God. Jesus promised His disciples the coming of the Holy Spirit, which would dwell with them forever, and this same Holy Spirit also dwells in us.

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-” the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete expression of the divine nature]. And you are in Him, made full and having come to fullness of life [in Christ, you too are filled with the Godhead-Father, Son and Holy Spirit-and reach full spiritual stature]. And He is the Head of all rule and authority [of every angelic principality and power]. (Colossians 2:9-10, AMP)

Daniel's prayer of mercy (Daniel chapter 9)

Daniel was aware that, according to the prophet Jeremiah, his nation would be in desolation for seventy years. When the seventy years had come to an end, he knew it was time to intercede on behalf of his nation by seeking the face of the Lord in prayer and fasting.

Daniel poured out his heart to God by confessing his sins and the sins of his nation. He did not first ask God to restore them, but instead confessed his sins and the sins of his nation, asking God to have mercy on them as he always had done in times past. He recognised God's mercy and loving-kindness for his nation.

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. (Daniel 9:20-21)

And the angel said, *"At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision."* (Daniel 9:23)

The Sequence of Daniel's prayer

1. Daniel first worshipped the Lord by adoring Him for who He is and praising Him for His everlasting mercy.
2. He humbled himself by admitting his sins and those of the nation.
3. He asked God for forgiveness.
4. Daniel then presented his supplication. God answered his prayer by sending an angel.

At the beginning of Daniel's prayer, God sent out the Angel Gabriel to deliver the interpretation of his vision. Daniel was a humble man, admitting the wrong doing of his nation. God told Solomon the same thing, "If you humble yourself before me and admit your wrong doings, I will hear your prayers."

Most of the time, when we pray, our prayers are not out of humility because there are sins or things in our lives that we think don't matter—but do to God. Sometimes we play the "I am right-to-be-right" game, and we don't consider others. These are attitudes of arrogance that hinder our prayers.

Every so often, sin can cause sickness—so while we are busy asking Jesus to heal us, we need to recognise Him as our healer. He is calling on us to confess our sins.

In Matthew Chapter 9, when Jesus healed the paralysed man, in that particular passage, He did not mention anything about healing.

This is what He said: *Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."* (Matthew 9:2)

Let's look critically at this scripture. Jesus saw the faith of the people who brought the person with paralysis to Him. This faith had nothing to do with the sick man but the people who brought him to Jesus. These men had to believe somewhere in their hearts that Jesus was going to heal this man. Faith is what puts God into motion; it should be the driving force for every prayer request we make because He wants us to trust Him. This sick man might have sinned, or maybe he did not believe in the healing power of Jesus (the sin of unbelief).

As an intercessor, you know for a fact that you do not have the time for doubt, unbelief, resentment or pride. These are the key factors that hinder your prayers from being answered. God depends on your faith and prayers to heal the sick, to bring the lost into the kingdom,

to stop a disaster, or expose a bomb hidden in the camp of His people. But you have to be right before Him.

James 5:16 says, *“Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].”* (AMP)

It is essential that our hearts are healed and restored before we present our prayer requests—so that our prayers will be answered.

For us to be effective intercessors, we must humble ourselves as Daniel did for his nation so that when we pray with the Word of God and His will on a situation, our prayers will be active and productive.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BEGINNING OF INTERCESSION

In introducing this chapter, I would like to start with the covenant God made with Noah and his sons. It is vital no information, in the beginning, is left out of the scene, so that the whole picture of intercession will make some sense—and you will better understand the importance of this ministry.

The Rainbow Covenant

God's covenant with Noah and his sons:

And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:" I set My rainbow in the cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; "and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh." The rainbow shall be in the cloud and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on earth. (Genesis 9:12-16)

This scripture is very powerful and still alive and real in the world we live in today. It also proves every theory of evolution wrong. The whole

earth was destroyed, and only Noah and his family were left. Genesis 9:1 states, “*After the flood mankind descended from the three sons of Noah.*”

Genesis chapter 10 records the genealogy of Shem, Ham and Japheth—the three sons of Noah. The new era of the human race born after the flood came from them.

God is still faithful today to the rainbow covenant, even though the people He made the covenant with are no longer living. Anytime a rainbow comes out in the sky; it is a reminder to man that God will not destroy the earth again with a flood.

In Genesis 8:21, God says the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Despite this fact, God will not destroy mankind. Some people might read this book and ask “What about the floods that destroy people and cities in the world today?” That is not the handwork of God. It is the work of the devil—using a form of deception to make people think that God has broken his covenant with mankind.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born. (Revelation 12:4)

And war broke out in heaven Michael and his fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven. (Revelation 12:7)

Since the birth of Jesus, the war began in heaven between the angels of God and the fallen of the devil. The manifestation of this war on earth is reflected by the decree made by King Herod, ordering all male children under the age of two to be killed. He later realised the wise men deceived him and that this child was a threat to his throne. (Matthew 2:16)

Jesus predicted these signs of deception would happen in the end time. He knew all the strategies the devil would use to make people think God is not real. God is the omniscient God—the God who knows all things. Only one thing is happening: a war between two parties, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

The Bible warns us not to be ignorant of Satan who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He knows his time is short, and he is as furious as ever. Satan wins people to his side through deception. But, no matter what he does, we already have victory over him. We must be alert.

Spiritual warfare through intercession can prevent some of the destruction we see today. It is God's will that as many as possible will come to the knowledge of the truth about His Love for the entire world and not die an untimely death.

Before some of these circumstances, God will call on you to pray His Word, and He will send His angels to stop the destruction. We should always remember a key point: we are not the ones to stop the destruction except through our prayers of intercession.

While we pray God's Word, we have ministers who are carrying out the job. With the latter explanation, we now know why there will be wars and rumours of wars, but in the midst of it, the entire gospel will be preached throughout the whole world before the end comes.

God, in His patience, will give every human being the opportunity to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and come into the abundant life He has promised them.

And you will hear of wars and rumor of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (Matthew 24:6)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

This is the true meaning of PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION.

This next section describes examples of people in the Bible that had a relationship with God, and they were able to stand in the gap to prevent destruction.

People who interceded in the Old Testament

Abram a man of faith (Genesis 12)

One day God called Abram to move out of his own country and take his family to a land God would show him. The Lord promised to bless and make Abram a great nation. Verse 4 says, *“So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him.”* Abram obeyed God by taking a step of faith, not having an idea or clue where he was going, but believing God was going to show him. The critical point about this passage is that you have to have faith in God before you can have a relationship with Him.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

It states that Abram believed the Lord and he credited to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

The first scripture explains that the only way you can come to God is by believing He exists. Abram’s belief in God was counted to him as righteousness. The first step of having a relationship with God is to

have faith in Him. Abraham became the father of faith. Jesus even referred to a woman as the daughter of Abraham.

Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18)

We know Abraham to be a friend and a servant of God due to his faith and obedience to God. Therefore, Abraham was able to establish a relationship with God. Now, in Genesis 18, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was so intense that God had to see what was going on before He decided to destroy the city. Three heavenly guests had just finished speaking to Abraham (the father of many nations) before he escorted them out of the city. Abraham had no clue of their next step.

And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham [My friend and servant] what I am going to do. (Genesis 18:17, AMP)

The Lord had promised to bless all the nations on earth through Abraham. They also had a relationship, and so He could not hide this from Abraham knowing he had relatives in the cities. These heavenly guests explained to Abraham what the Lord was about to do. Abraham began to intercede and plea on behalf of the righteous in order to save the city. Abraham pleaded from fifty down to ten righteous people. God knew Abraham had relatives in these cities, and He allowed him to plea on their behalf so that they would not be destroyed with the unrighteous.

This is the first form of intercession in the Bible. If Abraham had had no relationship with God, he would not have had that boldness to plea for the righteous. But God allowed Abraham to have his way when He asked God if he would spare the city for just fifty, then forty-five—all the way down to ten. Our God is truly a patient God. Abraham's intercession saved Lot's family. When the heavenly guests showed up at Lot's place and told him what they came to do, they allowed Lot to look for relatives to take with him before they destroyed the place.

The Lord had to tell Lot to hurry, but he was so sluggish that they had to drag him out of the city. The angels couldn't do anything until Lot,

and his family was out of the city. (It was a surprise that when he called his sons-in-law that they did not listen, thinking he was joking.) The heavenly guests even gave Lot a choice of where to go—not destroying the city he departed to. But his wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.

God is still the same yesterday, today and forever. His mercy and loving kindness endure forever. Our relationship with Him will open our eyes to any danger that is about to come to His children (us). He will reveal the strategies of the enemy. The key point is, when we hear God's voice, we need to listen and be obedient to what He is asking us to do.

Surely the Lord will do nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

God can call you at any specific time to pray; He will not hide anything from you. The Holy Spirit is there to guide you in all truth and to tell you of things yet to come (John 16: 13). God would not have saved Lot's family if Abraham had not interceded. Abraham knew God had to punish sin, but he also knew from experience that God is merciful to sinners. Lot and his family were saved all because of Abraham's intercession; this is the powerful effect of the prayers of intercession. We are in an era of God's grace and mercy. The final judgment time upon the world is yet to come. (Malachi 4)

Job's intercession for his friends

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one [reverently] feared God and abstained from evil and shunned evil [because it was wrong]. (Job 1:1, AMP)

Scripture goes on to explain that Job is a wealthy man with a large family. He was such a Godly man that he trained his children to be right before God. He made burnt offerings on behalf of his children in case they might have sinned against God in their hearts. He did this

regularly. This is enough to show he had a meaningful relationship with God.

One day the devil went before God, accusing Job and saying that the only reason Job was in fellowship with God was because of his wealth. After that accusation, God allowed Job to go through a tough test to prove his faith in Him. God already knew Job would never curse Him. Job went through a period of suffering and lost all his wealth but still acknowledged God.

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 this entire situation, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. (Job 1:20)

Job definitely had a strong relationship with God, but he was not aware of the existence of the devil who comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). He only knew that the God who gave could take away.

Everybody in the city heard about what happened to Job. Later on, three of Job's friends visited and mourned with him. When they saw the terrible condition Job was in, they misjudged him by saying he must have committed a great sin before God and was being punished. They tried to convince him to confess his sin and repent. In all, Job denied any wrongdoing but kept his trust in God. He also acknowledged God as his witness, advocate and intercessor. He fully relied on God to restore him.; this is the personality of a humble man.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. (Job 13:15)

Job's friends were known to be men of wisdom, but to him, they had no understanding. God spoke to one of these so-called friends named Eliphaz. He expressed His anger at him and the rest of them because they did not talk rightly about God as Job had. Then the Lord gave them these instructions:

Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your own folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right like my servant Job hath. (Job 42:8)

They did as they were told, and God answered Job's prayer. Job's prayer for his friends was a form of intercession. Job had to act as a royal priest. People brought sacrifices to the priest to pray over. The priest had to be right before the Lord, or the sacrifices would not be accepted—and he would be killed instantly. But, because Job was an upright man before God who persevered in times of suffering (James 5:11) and still acknowledged God, he was able to stand in the gap for his friends. If not, they would have been killed by the Lord's wrath. A key factor to this is also Job's forgiveness of his friends.

The proof he forgave his friends was his obedience to pray over their sacrifice. After this, everything Job lost was restored to him, and he received a double portion for all the trouble he went through. We cannot have unforgiveness or hold grudges towards others. If we hold them, our prayers are like the wind blowing.

Moses, the greatest intercessor of the Old Testament

Moses was the Hebrew prophet chosen by God to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. He became their leader and lawgiver during their years of wandering in the wilderness. Moses was the go-between for the nation of Israel and God. He had to plead on behalf of their requests and complaints to God. God, on the other hand, had to deliver His messages to His people through Moses.

The birth of Moses compared to the birth of Jesus

Before we look into their births, let's look into their names. Moses in Hebrew means *drawn out*. The Egyptian meaning is *to be born, a child or son*. By the time you put both together, it might make sense to say "a

child to be set apart". Jesus, on the other hand, means *the Lord is salvation*. They both had one main purpose, which was to deliver God's people.

Circumstances around the birth of Moses were similar to those around the birth of Jesus, the intercessor/mediator of the New Testament. When comparing circumstances around their birth periods and life experiences, it is interesting to note the parallel histories of the time of Moses' birth and that of Jesus' miraculous birth.

The time of their birth

The Birth of Moses

Moses was born at the time when Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, had given orders that Hebrew male babies should not be allowed to live. They were a threat to his authority because the Israelites were outnumbering the Egyptians. Moses' mother made a little basket to hide him in and placed the basket in the river Nile. Later an Egyptian princess who found him decided to adopt him. (Exodus 2)

The Birth of Jesus

Herod was the reigning king of the Jews when Jesus was born. He ordered all males under the age of two killed in an obsessive attempt to kill Jesus. Herod feared Jesus was a threat to his throne. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to flee from Bethlehem to Egypt until King Herod was dead, to protect Jesus.

Both Moses and Jesus spent the early years of their lives in Egypt.

Their leadership

Moses led the people of God out of bondage; he was their leader chosen by God. They could only seek God through Moses. (Exodus 3)

Jesus came to set us free from the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1) He is the head of the church, and we are the body of Christ. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6)

God's law

The law to govern God's people was given through Moses—the Ten Commandments.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

For while the Law was given through Moses, grace (unearned, undeserved favor and spiritual blessings) and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17, AMP)

Moses, the deliverer of God's people

Moses was chosen by God to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Egyptians; he was now to be their leader. He always had to go to God with their requests and complaints. Moses was now to re-present God to His people.

In the desert, the Israelites complained to Moses, and he interceded on their behalf. After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they wandered for three days and found no water. They got to a place called Marah and found the water there was bitter.

Then they complained to Moses, saying:

And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statue and an ordinance for them and there He tested them. (Exodus 15:24-25)

The Israelites had no direct relationship with God. Therefore, they had to complain to Moses who—on their behalf—had to plead with God. God turned the bitter water into sweet water for His people. The Lord then made a promise to His people that if they obeyed Him, He would

set them free from all the plagues that came upon the Egyptians. He made known himself as Jehovah Rophe,

“For I am the Lord who heals you.” (Exodus 15:26b)

God revealed His identity to His people (the nation of Israel) by giving Himself a name each time He showed them favour. He is the same God today. After this incident, they came to a place called Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they stayed near the waters. Marah represented the people’s unbelief and complaints, but Elim stood for God’s bountiful provision. God directed Moses footsteps towards His bountiful provision for his people.

Moses pleaded mercy when they sinned against God

Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, we sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us. (Numbers 21:6-9)

So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone who was bitten by a snake looked at the bronze snake, he lived. The Israelites had again rebelled against God and Moses, despite all the miracles God had done. God used venomous snakes to punish the people for their unbelief and complaining, and many of them died. A bite by a poisonous snake meant a slow death with intense suffering. The people confessed their sin and pleaded with Moses to ask God to take away the snakes.

Each time they were disobedient, God still showed mercy to them because of Moses relationship with Him. God can change a whole nation if just one righteous and faithful man can hold up the banner of prayer.

Jesus spoke about this incident in John Chapter 3, comparing it to His death on the cross.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
(John 3:14-15)

Those doomed to die from snakebite would live if they just looked up at the snake on the pole and believed. Similarly, our salvation comes from looking unto Jesus on the cross, and when we believe we will not die but live forever. The Israelites were healed from snakebite, but we have been healed from sin's deadly bite.

The sacrifices and prayers of the Old Testament stood as an act of intercession

And Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is the most holy to the Lord. Incense was a sweet smelling substance that was burned as an offering to God on the altar in the tabernacle. The purpose of this incense offering was to honour God. Incense burning in an upward direction towards heaven symbolized and expressed the prayers of the Hebrew people, which were considered as a pleasant aroma offered to God.

(Exodus 30:7-10)

Let my prayer be set before you as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. (Psalm 141:2)

In 1 Timothy 2:8, Paul wrote this to Timothy, “I desire therefore, that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” The burning of sweet incense on the altar is the same as our lifting up holy hands to honour God, when we have a right relationship with Him.

The priest himself had to be holy and perform a sin offering before he could burn the incense to honour God. Even Jesus said, “If you bring an offering to the altar and you remember that your brother has any grudges against you, leave your offering and go and reconcile with your brother then come back and honour God with your offering.” (Matthew 5:23-24)

The Day of Atonement

Atonement in Hebrew means *Kāpar* or “to cover over”. Atonement was the act by which God restored His relationship with His people, the Israelites. Since the fall, man was full of so much sin that God could not stand it. Therefore, He created a way for the sins of the people to be covered up—and to return them to right fellowship with Him.

Aaron was the first priest; he was the one to represent the people in performing this ritual. He had to first make atonement for himself and his household by offering a bull up as a sin offering. If he didn't, he would die during the ritual. The Day of Atonement was the recognition of the peoples' inability to make any atonement for their own sins. No one was worthy of entering the holy of holies. The high priest stood as the mediator between man and God. He offered the blood sacrifice and sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. This was the only time the priest could enter the most holy place, the inner room of the tabernacle.

The Day of Atonement served as a reminder that the yearly sacrifices could only cover up sins temporarily, but it pointed towards Jesus Christ the perfect atonement that would remove sins forever. After Jesus had His last breath on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (Mark 15:36) This signified the end of a priest making atonement for us.

It was obvious that not just anyone could perform the duty of a Priest. A priest had to have an upright lifestyle before God could accept his sacrifice.

Hebrews 4:15 says, *“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*

Thank God for Jesus, who won the victory on the cross. Now we need no priest to confess our sins. Hebrews 4:16 says that we should come boldly to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God’s instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and day difference he made for you - from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted. (1 Peter 2:9-10, The Message)

The above passage simply explains that God has chosen us now to be royal priests and to live a life that pleases Him. Then He will give us the responsibility of letting His will be done on earth through us and also reconciling others in the world to Him. (The ministry of reconciliation)

Isaiah’s prediction of Jesus intercessions for transgressors

And he was numbered with the transgressors. And he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for sinners. (Isaiah 53:12b)

No one can condemn us because Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose up the third day, is now sitting at the right hand of God ever pleading or making intercession for us. (Romans 8:34-36)

INTERCESSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Zacharias, the blameless priest

The first account of intercession written in the New Testament is found in the first chapter of the book of Luke. Zacharias was a priest in the days of King Herod. He and his wife, Elizabeth, walked blamelessly before the Lord. They were older people with no children.

Then one day, it was his turn to do his priestly duties in the temple.

According to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. (Luke 1:9)

Then the 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.” (Luke 1:11-13)

This happened before Jesus came on the scene; the priests were still burning incense in the temple. God answered Zacharias’ prayer because he and his wife were upright before the Lord—not just by keeping the laws, but by living a life of obedience to God from their hearts. It became their lifestyle. A key point to intercession is that obedience to God’s word from our heart has to be a lifestyle. We also need to put our trust in God no matter what the circumstances around us may be.

JESUS THE MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT

The death of Jesus on the cross was the end of the priests going into the Holy of Holies (behind the veil) on behalf of the people; it was the end of the yearly atonement for sins. When Jesus cried out on the cross, the veil in the temple tore into two from top to bottom. Jesus entered into the most Holy Place on our behalf and has become our ultimate high priest—ever making intercession on our behalf. We can now come before God through Jesus Christ; He became our open door to the Father. Through His death, we have been reconciled to God.

By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:22-25)

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (Romans 8:34)

These scriptures explain that Jesus is forever making intercessions for those who come to God through Him. He is forever our advocate. No wonder the scriptures say we should come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). Mercy is the aspect of God's love that causes Him to help us when we are miserable or when we fail—just as Grace is the aspect of His love that makes Him forgive the guilty. Grace is unmerited favour because we do not deserve it.

Jesus intercedes for Peter

And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32)

Jesus knew that Satan wanted to crush Peter like grains of wheat. Jesus interceded for him and assured him that his faith would waver, but it would not be destroyed. It would be renewed, and Peter would become a powerful leader in the kingdom of God. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus also told Peter, “Upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it”. The rock refers to Peter as a great leader and a forerunner of the twelve disciples. He was also the first to witness to the crowd on the day of Pentecost.

Because of Jesus' intercession for Peter, Peter became a bold witness, and many were saved through his message of repentance.

Jesus intercedes for his disciples and future believers

Before Jesus was arrested to complete His mission on earth, He first prayed for Himself to be restored to His glorious position before the beginning of the world. (John 17:1-5) Then He went on to pray for His disciples and future believers—that they all be one as He and the Father are one. Knowing that Jesus interceded for us should give us confidence that He had us in mind, and we can whole-heartedly work in His kingdom.

Below are the summary points of Jesus' intercession to the Father (John 17:6-25):

1. He interceded for all believers and not sinners.
2. That God should protect them by the power of his name (Jesus).
3. That the disciples be united as one in harmony and love, as He and the Father are one.
4. Not to take them out of the world but to protect them from the evil one. Jesus wants us to be a light to the world (Matthew 15:13-16) and to reflect His glory.
5. To sanctify them with truth—which is the word of God. A daily application of the word of God has a purifying effect on our hearts. It points out our sin, motivates us to confess, and renews our relationship with Christ.
6. Jesus also prayed for future believers, which includes you and me; This should give us confidence as we work in His kingdom. He already had us on His mind.
7. His greatest desire was that His disciples and future believers would become one—a powerful witness to God's love as He and the Father are one. (We can be the unified body of Christ

by praying for all Christians all over the world and expressing our love to one another.) Jesus' prayer for unity among believers was based on the believers' unity with Him and the Father. Christians can observe unity among themselves if they are living in union with God. For example, Christians having fellowship together regardless of the name and denomination of the church shows unity.

The most important thing is that we believe that we are one Body in Christ, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Intercession made by the Holy Spirit through us

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

The Holy Spirit is always there to intercede for us when we don't know the right words to say. He will pray the perfect will of God for us because He knows everything about us, and therefore knows what to pray through us and in us. The Holy Spirit knows the will of the Father; all He is looking for is a willing vessel to release God's will in the earth. That is why praying in tongues is important, because we release the will of the Father through the Holy Ghost in us.

I believe this chapter has revealed to you the importance of your genuine relationship with God by being faithful and obedient to His word. When you have an intimate relationship with God, He will reveal His will and mind to you—but He needs your cooperation. Then your prayers of intercession will have a powerful effect in our world today.

CHAPTER FOUR

The word “POWER” in INTERCESSION

We all received salvation through faith as a gift from God. Our power and authority in the name of Jesus came along with our package deal of salvation and the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

According to the Vines Expository dictionary, there are various Greek translations of the word power, but we will focus on two:

1. Used as a noun, Exousia: it denotes “freedom of action, right to act;” used of God, it is absolute, unrestricted. e.g., Luke 12:5 (“authority”); in Acts 1:7-8 “right of disposal;” is what is indicated; used of men, authority is delegated.
2. Used as a verb, Eousiazō; “to exercise authority” is used in the active voice, Luke 22:24-25, “have authority” (KJV “exercise authority”) Used in the passive 1 Corinthians 7:4 (twice of marital relations and conditions).

*One of the views on the subject of power in Scripture is that it has been committed to those who, on becoming believers, were “empowered” by the Spirit of God, are indwelt by Him and will

exercise it hereafter for God’s glory. (Vines Complete Expository Dictionary)

The English translation of power is the ability or strength to perform an activity or deed. While authority is to do something, particularly to give orders and see that they are followed, it emphasizes the legality and right to do something more than the physical needed to do the job. There are two basic forms of authority; (1) intrinsic authority; belonging to one’s essential nature. (2) Derived authority; given to one from another. (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary)

Relating the word “Power” with Intercession

As we have defined before, intercession is seeking the presence of God on behalf of others. According to both the Greek and English definitions of power, as a believer, God has given us that right to act or delegated authority to petition Him on behalf of others. It could be on behalf of a nation, people in authority, or the sinner. The manifestation of this power could be released through us in various forms such as prayer, praise, worship, Spiritual boldness in speaking the word of God, or through miracles.

How can you manifest this power?

The power manifested through God’s word

So shall my word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to me void, But it shall accomplish what I please And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon’s scalpel, cutting through everything whether doubt or defence, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God’s Word. We can’t get away from it—no matter what. (Hebrews 4:12, The Message)

We know that God created the universe by speaking the word. His word is powerful. Whatever He calls out, so shall it be. Wherever He sends the word, it will go. The word divides or makes a distinction between good from evil—clearly exposing our heart’s desires and intents. We are left open to make a moral choice of life. We manifest the power in His word by being obedient to what it says.

The Holy Spirit gives us the legal authority to speak God’s word in Jesus name

After Jesus arose from the dead He appeared to his disciples, and He gave them a command not to leave Jerusalem yet, but wait to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. After being baptised, they would receive power to become effective witnesses for Him from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:1-8)

As a born again believer, being baptised in the Holy Ghost, you have the power of attorney or legal authorisation to speak God’s word in Jesus name. It is unfortunate that today in this age of the church that we still have born again Christians who do not believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit because they do not understand it; This breeds a lot of powerless believers in the body of Christ—more frightened people than bold believers.

We have been given Spiritual boldness to overcome fear

1 Timothy 1:7 says, *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

We are not frightened. We have been given a spirit full of power, love and a sound mind—or spiritual alertness. Nothing is supposed to catch us unaware if we are on guard.

Spiritual boldness comes from the Holy Spirit, and this helps us to overcome fear. Paul was explaining to the Romans that there is a new life through the Spirit.

Romans 8:15 says, *"You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out 'Abba, Father.'"*

He uses adoption or "Sonship" to illustrate our new relationship with God. Therefore, He has given us the right to inherit all of what belongs to Him through the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, there was not yet the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but still, the Prophets and people God wanted to use to speak His word did so by the Holy Spirit descending upon them. But we have him on us and in us, thank you, Jesus. (John 14:17)

The evidence to prove we are God's children and claim our inheritance

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

The Holy Spirit is the SEAL that we belong to Christ, and we are entitled to our sonship; everything He promised us is manifested in our life through our obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Examples of the Holy Spirit coming upon people in the Old Testament

Then the Lord came down in a cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the same Spirit that was upon him and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. (Numbers 11:25)

This chapter talks about Moses choosing the seventy elders of Israel. God placed the Spirit that was upon Moses upon the seventy he elected.; This was a sign to Moses to show that God had accepted

them, and they had the authority to be elders or leaders over the people.

Other examples of God's people in the Old Testament when the Holy Spirit came upon them:

- Othniel—God raises a judge over Israel, and *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel.* (Judges 3:10)
- David declared, *“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.”* (2 Samuel 23:2)
- Ezekiel claimed, *“the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me.”* (Ezekiel 2:2)
- God also promised to give a new heart to His people *“I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes.”* (Ezekiel 36:27)
- Joel prophesied that in the last days, *“God is going to pour out of His Spirit on all flesh, and we shall all prophesy.”* (Joel 2:28)

If all these passages—and many more—are in the Old Testament, how much more can we read of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Throughout the book of Acts, believers were baptised in the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up in the boldness of the Holy Spirit to preach the first message of salvation and baptism of the Holy Spirit. He emphasised that the Holy Spirit is a promised gift from God for you and your children and for all who are far off. (Acts 2:38-39) This actual event fulfilled the prophecy of Joel 2:28.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

God uses Elijah as a bolt of judgment against Israel

(1 Kings 17 and 18)

God used Elijah as a bolt of judgment against Israel when Ahab’s wife Jezebel, led the people astray worshipping an idol called Baal. Elijah represented God in a showdown with the priests of Baal.

(1 Kings 18:36-38)

Elijah told this Baal worshipping king that there would be no rain for three and a half years except he tells his God again to pour down the rain. (1 Kings 17-18) Later Elijah prayed seven times, and it rained again; This showed God’s might and power to Israel. The Baal worshipers believed Baal was the god of the rain and bountiful harvest.

From this illustration also shows that intercession could be for or against something. In the first part of his prayer, Elijah asked God to close up the sky and let no rain fall for three and a half years—and there was no rain in the land for three and a half years. He proved to King Ahab that his God is the God of Israel and the God of the rain. He used the power of prayer to declare these words, and so it was.

The positive effect of Elijah’s prayer was that when He called on God to burn up his sacrifice that had been soaked three times with water, the Lord answered his prayers.

After the Baal showdown at Mount Carmel, Elijah convinced the king that there would be rain in the land again. So he went up on Mount Carmel to intercede to make sure it came to pass. He bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees and asked his servant to check the sky for any sign of a cloud. The servant checked the sky seven times before he finally saw a cloud as small as a man’s hand; This was the sign that God had answered Elijah’s prayer.

After all this, the power of the Lord came upon Elijah. It was a supernatural strength. He was able to run faster than Ahab’s chariot all the way back to Jezreel before the storm came down; This is the

same power that is available to us today. The New Testament mentions Elijah and his earnest prayers to God.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5:17-18)

Elijah's prayers were faithful and powerful. By being obedient to God, he was able to fulfill God's words spoken through him. In verse 18, James urges Christians to help backsliders return to God by taking the initiative to intercede for them. The body of believers ought to be an example of heaven on earth, drawing people to Christ through love for God and each other.

In Ezekiel 33:11, it states that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but if he turns from his wicked ways, he will live. In Peter's sermon of repentance in Acts 3:19, he told the people to repent from their sins and be converted because God is ready to wash their sins away and bring a spiritual refreshing in their life.

Moses prayer of intercession for king Pharaoh

So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people. Not one remained. (Exodus 8:28, 30 & 31)

The plague of the swarms of flies was the fourth God had sent to Egypt. Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go. Instead, he wanted to make a compromise. He told Moses to intercede for him so that the plagues would stop. Pharaoh knew that Moses' God had the power to stop the plague. So Moses interceded on behalf of Pharaoh. The Lord stopped every single plague, but Pharaoh still did not let them go.

The key point here is that although Pharaoh did not believe in the God of Israel, Moses was able to intercede on his behalf—and God answered his prayers. The same will happen for us when we pray on behalf of people or nations that do not know God. He will answer our prayers so that His will can be done through us for them. He just needs someone to speak His word on their behalf.

The Believers powerful Prayer

And when they heard it, lifted up their voices together with one united mind to God and said, O Sovereign Lord, You are He Who made heaven and the earth and the sea and everything that is in them. (Acts 4:24, AMP)

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak the Word of God with freedom and boldness and courage. (Acts 4:31, AMP)

After Peter and John were released, they went back to their people and gave a report. They lifted up their voice in one accord, praising God and asking Him for more boldness to preach the Word. While they were praying, the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the power of the Holy Ghost; This was like a new infilling of the Holy Ghost. Their request was for more boldness, which comes from the power of the Holy Ghost. The shaky effect on the physical place shows how much of an infilling they received that day. They were now speaking God’s Word with more boldness, freedom and courage after they had just been beaten for this same action.

Praying in the Holy Spirit releases God’s power in us to accomplish His will. It is a supernatural power which cannot be summed up by human ability. It is very important that we do enough praying until we are able to release God’s power in us to accomplish His will.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP IN PRAYER AND AS A LIFESTYLE

Worship is an important topic that every intercessor should understand. When you have an insight about worship, it will give you a sense of direction in prayer and in your daily walk with God. This topic in the body of Christ has not been expressed to its fullest. When people talk about worship, they only see it from the viewpoint of praise. There is more to it than that. When you have an understanding of worship, it is a lifestyle.

Worship comes from the old English word “Worthship,” a word that denotes the worthiness of the one receiving the special honour or devotion. God emphasised worship both in the Old and New Testament. After the Israelites left Egypt, God gave Moses instructions on how to build the tabernacle where the Lord would reside with them and establish the fundamental forms and principles to worship Him there. (Exodus 25-31 & 35-40)

In the New Testament, worship focused on God’s work of salvation through Jesus Christ. True worship is inspired through our obedience to the Holy Spirit. (John 4: 23-24)

A time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true (genuine) worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth (reality); for the Father is seeking just such people as these as His worshipers. God is a Spirit (Spiritual Being) and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (reality).
(John 4:23-24, AMP)

Worship can be described as an act of expressing *reverence, praise and devotion* to God.

We will talk about these components of worship in detail and their references to prayer and as a lifestyle.

REVERENCE

Reverence is a feeling of profound awe and respect towards God. Because of His majesty and holiness, He stirs a sense of reverence in those who worship and serve Him. As believers, irrespective of who is around us, we should always have a mind to do what is right. We know that God is omnipresent; He sees all things and knows all things. We express reverence to God when we have a Godly conscience always to do what is right irrespective of who is watching.

We submit to authority by being obedient to what we are told to do. Ephesians 5:21 says that we should submit to one another out of reverence for Christ, the same way as Christ submitted His will to the Father by dying on the cross for us. Submission to others exemplifies reverence for Christ. Reverence to God is expressed both in the Old and New Testament. In the scripture below, God calls the Israelites together to remind them of their reverence to Him.

Moses reminds the people to reverence God

Especially how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, the Lord said to me, Gather the people together to Me and I will make them

bear My words, that they may learn [reverently] to fear Me all the days they live upon the earth and that they may teach their children. (Deuteronomy 4:10, AMP)

Moses gathered the Israelites to remind them about their commitment to God's law at Mount Sinai. They only heard God speak His word, which they were to obey out of reverence to Him and teach their children. The same applies to us. As believers today, we should understand that obedience to God's words is a sign of reverence to Him. It is also our responsibility to teach our children the word of God and leave a legacy of God's authority in our homes. Too often have we allowed society to dictate and teach us how to train our children.

Proverbs 22:6 says, *“Train a child in the way he should go and when he grows up he will not depart from it.”*

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom, which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28-29)*

*A godly fear is a reverent kind of fear.

Expressing true reverence by the consecration of oneself

Therefore, SINCE these [great] are ours, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that contaminates and defiles body and spirit, and bring [our] consecration to completeness in the [reverential] fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1, AMP)

And if you call upon Him as [your] Father who judges each one impartially according to what he does, [then] you should conduct yourselves with true reverence throughout the time of your temporary residence [on the earth, whether long or short]. (1 Peter 1:17, AMP)

God chose Israel out of all the nations on the earth and then used her to reconcile humankind back to Him. We, as believers, have been pulled out of the world and set apart to be used by God. These scriptures are telling us to abstain from anything that could defile or

lead us astray from God's calling. We have been set apart to live a holy and moral life that will bring glory to Him in all that we do for His kingdom during the time we live on earth. Being consecrated is expressing true reverence to God. We can also express adoration to Him as our Jehovah-*makadesh*, the Lord who sanctifies us (consecration).

PRAISE (ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING)

Praise is an act of worship or acknowledgment by which the virtues or deeds of another are recognised and extolled. Our praise to God is how we express joy to the Lord.

We are to praise God for who He is (adoration) and for what He has done (thanksgiving). In most cases, Christians worship God for what He has done (thanksgiving) and do not give much emphasis to who He is.

In the Old Testament, God always revealed His identity to the nation of Israel by giving Himself a name each time He showed them favour. These names express His characteristics. We can express our adoration to God using these names.

Adoring God for who He is Powerful God (*Elohim*)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1) Hebrews 1:3 speaks of His power—He is the all-powerful God (*Omnipotent*). He is everywhere at all times (*omnipresent*) and He is the Lord of all wisdom and knowledge—the all-knowing Lord.

The Lord is peace (*Jehovah-shalom*)

This is the name Gideon gave the altar that he built in Ophrah after the Lord appeared to Him and said: "*Peace be with you, do not fear you shall not die.*" (Judges 6:24)

The-Lord-is-my-banner (*Jehovah-nissi*)

This name was given to the altar that Moses built in honour of God's defeat of the Amalekites. (Exodus 17:15)

The Lord will provide (*Jehovah-jireh*)

This is the name of honour Abraham gave to the place where God provided a sacrificial lamb in place of his son Isaac. (Genesis 22:14)

The Lord who sanctifies you (*Jehovah-makadesh*)

This is the name the Lord used to identify Himself as the One who had called the Israelites to be purified by living holy in obedience to His statutes. (Leviticus 20:8)

The Lord is my shepherd (*Jehovah-Rohi*)

The Lord is described as the shepherd who takes care and protects his sheep, making sure they lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1)

There are many more names of God, and they are all available to us today. He is the same God we worship, and we can use these same names to adore Him at all times—instead of waiting until He has done something special for us. Worship should always be our first step in prayer. God loves it when we acknowledge Him as the one who sustains and protects us.

Reading Psalm 146 is an excellent way to start a prayer session. This Psalm honours God as a complete help and need for all the earth.

PRAISE the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. (Psalm 146:1-2)

Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps truth forever. (Psalm 146:5-6)

Praising the Lord in faith

As I said earlier, the only way we can truly adore God is by faith. God needs us to release our faith within us. The scriptures say we live by faith, which is Spiritual, and not by sight, which is our five senses (smell, hear, feel, see and speak). Faith is internal, and sight is external. Even if we are in times of trouble or tribulation, we still need to praise Him in faith, knowing that He is the only one who can help us out of that situation (Psalm 57).

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and fell to the ground and worshipped. (Job 1:20a)

Though He slay me, yet will I trust him. Even so I will defend my ways before the Lord. (Job 13:15)

Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. (James 5:11)

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

All of these scriptures talk about perseverance and suffering for Christ's sake, but we still have a reason to rejoice because we all have a reward. Job is a good example of someone who persevered. Later, God rewarded him double for all his trouble. (Job 42:10)

Jesus told his disciples that they would be rewarded for leaving all for His sake, in this present time and in the age to come.

So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.” (Luke 18:29)

We must remind ourselves—whatever we do for the kingdom of God—that there is a reward for us here on earth and in heaven. Why not rejoice in faith, knowing there is a reward awaiting you?

Next, are powerful Biblical examples of people who praised the Lord in faith before they attained victory.

THE POWER OF PRAISE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Jehoshaphat, a devoted king to God (2 Chronicles 20)

Jehoshaphat was the young king of Judah whose faith in, and devotion to God led him to always delight in the Lord. In a time of danger when a great multitude of the enemy was attacking—and he knew Judah was not powerful enough for the battle—he called upon the Lord in faith. The latter part of verse 12 says, “*but our eyes are upon you*”. He then assembled the whole nation in the temple and prayed.

“Lord God of our fathers are you not God in heaven, and do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in your hand is there not power and might so that no one is able to withstand you?” (2 Chronicles 20:6) He went on to acknowledge all they had accomplished through God.

(In verse 14, the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel, and he spoke the word of the Lord.)

You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed, tomorrow go out against them. For the LORD is with you. (2 Chronicles 20:17)

At that moment, Jehoshaphat bowed down his head, and all the people worshipped God with him. When they stood up, they all praised God with loud and high voices; This is a demonstration of a faith victory. The battle was still the next day, but because they believed in God's word prophesied through Jahaziel, they spiritually saw the victory. The next day Jehoshaphat got the agreement of the people, and he sent the praise team ahead of the army; This was their victory song on the battlefield: "*Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever.*"

These were the results of their praise:

1. The LORD set ambushes against the enemy—who began to fight each other.
2. The people of Judah saw that all their enemies were dead, and no one escaped.
3. It took them three days to pick up the abundance of spoil from their enemies. It was more than enough.
4. Fear came upon the neighbouring kingdoms because they heard that the LORD had defeated their enemies.

After all this, the people took the time to come to the house of the Lord with all available instruments to praise Him.

This is a powerful lesson to learn. Here we see God acting as Jehovah-*nissi*—the same way He did in the days of Moses when He defeated the Amalekites (Exodus 17). He is still Jehovah-*nissi* today if we will allow Him as Jehoshaphat did in faith; praising God for a spiritual victory before it was manifested in the physical realm.

In this manner, the people of Judah showed full reliance on God. *Instead of waging war against their enemies, they sang songs of victory to God for His mercy and loving kindness towards them. The Lord, in return, blessed them with the spoils of the enemy.*

If only we can learn to always trust in God. Just by being obedient to Him and acknowledging His sovereignty, *victory will* be ours.

THE POWER OF PRAISE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:22-34)

And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chain were loosed.

These disciples were in a terrible situation. They were beaten with rods. Their clothes had been stripped off, their feet were tied, and they had been thrown into the inner part of the jail. But even then they began to sing praise and hymns to God. There had to be some faith in this praise. They believed that God was still their God and the only one who could rescue them from this predicament.

This was the result of their praise:

1. All of a sudden, there was a violent earthquake, which shook the foundations of the prison.
2. The prisoners were attentive to their prayers and songs.
3. The prison doors flung open, and everyone's chains were loosed.
4. The keeper of the prison was about to kill himself when he saw the prison doors opened and thought they had fled. Instead, He feared the God of Paul and Silas, wanting to

know more about the Lord. His life was saved both physically and spiritually.

5. The prison keeper's whole family got saved and baptised in the Holy Spirit.
6. The next day they were ordered to be released, but Paul refused to be released without a fair trial because as a Roman citizen he was entitled to a fair trial. The magistrates became afraid and had to plead with them to leave the jail; because of this incident, it taught the magistrates a big lesson on how to treat other believers fairly.

No matter the condition or circumstance we find ourselves in, we still must acknowledge that God is still God. Too often, when Christians find themselves in tight situations, they ask questions like "Why me God? Where are you, Lord? Why have you allowed this to happen to me?" They start to feel depressed about their situation and begin to look for others to pity them, too; This is exactly, what the devil wants us to do. Anytime we act this way; we are cheering for or praising the devil.

But when you praise God in your worst situation, the devil has to flee because you confuse him. He begins to ask himself, "How we can praise God when he has done so much to make us miserable?" He realises his tricks and deceptions have no more power on you. As a result, he loses his grip on you and looks for other prey.

All of a sudden earthquakes begin to happen; the impossible becomes possible; doors that were once closed to you begin to open, and people who once looked down on you begin to exalt you. Your testimony leads to someone being saved or someone being delivered from a similar dilemma. An "I can't do it" person changes confession and says "Now I know I can do it" and the atmosphere is charged with God's power of possibilities.

“We have victory over the devil (the accuser) by the blood of the lamb (the blood of Jesus) and by the word of our testimony to others (declare your victory).” (Revelation 12:11)

The word of your testimony is the sign of victory over your situation.

The next time you go through an awful situation, remind yourself of Job, Jehoshaphat, Paul and Silas. Note that what you go through is not what matters. What matters is how you handle the situation.

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God. (Ephesians 5:15-21)

This scripture gives us a warning about the days ahead of us. They are evil, so we must have a sense of urgency in making wise choices. Do not to be foolish as if we do not know the will of God. We need to stand firm in our faith and not waiver when situations arise. But at all times, sing songs and make melody in our hearts. Instead of calling people to sympathise with our issues, we should invite them for a Holy Ghost party, sing spiritual songs in the Lord and be happy.

PRAISE IS ONE OF OUR WEAPONS TO OVERCOME THE ENEMY. HE DOES NOT LIKE IT WHEN YOU PRAISE (CHEER) HIS OPPONENT (GOD). IT PUTS HIM IN A CONFUSED STATE OF MIND. FINALLY, HE LOSES HIS GRIP ON YOU AND CRASHES TO THE GROUND WHILE YOU HAVE THE VICTORY THROUGH YOUR PRAISE TO GOD.

(Yinka, 2005)

DEVOTION

Devotion: This is to give oneself completely (dedication) or to be consecrated to be used by God. Christians are to worship God by being obedient and living a lifestyle according to His word.; This is the act of worshipping God through devotion.

WORSHIPPING THE LORD IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

(Devotional worship)

But the time is coming – it has, in fact, come – when what you’re called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. “It’s who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That’s the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself – spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration.” (John 4:23-24, The Message Bible)

Who is a Samaritan?

Samaritans are known to be kind-hearted or charitable people (parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10). In the passage, this woman emphasised the place of worship and the different people who worshipped God. Jesus explained to her that where people worship or who are worshipping is not essential (God is omnipresent, and He created all human beings) but HOW she worships. Most people do not understand that their devotion to God is their **devotional act of worship**. Maybe if they did, they would be more devoted to Him.

Worshipping the Lord in Spirit

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members

and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1, AMP)

Our spiritual act of worship is when we lay aside our own desires by crucifying our sinful nature and presenting ourselves daily to God—letting Him be Lord of our Life. Being obedient to the Holy Spirit can only please God as our way of worshipping Him. Jesus said he does what pleases the Father; we also need to live a lifestyle that pleases the Father. (John 8:29)

We should always remember that devoting ourselves to God is an act of obedience to the Holy Spirit; This will make us genuine worshipers. God is seeking out these genuine or real worshippers to reveal His will to on the earth so that it can be birthed out through us.

Worshipping the Lord in truth

So Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, if you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free. (John 8:31-32, AMP)

Then Jesus turned to the Jews who had claimed to believe in him. “If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you.”
(John 8:31-320, The Message Bible)

Most of the time, this scripture is quoted as “*you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*”. It is only the truth that you hold unto; the word of God that you believe and experience by acting in obedience to what the word says will set you free.

Our truthful act of worship is to believe in God’s word, hold onto it and experience it by living in accordance to the Word. When we do otherwise, we believe a lie from the devil and are kept in bondage.

No good thing comes from the devil; he came to kill, steal and destroy.

(John 10:10)

The only way we can become *genuine worshipers*—which the Father is looking for—is by believing God’s word and being obedient to the Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit). The Father has sent the Holy Spirit to help us walk righteously and convict us of sin (John 16: 7-8). He will also guide us into all truth by speaking directly from the Father and will tell us things that are yet to come. (John 16:13)

We can put to death the dictates of the flesh by being obedient to the Holy Spirit and proving ourselves to be true sons of God. Our spiritual and truthful act of obedience is allowing the Holy Spirit to take full control of our lives—believing the Word of God and acting upon what we believe; *This is our devotional worship* to God.

But be doers of the Word [obey the message], and not merely listeners to it, betraying yourselves [into deception by reasoning contrary to the Truth]. For if anyone only listens to the Word without obeying it and being a doer of it, he is like a man who looks carefully at his [own] natural face in the mirror. For he thoughtfully observes himself, and then goes off and promptly forgets what he was like. But he who looks carefully into the faultless law, the [law] of liberty, and is faithful to it and Perseveres in looking into it, being not a heedless listener who forgets but an active doer [who obeys], he shall be blessed in his doing (his life of obedience). (James 1:22-25, AMP)

Elements of worship

The following are the key essentials that take place in our expression of worship to God. Below these elements are explained.

Bowed

In Greek, the word is *Kampto*, “to bend”. It is used often as the bending of the knees in religious veneration (worship, reverence,

adoration, respect, regard). The practices of bowing down or bending the knee—in a more pronounced form—involves falling prostrate; This is the practice of falling upon the knees, gradually inclining the body, and touching the forehead to the ground. In biblical times such practices conveyed an attitude of reverence, respect, humility, and homage towards others.

Kneeling

Kneeling is an act of falling to one's knees as a gesture of reverence, obedience, or respect. *Gonupeteo* denotes “to bow the knees,” “*pipto*,” and “to fall prostrate,” the act of one imploring aid or of one expressing reverence and honour. It is always used as an attitude of prayer.

Loud

In Greek, the word *meGas*, “great,” is used, besides other meanings of intensity, as of the force of a voice. In English, it means making a great sound, noisy.

Shout

Shout is *keleusmas*, “a call,” summons, shout of command (akin to *keleuo*, “to command”). It means loud or piercing cry or to utter a loud, sudden cry.

Clap

Clapping of the hands is a gesture of triumph.

Dancing

Choros primarily denoted “an enclosure for dancing;” hence, “a company of dancers and singers.” It is a rhythmic movement of the body usually done to musical accompaniment. Among the Israelites dancing generally occurred among women, either singly or in groups. It was a way of celebrating a joyous occasion. Indeed, dancing became a symbol of joy, an opposite of mourning.

Blowing of the horn or trumpet (shofar)

A horn is symbolic of strength. During times of worship or a victory celebration the ram’s horn, a musical instrument known as the shofar, was used. The priests mostly blew it as a sign of victory or to gather the people. There was always uniformity of the people when the shofar was blown.

All of these are the key essentials that took place during worship. They exist in most of the former examples, but I would like to give other examples. God is still the same yesterday, today and forever, but the church has changed the mode of worship. We now feel it is too deep or an old tradition.

The burning bush worship

*“Moses, Moses.” And he said, “Here I am.” Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. **Take your sandals off your feet**, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:4b)*

Taking off your sandals in the east was a sign of reverence to the other person. The ground became holy because of the presence of the Lord. Moses was afraid because he acknowledged God’s sovereignty. It was a holy fear.

In Joshua 5:14-15, Joshua **fell face down** in reverence, when he saw a man who identified himself as the commander of the army of the LORD. He was then asked to take off his sandals.

A Worship that brought down the walls of Jericho

This was the instruction for worship:

*You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do for six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall **blow the trumpet** It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the rams' horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with **a great shout**; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him. (Joshua 6:3-5)*

The city of Jericho had very high walls all around it, and the city was known as a symbol of strength and power. Joshua had sent some men to spy the land, but Joshua would not go in until he got instructions from the Lord because the city had been shut. There were no ways of entrance or exit because the people of the city were very afraid of the Israelites. God's first instruction was that the armed men should march around the city once for six days. The priests should be in front carrying the Ark of the Covenant and carrying trumpets of rams' horns.

The significance of these instructions was that God wanted the people to know the victory of this war had nothing to do with their military expertise. He was the one in control. Their role was to carry out these instructions just the way He gave them.

The priests were going before God on behalf of the people and the rams' horns (shofar), musical instruments, were blown to summon people for battle. The priests also blew the shofar during the times of rejoicing in worship or when celebrating different types of feasts. It was to remind them of what the Lord had done for them.

In this case, when the shofar was blown, it reminded them that their victory would come from the Lord and not their own military strength. When there was a long blow of the horns, the people gave a loud shout, and the fortified high walls tumbled down. The blowing of the horn and the shout of the people were a sign of victory. Not only did they win the battle, but they went into the city and got the spoils and saved them for the treasury. Only Rahab and her family were saved because she was faithful in hiding the men who came to spy out the land.

The presence of God ignites the people into a full worship

*Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with **shouting** and with the sound of the **trumpet**. (2 Samuel 6:14-15)*

The Israelites were so happy when the Ark of the Covenant was brought back to Jerusalem. King David expressed himself by dancing and wearing a priest's apron. They all joined in with him, shouting and blowing the trumpets.

The Ark of the Covenant signified God's presence was with them. If they could be so happy, how much more should we rejoice now that we have the spirit of the living God in us? We should always have a heart full of worship.

The people of Judah's expression of Praise and Worship

We already talked about King Jehoshaphat's form of worship. After Jahaziel prophesied, the king bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people did likewise. He led the people in worshipping God. The Levites, who were also assistants of the priests, stood up and praised God with a loud voice to express the sign of victory.

The Rebuilding of the Temple Worship

*When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with **trumpets**, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David, King of Israel. And they **sang** responsively praising and giving thanks to the LORD: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with **a great shout**, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. (Ezra 3:10-11)*

The rebuilding of the temple began after all the exiles from Babylon came to Jerusalem as one and settled down in their hometown. When the seventh month came, they decided to start the foundation of the temple despite being afraid of the neighbouring towns.

The Levites were appointed to supervise the workers. When the foundation of the temple was laid, the priests dressed up in their robes with horns (shofar) in their hands and the Levites with cymbals praising God. All the people came out to give great shouts of praise to God, because they were full of joy.

When we look at all of the examples, there is a bow down action, blowing of the horns and a loud shout, and a dance. But we rarely see these happening in the church today. They all have significance in worship to God.

The importance of expressing worship

1. Bowing down is a sign of expressing reverence to God.
2. Dancing and singing is a way of expressing joy and acknowledging the wonderful ways of the Lord.
3. Blowing the ram's horn or shofar is a sign that the victory in a battle will come from the Lord and not from military strength.

4. The shofar is also a musical instrument played during times of celebration, reminding the people that the Lord is their banner.
5. A shout or a loud shout is a sign of victory before and after the war. Jehoshaphat and the people shouted with a very loud voice before they went to the battlefield, and they shouted for joy after they came back. The people had to make a very loud shout before the walls of Jericho came down. And, after the foundation of the temple had been laid, the people made a very loud shout.

Another thing to note is that the priests played a vital role in worship; they were always the ones leading the people into worship. The duty of the priests could be compared to that of an intercessor. As born again Christians, we do not need anyone to intercede for us because we have the Holy Spirit as our intercessor. Jesus is also at the right hand of the Father always ever interceding for us.

Jesus already paid the price for the whole world to receive salvation, but if unbelievers do not become aware of the truth, they will not know about salvation. We act as the priests on their behalf until they come into the knowledge of the truth of their saviour, Jesus Christ. We should always remember that God loves wicked people, but He hates the act of sin. Jesus paid the price for the world, and through intercession and evangelism, the world can be reconciled to God. The Bible says every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. For this reason, more prayers of intercession need to be prayed for lost souls.

The book of Psalms

The book of Psalms is a collection of songs and prayers which express the heart of humanity—ranging from the confession of sins

and expression of doubt and fear to seeking God for help and expressing reverence through praise and worship.

David wrote the majority of the book of Psalms. It shows how close his relationship was with God. Whatever the situation he was going through, he always expressed his love towards God by praising him through different expressions: a loud shout, dancing, singing, clapping, bowing down and others. Also, when David was going through a hard situation, he expressed how he longed for the Lord, knowing Him as the only one who could show true love and help.

The more intimate your relationship is with God, the more you appreciate Him for who He is and what He has done for you. As a result, your desire to worship will become stronger.

*Oh, **clap** your hands, all you peoples! **Shout** to God with the voice of triumph!* (Psalm 47:1)

O GOD you are my God; Early will I seek you; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. so I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. (Psalm 63:1-2)

*Oh come let us **sing** to the LORD! Let us **shout** joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.*

*Oh come, let us worship and **bow down**; let us **kneel** before the LORD our maker.* (Psalm 95:1 & 6)

*Make a joyful **shout** to the LORD, all you lands!* (Psalm 100:1)

If you want to learn more about expressing worship, read and meditate on the book of Psalms regularly and get familiar with David's humble heart and his ways of worship.

Let's also look into these elements in the New Testament.

Elements of worship in the New Testament

The sound the trumpets preceding the return of Jesus Christ

*Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:30-31)*

*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a Shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the **trumpet of God**. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)*

Both passages say that at the return of Jesus, those who are not prepared will see Him coming from the clouds, and they will lament their unbelief. But He will first send His angels to blow the trumpet with a great sound to gather His elect from all over the earth; such indicates that the great sound of the trumpets is a victory for the saints over this sinful world.

The loud shout on the cross

*And Jesus cried out again with a **loud voice**, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked. And the rocks were spilt, And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. (Matthew 27:50-51)*

The passage indicates the second time, Jesus cried out on the cross in a loud voice. At that same moment, the curtain of the temple was torn into two from top to bottom. The tearing of the curtain was a symbol that the barrier between God and humanity had been removed. No priest had to go into the Holy of Holies on behalf of man anymore, because Jesus became our high priest. Through Him, we have been reconciled to God, and He is ever interceding for us; this was the loud

shout of victory by Jesus on the cross—which also woke up the saints in the grave.

A blind man shouts in faith for healing

Bartimaeus was a blind man in Jericho who always sat by the roadside begging for alms. One day he heard that Jesus was passing by, and he determined in his heart that whatever it took, he would receive his sight. *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to **cry out** and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he **cried out** all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’* (Mark 10:47-48)

So Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ The blind man said to Him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.’ Then Jesus said to him, Go your way; your faith has made you well. (Mark 10:51-52)

Though he could not see, he could hear the crowd coming towards him. When he sensed that Jesus was near, he cried out with a loud voice for Jesus, but the people around him bid him to keep quiet. This blind man was not discouraged by what they said, because he was on a mission to receive his healing and not even those who could see would stop him. He cried out louder, and Jesus stopped and asked the people to bring him. When Jesus asked the blind man what he could I do for him, he went straight to the point. “That I may receive my sight,” and Jesus said, “Go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

This man’s faith was so great that Jesus didn’t have to lay hands on him or say, be healed. This man had already received his healing when he cried out to Jesus. If he hadn’t, he would have been discouraged by the people

who could see. He would have given up and gone his way feeling depressed by his disability. His faith made him unstoppable. There was victory when the blind man cried out to Jesus. After he received his sight, he began to follow Jesus.

A loud voice that woke up the dead

*Now when He had said these things, He cried with a **loud voice**, “Lazarus come forth!” And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him and let him go.”* (John 11:43-44)

In this verse, Martha, the sister of Lazarus, came to tell Jesus that her brother was dead, but Jesus reassured her that he would rise again. In verse 41, Jesus prayed the prayer of faith, thanking the Father that He always hears when He prays. Jesus said this was for the benefit of those who did not believe, so they may believe that He was sent by the Father to save the world. After He prayed with a loud voice, He called out “Lazarus to come forth”. His loud voice had victory over death.

When Paul and Silas were singing to God, it must have been in loud voices because they were in the dungeons or bottom jails—but other prisoners could hear them singing, and an earthquake shook the prison. Then they shouted loud, praising God for who He was as a sign of victory—knowing that God was the only one who could rescue them from such a situation.

The book of Revelations

Throughout the book of Revelations, the angels were always bowing and singing with loud voices worshipping God. The elders also fell down as a sign of their worship to God.

*Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders **fall down** before Him who sits on the throne and **worship Him** who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”* (Revelation 4:9-11)

*and crying out with a **loud voice**, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” All the stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and **fell on their faces** before the throne and **worshipped** God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,*

thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 7:10-12)

*After these things I heard a **loud voice** of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures **fell down and worshiped** God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!” (Revelation 19:1 & 4)*

Kneeling and Bowing or fall on your face

Below are also elements of worship, showing a sign of respect to God or others.

Jesus prays in Gethsemane

*He went a little farther and **fell on His face**, and prayed saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” (Matthew 26:39)*

Stephen’s last prayer

*And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. “Then he **knelt down and cried out with a loud voice**, Lord do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:59-60)*

Every knee on earth will bow to God

*For it is written: “As I live says the LORD, every **knee shall bow** to Me and every tongue shall **confess** to God.” (Romans 14:11)*

*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that*

*every tongue should **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (Philippians 2:9-11)

Paul's manner of kneeling while praying with the saints

*For this reason I **bow my knees** to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Ephesians 3:14)

*And when he had said these things, he **knelt down** and prayed with them all.* (Acts 20:36)

These scriptures show that expressing worship is very important. Marching and confession is an act of obedience in worship while kneeling or bowing down is a sign of reverence towards God and or others. Paul expressed his manner of kneeling and praying with the saints as reverence to God and also expressing humility towards others.

Every knee shall **bow**, and every tongue **confesses** that Jesus Christ is Lord is an act of obedience in worship. God has commanded every man to take part in this as a way of expressing our willingness to worship in obedience and faithfulness towards Him.

It is time the church broke loose from tradition and religion created by human beings and get back to the basics of God straight from His written word. Men, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote the Bible. If we allow the Holy Spirit in us to lead us into worship directly, we will be at liberty in our mind to express ourselves outwardly. Obedience to worship is obedience to do God's will. We can then reflect God's glory in the earthly realm and become vessels to be used in His kingdom. Be led by the Holy Spirit and be free to worship. Become a willing vessel to be used by God in His kingdom.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATE INTERCESSION

Unity in prayer

Unity is the state of oneness or to act as one in harmony. Unity can also be described as an agreement between different people coming together for one common goal.

When the Israelites left Egypt, they all came out together; no one was left behind. In Exodus chapter 19, God gave Moses instructions to have the people consecrate themselves on the third day and gather together—before He gave them the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. In those days, there was always a coming together before God spoke to His people through Moses.

In the New Testament, Paul encouraged the Hebrews not to forsake the assembly of the saints but to encourage one another as the day is fast approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

Jesus' intercessory prayer of oneness for all believers

In John Chapter 17, Jesus had a passion for the oneness of all believers. He prayed five times on the topic of oneness. These were His prayer points to the Father:

Jesus five prayer points of unity for all believers

1st time:

keep through your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. (John 17:11)

2nd time:

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word. (John 17:20)

3rd time:

that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us." (John 17:21)

4th time:

And that glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one. (John 17:22)

5th time:

*I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one...
And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which you loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:23 & 26)*

Below is the summary of the above passage:

1. Jesus' prayer point was that His disciples would be one and all those who believe in the word of their mouth would also become one with them.

2. All believers would be unified with the Father and Son as He and the Father are one.
3. That the perfect love the Father had for Him (Jesus) would also be in us (all believers).

Perfect unity amongst believers manifests the true love of God and reflects God's glory in our lives; This is the only way the world will have a hunger for the God we serve. Paul prayed continuously in his letters to the believers that they should bear with one another in love. Paul's letter to the Colossians asked that their hearts might be knit together in love, and to attain all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ. (Colossians 2:2)

To reap the blessings of cooperate prayer, there has to be unity amongst believers: Unity in pray will allow us to understand the knowledge and mysteries of God's word. Paul also prayed for the church as a whole to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—putting aside all other things that can bring division. Unity in the body of Christ exemplifies unity between the Father and the Son.

Paul's prayer of unity for the church

With all lowliness and gentleness with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Jesus Teaching about Agreement in Prayer

Jesus taught his disciples the importance of what we say to one another and praying in agreement. Whatever we say to one another has an everlasting impression in a relationship. Jesus backs up our decision with a yes and takes action on what we say.

Take this more seriously: A yes on earth is yes in heaven; a no on earth is no in heaven. What you say to one another is eternal. I mean this. When two of you get together on anything at all on earth and make a prayer of it, my Father in heaven goes into action. And when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I'll be there. (Matthew 18:18-20, The Message)

Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, make a symphony together) about whatever [anything and everything] they may ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven. For wherever two or three are gathered (drawn together as My followers) in (into) My name, there I AM in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:19-20, AMP)

The sincere agreement between two believers is more powerful than the superficial agreement of thousands because Christ's Spirit is present with them. When believers can come together with one mind to pray, anything they ask will be done because the presence of the Lord is with them.

The stronger the unity, the greater the defeat for your enemy

Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. (Leviticus 26:8)

In this passage, God was giving the Israelites instructions on how to live. If they obeyed Him, they would be blessed. One of the blessings was that the more they come together in agreement to fight their enemies, the more they would succeed in battle. When we look at the mathematical expression—five to a hundred and a hundred to ten thousand—this is not simple multiplication. It's exponential. It is multiples of the former number.

God was encouraging them to be in unity when they went to battle. He would give them supernatural power to defeat the enemy. When we come together and pray, it is easier to defeat the enemy. God's Word says His presence is with us, and He will bless us with a supernatural breakthrough in our prayers.

God commands his blessings where there is unity

BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing life forevermore. (Psalms 133)

God loves it when we all can get along; there, He **COMMANDS** His blessings, which means He empowers us to prosper. When we can learn the importance of cooperate prayer, we will be able to understand the mystery of God's Word more and have a distinct revelation about our prayer requests.

The harmony of the disciples on the day of Pentecost

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples had to come together before the coming of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:1-4) The church is one body under the headship of Christ. Ephesians 4 explains that we need to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is One body and One spirit, and we were called to One hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all—who is over all and through all and in all. We must learn how to come together and communicate to our Father in unity. When we lift up our voice in One accord, it pleases the Father. Praying in unity also hastens our request to God.

The Believers One Mind Prayer

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them. (Acts 4:24)

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart

and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. (Acts 4:31-32)

This happened after the Sadducees had released Peter and John from prison—where they had put them for preaching the gospel. Peter and John went back to their own people and reported what happened to them. The believers now came together in agreement to pray. They all lifted up their voices in one accord, praising God and asking him for more boldness to preach the word. After they had prayed, the place where they were praying was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

A unified prayer stirs up a miracle—Peter’s release (Acts 12:5-17)

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. (Acts 12:5)

Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him they were astonished. (Acts 12:16)

When Peter was in prison, the believers kept on praying continuously for his safety. Peter was bound up with two chains between two soldiers. Later that night, an angel of the Lord went to release him, but Peter thought he saw a vision. It wasn’t until he was out of the prison, and the angel had left that Peter came to himself and knew it had been real. The first place he went was to the believer’s gathering—where they were still praying for his release. Peter knocked on the door, and they thought it was his ghost. But when they finally opened the door, they were surprised to see it was him. While they were still praying, God answered, it was a miracle.

When intercessors can cultivate a habit of cooperate intercession, miracles will happen in our society more often than usual. The Lord will send out His angels on our behalf. There is never a shortage of miracles in heaven. The reason we see a lot of miracles happening at

large conferences is that most people go with a high expectation that God will do something miraculous.

It is essential that believers can always intercede for nations and people. In the beginning, God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth. They lost it through the deception of the devil, but thank God for Jesus Christ who went to the grave to get it back from the devil. Jesus rose up on the third day and returned it to us: the church.

The church is often referred to as a physical building, but every believer is “the church” which means called out ones.

Colossians 1:13 says, *“For God has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear son.”*

Christ is the head of the church, and we are His body. Therefore He has given us back our dominion and power over the earth. (Colossians 2:10)

Once He has given us dominion, it is our duty to exercise it in the earth. We have to release God’s power within us through prayer and obedience to doing His will. God cannot violate his Word; He gave us dominion, so we need to exercise it in the earthly realm by praying His will on behalf of the nations.

FASTING

What is Fasting?

Fasting is the denial of food to oneself and a commitment to consecrate oneself to God by purposely spending time in prayer and studying God’s Word. Sometimes we can get so busy with our daily routine and not have enough time to really fellowship with God. It does not mean we don’t pray or study the Word of God, but sometimes we rush through it with an unsettled mind because we are thinking of our next move for the day. We cannot really hear the Lord speaking to us.

Why do we need to fast?

Food feeds our physical man, the body, which wears away as we grow older. The Word of God feeds our spiritual man. Our human spirit is being renewed daily as we become more rooted in the Word of God. Our five senses (smelling, hearing, touching, tasting and seeing) feed our Soul man, which is the centre of our mind, will and emotion. Our soul man has a choice to feed off of the five senses or to be fed the Word of God.

But He answered (Jesus) and said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:16)

Human nature could be defined as a three part being. We are a spirit, we have a soul, and we are in a body or an earthly suit called flesh. Before we were saved, we lived off of our soul man. Whatever we fed, the soul man was processed in the mind and carried out by the body. When we became born again, our spirit man became regenerated or made alive by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are born again by the spirit and not by the soul man. The soul man can never be born again. Therefore we feed our spirit with the Word of God and allow it to dictate to the soul man.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

The conformity or traditional values of this world are obtained by the five senses—what we hear, see, smell, touch and taste. But Paul is saying we should allow a transformation or a change of the new mind to prove the perfect will of God in our lives.

while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” or it could be paraphrased as “we live off the Word of God and not off our five senses.” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Not only do we have the Word of God to transform our lives, but we also have the Holy Spirit, who will empower us to do what is right. Jesus told His disciples that He would send a helper, the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things and bring to remembrance all the things that He taught them. (John 14:26) Today the Holy Spirit reminds us of the Word of God that we have learned.

The Importance of Fasting

Fasting is not just abstaining from food, but it is being committed to pray and study God’s Word. It is an opportunity to purposely humble oneself and seek the Lord’s face with a sincere heart; this should be our primary goal for fasting.

Cooperate Fasting

Cooperate fasting is bringing a group of people together to fast in agreement on common ground.

Examples of cooperate fasting

King Jehoshaphat gathered the nation together to seek the face of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast. When King Jehoshaphat got the bad news that his enemies were coming against him, the first step he took was to gather the nation together and proclaim a fast throughout Judah.

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

Jehoshaphat revered the Lord. His first step was to seek a sense of direction from the Lord by making the whole nation spend time seeking the Lord's face.

So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:4)

As we discussed earlier, the Spirit of the LORD spoke through Jahaziel and gave them a sense of direction on what to do.

Israel is urged to gather for a cooperate fasting and repentance while Samuel fervently intercedes on their behalf (1 Samuel 7:1-8)

After the Philistines returned the Ark of the Covenant to the Israelites, Samuel asked the people to put away their foreign gods and serve the Lord with all their hearts so that they would be delivered from the Philistines. He gathered them together at Mizpah and prayed for them.

So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. (1 Samuel 7:6)

Further down in the chapter, it explains that when the Philistines heard of their gathering, they came to attack them at Mizpah. Then the Israelites were afraid. The people pleaded with Samuel to intercede fervently on their behalf to God. He also offered up a burnt offering.

God answered his prayers by sending thunder to confuse the Philistines, and the Israelites pursued them and took back all of the cities the Philistines had taken. The corporate fasting and confession of sin by the Israelites reinstated the presence of God in the nation and restored all that was lost.

Esther's request for a cooperate fast as she interceded to save the Jews

Esther was in the right place at the right time—even though King Xerxes had no clue that she was a Jew. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, uncovered the plot of Haman, the king's highest official, to destroy the Jews and asked Esther for help.

Then Esther told them to reply Mordecai: "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded. (Esther 4:15-17)

Now Esther had no clue what to do, but her first step was to seek God in prayer and fasting—and requesting that the people around her should do likewise. She also instructed Mordecai to have all of the Jewish people do the same. She was willing to take the risk for her people, knowing that God was with her. Sometimes rendering service to God will cost us. Knowing that we can trust God should allow us to be willing to take a risk for Him.

Then king Abasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews. "You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke." (Esther 8:7-8)

Esther finally found favour with the king. She and Mordecai were allowed to write their own law to defend themselves from any opposition. Also, Esther was given Haman's property. Esther relied totally on God to plan out the strategy to present her case before the king and save her people.

A cooperate fast that stirs up a cooperate miracle

The people were with Jesus for three days without eating. They brought all kind of diseases before Him, and He healed them all.

Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way. (Matthew 15:32)

The disciples were able to gather seven loaves of bread and a few little fish from among the people. Jesus ordered the multitude to sit down on the ground. He blessed the food, broke it and gave it to the disciples to share among the people. Four thousand men, besides children and women, were fed that day. After everybody was full, they collected seven large baskets of leftovers. This was nothing but a miracle.

In John Chapter 6, He also fed five thousand men besides women and children with a lad's lunch pack of five barley loaves and two small fish. After everybody had eaten, twelve baskets of leftovers were collected. It was not just about food. They were also hearing the Word of God and seeing it performed; their spirit man was being fed with the word (Jesus is the Word). Their soul man was denied its will to eat, but the spirit man was fed three days consecutively with Jesus' teachings—in power and in demonstration. **This is the power of corporate fasting.**

A cooperate fast by the church to ordain missionaries with God's power

Now in the church (assembly) at Antioch there were prophets (inspired interpreters of the will and purposes of God) and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon who has called Niger [black], Lucius of Cyrene Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate now for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying, they put their

hands on them and sent them away. So then, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from [that port] they sailed away to Cyprus. (Acts 13:1-4, AMP)

Antioch was the central home of the early Christians. It was culturally diversified and a commercial centre for trading. This place was the beginning of Paul's evangelistic outreach. The first verse names a variety of gifts in the church: prophets, teachers, and a government official. They all had different ethnical backgrounds. Barnabas was from Cyprus, Symeon (Niger) an African, Lucius of Cyrene also of African descent, Manaen an influential man due to his association with Herod, the king, and Saul a Jew from Tarsus with rabbinical training and Roman citizenship. They were all in the atmosphere of fasting and prayer.

One day while they were worshipping the Lord, the Holy Spirit spoke through one of them—likely one of the prophets. The Holy Spirit spoke precisely: Separate now for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

After the call, He also gave them a direction as to where they should go to minister. God is still working the same way in the church today, using a mix of different cultural backgrounds and walks of life. If only we can learn the basic principles of coming together in one accord to pray, fast and worship, He will give us a sense of direction in choosing specific people for a specific task for a specific place; This is not based upon your position in leadership as we can see from verse one—nor your cultural background.

In the church today, one race might think they are superior to another race, or one leader might think they are superior to another. However, we lose the effectiveness of unity when we have a human thinking of direction instead of being Holy Spirit led.

But if the church, a variety of God's people, can come into agreement to be Holy Spirit led, we will see the manifestation of the power of Holy Spirit just as in the book of Acts.

A cooperate fast to ordain leaders results in manifesting the power of God in them (Acts 13:6-12)

Going further down into this same chapter, we see Paul and Barnabas stopped at a city called Paphos. The deputy governor invited them over to preach the Word of God because he had a desire to hear the gospel. Verse 7 says he was also associated with a sorcerer named Elymas (called Bar-Jesus) who was being paid and was leading the city into deception. When he saw Barnabas and Saul preaching to the deputy governor, he tried to stop them so they wouldn't win him to Christ.

But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit, looked steadily at [Elymas]. (Acts 13:9, AMP)

Paul and Barnabas confronted Elymas with this sin of deception and caused him to be blind instantly. When the deputy governor saw this, he was amazed at the power of their God that they were preaching about; as a result, he became a believer.

In these last days, God is moving in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders. The governor was made speechless by this sign. He had been paying this sorcerer but here comes the message of salvation free of charge and backed up with signs and wonders; This is the power of fasting.

Jesus encouraged his disciples to fast and pray

Jesus encouraged His disciples that there is a degree of faith that needed prayer and fasting to obtain it.

The disciple's failure to cast out a deaf and dumb spirit

... "Teacher I brought you my son, who has a mute spirit. "And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and

becomes rigid. So I spoke to your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.” He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.” (Mark 9:17-18)

In this passage, Jesus is talking about the unbelief of both the disciples and the father of the child. The disciples did not have enough faith to cast out the dumb spirit, and the father of the son did not have enough faith to believe for a miracle. Jesus told him that all things are possible to those who believe. (verse 23)

As for the disciples, they waited until they were behind closed doors and then asked Jesus this question:

*And when he had come into the house His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer **and fasting**.” (Mark 9:28-29)*

What Jesus was telling His disciples is that you need an increase in faith to manifest kingdom authority. We should always remember that we are up against demonic strongholds which do not want to see the manifestation of the kingdom of God in demonstration and power. The more you interfere with the devil’s plan, the more you need to seek the Lord in fasting and prayer for a sense of direction or strategy to overcome strongholds.

From the above examples, we can summarise in the following points the reason why Cooperate fasting is important:

1. To seek direction and strategies to overcome a spiritual battle or struggle.
2. To humble ourselves as a people and confess our sins; This will reinstate God’s presence in our nation and bring about restoration and peace among the people.
3. For the demonstration of the power of God through signs, wonders and miracles.

4. For seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit, to ordain ministers and for a sense of direction in ministry.
5. For creating an agreement, amongst people of different nations or ethnic backgrounds.
6. For spiritual warfare, some demonic forces are very stubborn; it will take fasting to destroy such strongholds.
7. To save a whole nation from being destroyed. We can also fast for seeking the presence of God in worship or a desire to study the Word with a revelation of understanding Him more.

Once our focus is on God, we will be able to hear His voice more clearly when He is speaking to us.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I want to use this final chapter to focus on how our prayers of intercession bring positive results and have an impact in the world we live in today. I have first to make, it clear that when we pray the prayers of intercession, we are interfering with the devil's strategy to destroy as many of God's people as possible. That's why he goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour. Prayers of intercession involve warfare, but they have to be done with a sense of direction from God. God always has a strategy to disrupt the enemy's plan. It is important that we hear from Him for direction, and that we do not do it our own way. That will not be effective and might even get out of hand.

Only a warrior is fit for the fight

Am I fit to fight a spiritual warfare, or will I let my guard down when I *see a demon*?

Am I bold enough to step into the kingdom of darkness and take God's children out?

In most cases, when the Bible talks about prayer, it refers to weapons of warfare which means artillery for fighting. We are up against a spiritual force.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

Sometimes it is referred to as a fight.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
(1 Timothy 6:12)

It is a spiritual fight, not a physical fight. Another scripture says, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (not made by worldly material as opposed to the flesh).

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.
(2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

It is evident that there is a spiritual battle going and that we need spiritual weapons—God’s mighty and powerful weapons to fight. We have mentioned some of these in earlier chapters. Always ask yourself the previous questions when you feel reluctant to pray, and another soul is lost to the prince of this world (Satan).

Unique qualities of spiritual soldiers

These are some unique qualities that are necessary if you are to become effective in prayer and to your call. The first step is to be born again and filled with the Holy Spirit—with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

According to Acts 2:8, praying in the Spirit is the key to successful Intercession because it releases God's power in you.

We are in a spiritual battle which needs a spiritual realm (kingdom) to release God's power, weapons and strategies. Also, it allows us to pray for God's perfect will.

Sometimes when we are weak, but we just feel the urge to pray—not knowing what to pray for or how to pray—the Holy Spirit will help us to pray the perfect will of the Father at that time. The Holy Spirit might lead us to pray for a certain nation we know nothing about. However, by praying in tongues, the Holy Spirit will pray the right prayer needed for that nation.

Praying in tongues is like a weapon. Do not go to war without it, or you will be defeated.

We are fighting Spiritual powers in high places. Therefore we need spiritual weapons to fight a spiritual battle. It is important that every spiritual soldier has the following qualities:

1. You must have a forgiving Spirit. You do not have the time to hold grudges or malice—or whatever form of unforgiving excuses—toward others. This hinders your prayers and draws a line between you and Christ. (Matthew 6:14-15 & Luke 6:37)

We have to forgive as Christ forgave us. An intercessor has no room or time for resentment towards others. God may call upon you to intercede for a person who did great harm to you in the past. How can you pray for such a person if you are stuck in unforgiveness? When you don't forgive you lose focus on your calling.

2. Your walk with Christ must be a light to others. (Matthew 5:13-16) John 15:1-4 refers to bearing fruit. As we become a light to others, we attract others to Christ and win souls for the kingdom of God. Our life must be a living epistle that draws others to Christ when they read it.

3. You must have an intimate relationship or a habitual fellowship with God. The key is to be familiar with the 5 W's and H (what, when, why, where, with, and how) in God. There has to be constant communication going on between you and God. It might be by praying both in the natural and in the spirit at any point in time. It could also be by reading or hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) or by speaking the word of God in faith and listening to the voice of God.
4. We need to keep our hearts pure at all times and be ready to worship, especially before we sleep, so we can be tuned in to what God is saying at night. I have observed that God does a lot of talking to me at night. (Psalm 17:3) It might be through a vision, a dream, or at times, I will find myself up in the middle of the night just listening to His voice and writing what He speaks to me. I was curious about this, so I decided to research night communication. In my findings from the Bible, I observed that God did a lot of talking to people at night.

David wrote a lot of his songs at night in the book of Psalms. God spoke to Solomon at night after the rebuilding of the temple. When Samuel was young, God came to him at night to deliver a message to the people. God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel towards evening time to interpret the dream of the seventy weeks. An angel appeared to the shepherds at night to bring the good news about the birth of the saviour of the world. The Lord sent an angel to release Peter at night from prison. While Paul and Silas were singing and praying to God at night, an earthquake happened. Before Jesus chose the twelve disciples, He went to the mountainside to pray to God all night. Jesus prayed three times, consecutively to the Father at night before His arrest. He prayed for Himself, His disciples and future believers; This tells me God loves the night communication. Why, is still a question?

5. You must express love and kindness both inside and outside of the Christian community. The new commandment Jesus gave His disciples was to love one another; this commandment, when kept, fulfils all. The same applies to us today. Loving others should be unconditional, and it should be a lifestyle. The compassion Christ had for us is the same compassion we need to have for the lost. We must pray for God's will for His people to be fulfilled. Being concerned with the well-being of others is a mark of a true intercessor. Intercessors care for God's creation. It is a selfless concern which will receive a reward.

6. At times worldly cliques can draw you away from your calling by keeping you so busy with one another that you lose focus on your relationship with God. Be careful of what kind of company you keep.

Once God has called you to be an intercessor, it is irrevocable (unchangeable). So, why not get busy with your calling? He who has called you will also give you the divine power you need to answer His call. He will also give you the ability to escape any evil desire.

Below are my wake-up scriptures, and they got me going with my call to prayer.

The unchangeable call by God

For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call]. (Romans 11:29, AMP)

This scripture, in reality, is referring to Israel as the promised nation through which all of the earth will be blessed. Even if it seems like some reject Jesus as their saviour, God will still show his mercy and love to them because he has chosen them. That will not change a bit. As for us, we are spiritual Israel, so once He has called us, He will not change his mind towards us.

God's assurance and empowerment for the divine calling

For his divine power has bestowed upon us all things that [are requisite and suited] to life and godliness, through the [full personal] knowledge of him who called us by and to His own glory and excellence (virtue). By means of these He has bestowed on us His precious and exceedingly great, so that through them you may escape [by flight] from the moral decay (rottenness and corruption) that is in the world because of covetousness

(lust and greed), and become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature.

(2 Peter 1:3-4, AMP)

This scripture explains that God has empowered us for what He has called us to do. It is not our moral character or good behaviour but by God's divine nature. After we were saved and baptised in the Holy Spirit, we received the characteristics of God. These are the fruit of the spirit: love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, gentleness (meekness and humility) and self-control (self restraint, continence). (Galatians 5:22-23) What we need to do is to grow in them by allowing our behaviour to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We do this by having an intimate relationship with God. Further down, in 2 Peter 1:5-11, it explains that if we make every effort to grow in these godly characteristics, we will be effective and productive for the kingdom of God.

The more we mature in them, the more we despise the lust of the world. We live in this world, but we are not part of it because He has translated us from the powers of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son. Therefore, through our prayers of intercession, we win more souls for the kingdom of God.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

It is God's rule of grace (undeserved merit) in the world or in a believer who allows Jesus to be Lord of their life.

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

God's kingdom isn't a matter of what you put in your stomach, for goodness' sake. It's what God does with your life as he sets it right, puts it together, and completes it with joy. Your task is to single-mindedly serve Christ. Do that and you'll kill two birds with one stone: pleasing the God above you and proving your worth to the people around you. (Romans 14:17, The Message)

The scripture above explains that the kingdom of God is not just having our daily food but living the right life of love that pleases God. We have peace knowing that we can rest in Him and not worry about the problems of this world.

He has promised us a kind of peace that the world can never give us because He has overcome the world (John 16: 33). Also, He gives us joy, which is a positive attitude or a pleasant emotion. Joy can be expressed amid sorrow. All these are characteristics of God and produced by the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 6:22-23)

To represent the kingdom of God, you need to reflect these characteristics in your daily life. This is what will attract unbelievers to be part of His kingdom. Our ultimate responsibility is to attract others to Christ.

The Mysteries of the Kingdom

And He said to them, to you has been entrusted the mysteries of the kingdom of God [that is, the secret counsel of God which are hidden from the ungodly]; but for those outside [of our circle] everything becomes a parable. (Mark 4:11, AMP)

As a believer, you have an understanding of the counsel (guidance) of God because you have made him Lord of your life. However, the ungodly do not know and are miserable about life. It is our duty to affect them by the way we live. God's mysteries are in Christ. If you make Him Lord of your life, the mysteries are no longer a secret to you. This is the hope of glory revealed through Christ. (Colossians

1:26-27) Your lifestyle could become someone's hope. Your obedience to pray could cause a nation to rise and shine out of the darkness and bring a sinner to Christ.

We are Citizens of the Kingdom of God

Since we know God has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13), we are citizens of a new kingdom, which is the kingdom of light; This indicates that our citizenship needs to be changed. My question to you is this, has your citizenship been changed, or are you living in a new kingdom with an old identity?

When we were in the world, we behaved like the world because that was where we belonged. We followed the instructions and moral standards of the prince of this world because that was what we knew. But now that we have changed citizenship, we have a new identity and a new kingdom to represent.

Living in the New Kingdom

Physically, we are living in this world, but spiritually, we are living in a new kingdom. A new king gives us instructions on how to live in His kingdom. He teaches us how to represent Him through our way of living, and He tells us what this new kingdom is all about.

Who do you represent? (We are Christ's Ambassadors)

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no

sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

An ambassador is an official representative on behalf of one country to another. As believers, we are Christ's ambassadors (representatives) in the world and sent with the message of reconciliation to the world. It is our responsibility to allow the people of the world to know about Christ through our actions, deeds and obedience to pray. Jesus' entire ministry on earth represented the kingdom of God through His acts and deeds—healing the sick, casting out demons, performing miracles, teaching the people how to live a righteous life and always praying to the Father. Through our powerful prayers of intercession, we can do the same because we represent the kingdom of God.

GOING BEYOND THE SCOPE OF INTERCESSION

Our prayers of intercession are so important to God; we are His watchmen in the earthly realm. In earnest prayer to God, we shake the world and snatch people out of the darkness. It is His will, but He needs a willing vessel to accomplish the mission. Sometimes it takes more than prayer to accomplish a mission for God. God needs your assistance to accomplish the mission.

In my prayer life, I have observed that I can pray for a situation and see things happen just the way God wanted it. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will give me instructions on how to get the mission accomplished. One thing I know; it is more than prayer.

As an intercessor, you always have the urgency for the mission to be accomplished—especially when you have an intimate relationship with God. The degree of your intimacy with God will determine the degree of effectiveness of your prayers of intercession; This is the reason I emphasise worship so much. It is the key to your intimate relationship with God. You will gain knowledge of obedience and faith through worship, which is what God requires from us.

At the beginning of this book, we talked about people God used to accomplish His will. They all had two things in common: obedience and faith. We are not exempted from these factors, and God loves us so much that He gives us the assistance of the Holy Spirit to help us accomplish His will. We should be known to be humble people who are ready to put the needs of others before ours by encouraging and exalting others before ourselves.

In most of the examples of those who interceded, they also had to carry out God's instructions to accomplish the mission. When the Israelites were dying of snake bites, Moses pleaded on their behalf. God asked him to put a snake on a rod and hold it up high for them to look up at for healing. Elijah interceded seven times for rain and then made sure he finally saw a cloud before he went back to the city. Esther interceded on behalf of the Jews and went before the king to make her request despite the risk to her life.

What sacrifices are you willing to make for God's will to be accomplished through you? You might be in an environment where everybody is consumed with his or her own thoughts and desires of life. It might be in a marriage, a ministry or workplace, but God wants to accomplish a mission there, and you are the only one who is hearing and obeying His instructions. He will give you an extra anointing to stand in the gap—not only to pray—but to do what it takes to prevent the destruction caused by disobedience and self-desire. Since you know what you are doing is not in your own strength (works) but by the Spirit of the living God inside of you, you will not be frustrated or worn out.

God told Zechariah to tell Zerubbabel, *“Not by might nor by power, but by My, Spirit says the LORD of hosts”* and *“He, Zerubbabel, laid the foundation of the temple with his own hands and will also finish its construction”* (Zechariah 4:6-9). The Bible also says, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* (Philippians 4:13)

I strongly believe that intercessors or watchmen are guards in a ministry. They are not just called to pray behind closed doors but to

listen to God's voice and to carry out the instructions given to them by God. Whatever God is saying to them must be taken more seriously. No ministry should fold up or be in turmoil if the watchmen who know and understand God's vision for that ministry will put their hands to the plough and be active in any area where there is lack. When we do this, we stand in the gap, and the vision will come alive through our obedience to act.

It is also essential that people in leadership positions take intercessors or prayer warriors more seriously and not just see them as a bunch of people who have to only pray behind closed doors.

It is God's will that through the church His kingdom will advance. Therefore, those who desire to seek the heartbeat of God through prayer will have a passion to see it accomplished; such people can range from the youngest to the oldest; from a layman to the well-tutored in the Word of God. All He is looking for is a willing and obedient vessel. The truth is, the outcome is beneficial for all of us.

As we all know, we are living in perilous times, now is the time God needs us to pray the prayers of intercession and get busy in His kingdom. The Bible says, *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,"* (Habakkuk 2:14)

It also says, *"that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* (Philippians 2:10-11)

What part are you willing to play to see it happen?

Join the ministry of reconciliation today by praying the prayers of intercession and spread the good news of salvation (evangelism), and God will surely bless you.

Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yinka Oloyede is the first child born into the Adeleye family, on the 28th of May 1967 in England. She is a graduate of Chemistry Science and Education. She also took online courses in Creative writing and Publishing.

From a very young age, she loved to pray and knew that something would tell her to pray or speak to her about certain situations. When she prayed, there was always a positive result for her obedience, but she was still a novice.

Yinka became a member of Excellent Covenant World Outreach Ministries, Germany in 2001. Through the powerful teachings of her Pastors, Archie and Tracy Walker, she learned that the 'something' she always referred to was the Holy Spirit's call to PRAY.

She began a journey to a Spiritual school and called it the Holy Spirit School of Ministry. Since then, she has been hearing the Lord more clearly about this calling and has been praying ever fervently for God's will in the earthly realm.

She introduces herself as one called by God and ordained by God to be a messenger of Hope, Peace and Love to the nations of the world through the CALL TO PRAY, INTERCEDE AND ACT.

She has travelled to various countries to fulfil this mandate by teaching the Word of God and organising prayer and prophetic gatherings. She has also established Glory House of prayer platforms in Various cities in Germany and an online Minister's chapter to intercede for leaders and the nations.

Yinka also believes she has been sent to prepare the next generation for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fulfilling this mandate, she has a WhatsApp group for youths from different countries where she teaches them to be Kingdom and Nation Builders and prepare them for the coming of Christ.

Yinka is blessed with four active children, Yetunde, Tobi, Femi and Bunmi. They reside in Germany.

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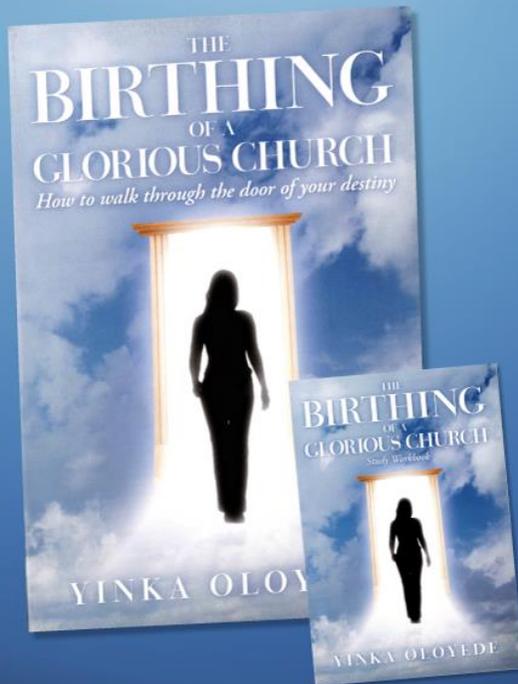
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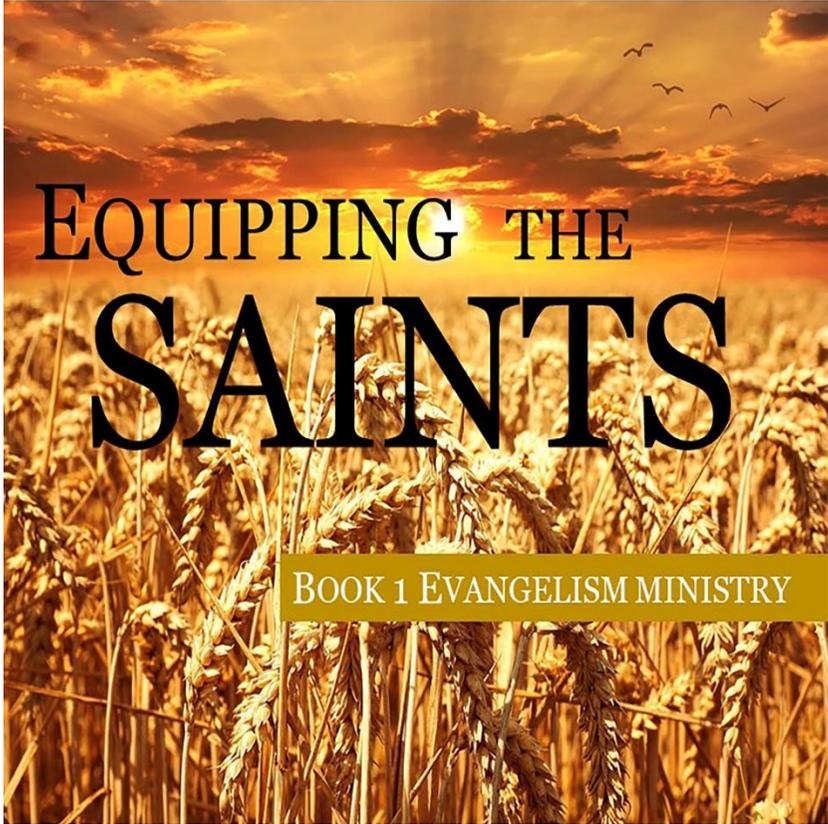
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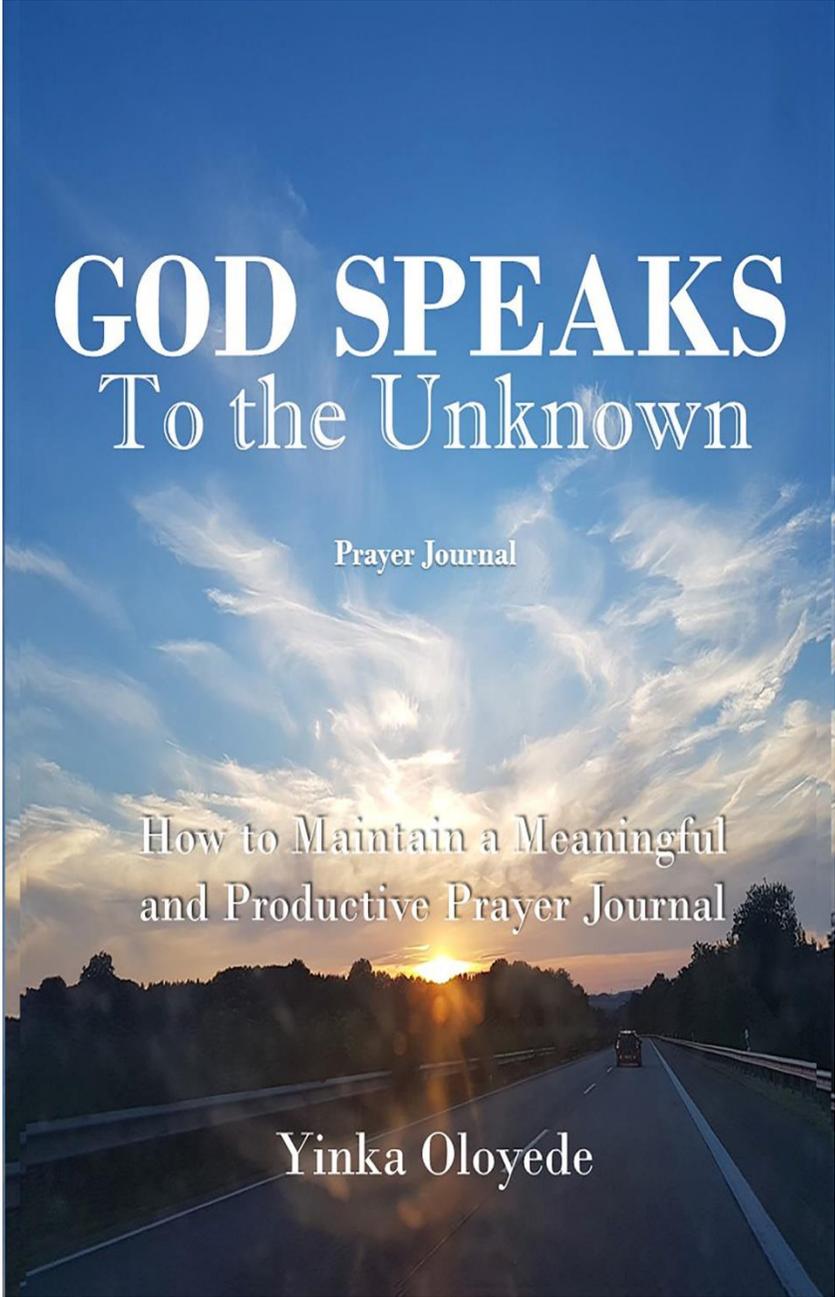
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