

**AHADI GOSPEL MINISTRY**  
**A DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING GUIDE**



**NEW LIFE IN CHRIST**  
**GROWING TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY**  
**REFRESHING MOMENTS-WAITING UPON THE LORD**  
**FINISHING WELL**

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## SECTION 1: NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

### a) New life in Christ begins at salvation

#### i) The meaning of salvation

This refers to the act of accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior in one's life. It is a turn-around of one's life from worldly sinful lifestyle into a new Godly lifestyle, hence, the new life in Christ...2 Cor.5:17= becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.

#### ii) The need for salvation-restoration

Following the fall of man at the garden of Eden—Genesis 2, into his sinful state, God initiated a plan to restore mankind to himself. This plan ran through generations until it was finally settled with the coming of the prophesied messiah, Jesus Christ---Isaiah 7:14, Matt. 1:23, Isaiah 9:6.

It is no longer you who lives but Christ in you= Galatians 2:20== I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

This was out of God's pure love for mankind whom he had made in his own image—Gen. 1:26-28 and that's why he sent his only begotten son to restore mankind to himself after the fall --- John 3:16.

#### **Salvation= to salvage= to save from danger**

Salvation is a way of escaping god's wrath for man's disobedience which is set for the final judgment. God's judgment has two destinies namely: heaven and hell. Those who accept Jesus Christ and live right with him shall go to heaven and those who consistently refuse to accept Jesus Christ shall have hell for their destiny. The choice is always yours.

Judgment for the born again Christians ( being like Christ= Christ like) is largely for rewards while that of the rebels shall be to punish sin and the rebellion---Romans 6:23

Once one is saved, they get into the new lifestyle= new life in Christ.

#### iii) Conditions for the new life

- **Believing and confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ**

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever **believes** in him should not perish but have everlasting life= John 3:16

Every tongue shall **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord=Philippians 2:9-11

For there is **no other name** that by which ye might be saved, except the name Jesus Christ= Acts 4; 12..... The chief cornerstone ...Acts 4:11

- **Renewal of mind= begin to think like Jesus**

...offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasant to God- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind... Romans 12:1-2

- **Shunning from former, old ways and lifestyle which disappointed God**

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance, but just as he who called you is holy so be holy in all you do, for it is written, be ye holy because I am holy=1 Peter 1:14

- **Walking in newness of life**

What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? Certainly not. We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? we were buried with him through baptism into death....we too may live a new life= Romans 6:1-23 (v1-4)

- **Seeking God's kingdom and all its righteousness**

But seek ye the kingdom of God and all its righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you= Matt.6:33

## **FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS OF THE NEW LIFE**

### **(i) Knowing God at a personal level**

Ps. 23; Prov. 1:7-. The beginning, of all wisdom is recognition of God in an individual Failure to do so reduces him /her into a non-Christian individual.

- S/he must be born again, one who confesses God as lord and savior — Jn. 3:16- 19, Rom 10:9-10
- There must be a re-birth in character and lifestyle in order for one to claim a new life. This re-birth comes with accepting Jesus into our lives as Christians - Lk 6:45; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24. Q'Y 2:

### **(ii) Prayer and fasting**

this aspect causes/produces re-charging in the life of a Christian who claims to be a born again and hence paramount. It gives one power and strength — in other words, it energizes a believer. Jesus himself said, some things can't be accomplished save by prayer and fasting- Mk. 9 29

Jesus Christ set a good example in attending morning glory without failure and fasting for forty days—Mk1:35;Mtt.4:1,Lk.4:1

### **(iii) Fellowship**

Don't forsake the fellowship of brethren Heb. 10:24 --in fellowshiping we

encourage each other through psalms, hymns, scriptures, etc.

+ Good fellowship nurtures our Christian growth into maturity. Remember, the bible records that an iron sharpens the other — Pro. 27:17

#### **(iv) The word of God**

• The Bible as the word of God contains the mind of God and his intention for mankind.

Thus, knowing and studying God's word makes one understand God better, hence strengthening his/her relationship with him. Men shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of ‘

God - Mtt. 4:4; Duet. 8:3

• The word of God is a lamp into our feet and light to our path — Ps. 119:105. ‘, )

• Meditation on God's word brings us closer to God — Ps\_1:1-6 (v)

#### **v) Anointed praise and worship**

• God inhabits the praise of his people.

• This brings God's glory down and so our fellowship with the father gets strengthened as of the days of old in the Garden of Eden— Gen 3:8 praise and worship sends towers tumbling down as of the Israelites and Jericho

Chron. 20:22 “

It soothes the heart of n individual even when lonely and alone.

• It constitutes a wonderful ingredient in meditation and quiet time.

#### **(vi) Desire for Holiness**

• Fleeing youthful desires/lusts of the body —2 Tim 2:22; Gal. 5:19-20; Mk 7:20-23

Heb 12:14:

A Christian who desires to be holy is one who desires to see God and inherit eternal life.

#### **(vii) Desire to set a good example /Mentorship**

- Mt. 10:32-33 ; Mk. 16:15.

#### **(viii) Good friends and friendships.**

+ Bad company corrupts good character 1 cr.6:14-18 Pr12:26;

**Judges 16:15-18**

#### **(ix) Setting right goals as a Christian**

+ What you will want to achieve in life as a Christian will determine your tailoring of effort and direction.

+ A Christian with no goals is a misguided fellow who leads for emotion — where there's no vision, people perish- Tim 2:3-6 ; 2:15 ; Heb 12:1-3 10:19-25.

#### **(x) Humility**

+ This will determine so many things in your life both at present as well as future. Your obedience to parents, church leaders, government, etc. is determined by the level and regard for humility in your life. Where there's no humility, pride is paramount, and remember pride goes before destruction

+ God's principle in being promoted is the more you humble, the he exalts you and & vice versa  
— 1 Pet. 5:6 ; Jam

## **CHALLENGES FACING THE NEW LIFE**

### **a) Mass media/internet/information technology (IT)**

This exposes a Christian to a lot of immorality and sin. Thus it lures them to lusts and desires. The radio, TV, video, newspapers, journals, and the like carry a lot of perversity and can easily corrupt a youth. However, when tempted you need not yield to sin Jesus was tempted yet never sinned let's follow his example.- 1Jhn-3:5-6

+ Although we live with these things, we don't need to be conformed, but renewed Rom. 12:1.

+ This exposes a Christian mainly to pornography that defiles their minds and tempts them to experiment, resulting to sin.

### **b) Friends and friendship/companionship**

Remember, bad company corrupts good behavior — 1 Cor 15:33 ; Prov. 12:26 .

### **c) Physical body lusts**

+ Christians are easily entangled in this kind of sin because of the proximity with the opposite sex and petting. In as much as you need to fellowship, borders need to be maintained to observe holiness. 4ec.

+ Never let your body control you, instead control your body (self- control) - Gal 5:23 (gentleness/ self-control)

### **d) Worldly standards/fashions**

• Fashion is the thing that badly corrupts Christians, especially the youth as they claim to move with the time — the so-called dot-corn-generation

+ In order for a youth to fit in this generation she/he has to conform to some standards which the world has set for its youth, thus unless a Christian is serious, she/he can easily be lured into fashions which at times derail us of holiness.

+ Worldly standards dictate that a modern Christian should behave and live in a certain life style, thus, one needs to be born-again, not an issue of religion, to remain uncorrupted.

+ According to the standards of this world, sexual sin is regarded as very normal and in fact the best thing to be enjoyed especially by the youth, when in reality, it's sin and defiling our own bodies — let's run away from such standards.

+ You'd rather look a fool to the world but be wise unto God than enjoying the world and go to hell for what shall it profit you if you get the whole world and lose your soul — Mk. 8:36.

+ Say no to the worldly standards and strive to meet the biblical standards, which produce life and eternity.

+ Don't be conformed instead be renewed in your minds and present your bodies as a living sacrifice unto God— Rom. 12:1-2 *I*

## **OVER-COMING THE CHALLENGES FACING THE NEW LIFE.**

### **(i) Relying upon God**

- This is the primary foundational pillar. For you to overcome sin you need to have Jesus as the center-stage of your life even as a Christian.
- Never be ashamed of your God — acknowledge him even in public, that's life unto you — Mtt. 10:32-33 ; Mk 16:15.
- The worst risk in your life as a Christian is hiding your testimony that's courting death!
- The fear **of God** and desire **to be holy** will keep you away/off-defiled mass media, bad friends and friendships, physical body lusts and worldly standards/fashions.

### **(ii) Knowing God's word for each challenge.**

- As a Christian, you need to know what the Bible says about the mass media and how you need to interact with it; friends and friendships, lusts, worldly standards and the like. Once you are informed of such things you will always strive **to keep clean** and never fall over to any of them.
- No wonder, the Bible says, let the word of God richly dwell in you — Col. 3:16
- The word is a lamp to your feet and light unto your path — Ps 119:105.
- The word will order your steps.-Prov.16:9

### **(iii) Prayer and fasting**

- This is the adding of fuel to your vessel.
- Jesus practiced it and overcame — Mk 1:35
- Some things can't be accomplished save by prayer and fasting Mk. 9:29

### **(iv) Putting on the full armour of God**

- As recorded in the Bible — Eph 6:10

The full armour:

Sword — Word of God

— Waist Belt—Truth

— Breastplate — Righteousness

— Shoes — Gospel of peace

— Shield—Faith

### **(v) Others**

- Avoid exposure to pornography.
- Avoid creating/brooding conducive environment for sin — indeed we should run away from any suspicious environment.
- Avoiding bad company.
- Etc.



## SECTION 2: GROWING TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

**Objective:** To cause a yearning/ desire in one's New Life in Christ to grow towards Spiritual Maturity.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the- oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age ...” Heb 5:12--14

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on “ to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance “- Heb 6:1-2. ; 11-12; Luke 1:80

.....And to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding....and increasing in the knowledge of God.” - Col. 1:9-10, 2:6-8; Eph 4:14; 1 Cor 14:20

A Christian who doesn't grow soon after being born again is abnormal, or can be seen as retarded. The ensuing discussion defines spiritual growth and documents details on how to grow towards spiritual maturity.

### 2. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

- a. **Grow(Growing)**- means to develop; increase in size, height, length, etc. to become too big; reach the stage of full development; to become more deeply rooted. (An English Readers Dictionary. Oxford).
- b. **Spiritual (Spirit)** - of the soul; part of a human being considered/thought of as separate from the body; supernatural being/nature = **God is Spirit- John 4:24**
- c. **Maturity (Mature)** - Come or bring to full development or to a state ready for use; ripe; fully grown or developed; carefully thought out; perfected.  
Thus, spiritual growth towards maturity can be understood as the increase in the supernatural being of an individual soon after being converted/ born again to a state of usefulness or perfection in the ministry, with full faith in Jesus Christ as lord and savior. In the Christian perspective, the aspect gives the ability to discern good and evil sin and holiness – Heb 5:14

Growing = increase in size and shape/ getting aged without necessarily being useful/becoming mature.

### **3. GENESIS OF GROWING TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

Just like in the physical nature where growth and development besets from conception, spiritual growth also starts with the confession and receiving of Jesus Christ as lord and savior in one's life= 2 Cor 5:17. That is to say, soon after being born - again, a convert/proselyte or believer is expected to grow to higher status till such a time when the same person can be entrusted with some service in the ministry vineyard. Hence, a Christian who doesn't grow soon after conversion is abnormal, or could be referred to as retarded.

That is why, the writer, in Hebrews 5:12-14, doesn't spare his subjects, instead, firmly castigates/ condemns them that... by now you ought to be teachers of the word of God, but then, you are still tiny babes in the spirit - we need to arise and shine for our light has come Is. 60:1.

Soon after we attain the Nicodemus state, (John 3:1-21), we are expected to move to higher levels or grounds in the faith and not remain spiritual babes.

**Ref. 2 Pet 3:14, Luke 1:80, Mat.13:18-23, 1Pet 2:2**

### **4. STEPS IN GROWING TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

These could also be looked at as signs or indicators of growth towards spiritual maturity and can be identified as follows:-

#### **a)Knowing God and his Word**

Let the word of God dwell in you in plenty= Col.3:16

The word is sharper - Heb. 4:12, Luke 1:80, Mat 13:18-23

Christian faith is pegged on Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, having come into the world in the form of a human person, and died on the cross to save us from our sins. Now, soon after conversion we need to strive and increase our knowledge of who God is and many other details. All these things are found in his word, for in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God - Jn. 1:1. Thus, knowing the word of God, is knowing God himself, and vice versa. Paul in Col 3:16, exhorts us to have the word of God dwell in us richly, for he knows, it's all we need in our Christian faith and walk with him. All other issues to do with tithing/giving, prayer and fasting, fellowship. etc., are contained in the word, as the source. We need the word of God in us to understand all truth about God - Jn. 8:32. If anything, we don't need to solicit for many pieces of advice from friends, colleagues, pastors, etc., on what God says about an issue (though by so doing, there's no sin), instead, we over and above need the word of God and God himself to tell us his will about the issue at hand. Advice is good but sometimes, can deviate you from your focus. No wonder, a popular adage goes, "Let people advice you, but not decide for you." Your ultimate decision should come from God not man, for cursed is the man who trusts in man - Jer. 17:5.

Kay Arthur in his book entitled 'Lord I want to Know You', records many things/aspects about God. In fact, the same yearning in Arthur, ought to be in us and desire to know more of him as: -

El-olam - God everlasting/eternal - Gen. 21:33; Is. 40:28

El-Elyon- God, most high- Gen 14:18; Ps. 9:2

ii. El-Elohim - God, the creator/mighty/strong one - Gen. 1:1; Ps. 68:1

iii. El-Shaddai - The all sufficient God/God Almighty - Gen. 17:1; Exo. 6:3

iv. E1-Roi - The God who sees - Gen. 16:13

v. Jehovah-Rah or Rohi - The lord my shepherd - Ps. 23:1

vi Jehovah - Shammah - the lord is there/never changes. Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8

viii.Jehovah - Rapha or rophe - The lord our Healer Exo. 15:26.

- viii. Jehovah - Jireh - The lord our provider - Gen. 22:14
- ix. Jehovah - Tsidkenu - The lord our Righteousness - Jer. 23:6
- x. Jehovah - Mekoddshkem or Maccaddeschem - The lord our sanctifier - Exo. 3 1:13; Lev.20:8
- xi. Jehovah - Nissi - The lord my banner - Exo. 17:15
- viii. Jehovah - Shalom - The lord our peace - Judges 6:24
- viii. Jehovah - Sabaoth - The lord our Hosts - Jos. 5:14; 1 Sam. 1:3 Ps. 24:10.
- Xiv. Jehovah or Yahweh - The self-sufficient or existent God - /Gen. 2:4; Exo. 3:14; Ps. 68:4, Jn 8:58-59 = self- contained God
- xv. Adonai - The lord/master/sovereign ruler - Ps. 68:32; Is.6:8-1 1.
- xvi. El-Chai- the Living God
- xvii. Jehovah Bethany- God of the house of rest  
His name is the Word of God= Rev.19:13

N/B: The list doesn't exhaust God. There's more to it! In knowing the word of God, we need to:

- To love it - Prov. 7:2-4; Col. 3:16; Ps. 119:105
- Confirm it like the Bereans - Acts. 17:1 1 — they searched scriptures daily
- Meditate upon it day and night - Ps. 1:1-6. (V.2) . . .
- Be diligent in searching it =Heb.2:1; 1Tim 2:15; Ps.119: 41, 94, 141

As food is to body, so is the word of God, to the spirit - Heb. 5:12-14. It is the balance diet for your spirit man-2 Tim 3:16-17= that the man of God may be perfect.

God's word grants us hope= Ps.130:5

Crave for the word that you may grow in your salvation= 1 Pet. 2:2

### **b) Diligence in Prayer and fasting**

Men of prayers are men of visions= Acts 16:9, 18:9, Eph.4:13

Soon after conversion, we experience a lot of difficulties in praying. Many of us don't even know where to start and even how to begin. The bible too attests to this, but gives a direction on what to do. It says, indeed, we don't know how to pray, but the Holy Ghost intercedes for us to the father, in groaning which can't be uttered - Rom.8:26-27. Hence, we should rely upon the spirit of the father to teach us to pray= he helps us in our infirmities.

The Lord's Prayer too, is a good sample prayer which gives us a green light on how to pray – Mt. 6:5-13.

Jesus' morning glory character is a good example too= Mark 1:35. Jesus stresses on this aspect as he knows for sure that, some things can't be accomplished save by prayer and fasting - Mk.9:9.

The Holy Ghost is our **helper** and so we don't need to panic in this issue - Jn. 14:16-18, 25-27; Jn 16:6-14: Rom. 8:15.

We must do this with all diligence to attain spiritual growth and maturity - 1 Peter. 4:7.

In prayer and fasting, you refresh your spirit and energize for more work-Amen!

Rely upon the holy spirit for breakthrough in prayer and fasting= success in prayer. In fact, the secret in prayer is the Holy Spirit.

### **The Holy Spirit= Trinity of God**

a) *realizing our inability*-without the holy spirit, we cannot:-

- witness-acts 1:8
- understand-1 Cor 2:11
- worship-john 4:24
- receive gifts-1 cor. 2:14
- have power-2 tim 1:7

- have guidance-acts 16:7
  - have security-1 john 3:24
  - have evidence-acts 6:6-8
  - have life- rom 8:6
  - have future-2 cor. 1:22
  - have uniqueness-acts 20:22-24
  - have resurrection- romans 8:11
- Jesus says, "...for without me you can do nothing."....John 15:5

*learning to listen to the holy spirit for beginners*

- in circumstances
- in following examples
- in scripture- psalm 119:105, acts 28:25
- in listening to preaching, word of knowledge, word of wisdom/prophecy-acts 13:2

**c) Realizing our calling in the lord**

1Tm 4:14; Luke 19:13- **occupy till I come.**

Once you get saved, you should strive to identify your area of calling in the ministry, because, every believer, has a talent/calling to serve, in a certain given area - 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Eph.4: 11.

After the realization, you should then take a bold step, knowing that you will have to give an account unto God for that which was entrusted unto your care - Mt. 25:14-30 (v. 19, 26).

In other words, be responsible in your area of calling and struggle to complete the duty -- 'bestowed upon you and meet what God expects of you - be a faithful servant. 'A believer who's spiritually growing is the one who has identified his/her area of calling and is now seriously working towards perfection - "...? Let us go on to perfection..." Heb 6:1, 12

Your talent or gift is for the betterment of the church= for the work of the ministry and edification of the church as the body of Christ

5 Ministries = Eph 4: 11-15

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Evangelists
- Pastors

Gifts of the Holy Spirit= 1 Cor 12:1-11 (you can explore more on this aspect)

- Word of wisdom- 1 Cor 12:8, Luke 6:9
- Word of knowledge- 1 Cor 12:8, Luke 18:22

- Faith- 1 Cor 12:9, acts 3:6
- Gifts of healing- 1 Cor 12:9 , acts 28:1-10
- Working of miracles- 1 Cor 12:10 ,acts 6:8
- Prophecy- 1 thes 5:20-21
- Discerning of spirits-1 Cor 12:10 , Luke 8:29
- Speaking in various tongues- acts 19:6 , 1 Cor 12 :10 ,14:13-33
- Interpretation of tongues- 1 Cor 14:13
- Gift of service- romans 12:7 , 2 tim 1;16-18
- Teaching- Eph 4:13-14
- Motivation –romans 12:8 , acts 20:18-21
- Giving –rom 12:8 ,acts 4:32-35
- Leadership- rom 12:8 , acts 13:1-3
- Mercy –rom 12 :8 ,Luke 5:12-13
- Apostle – Eph 4:11
- Hospitality -1 pet 4:9
- Celibacy- 1 Cor 7:7
- Administration-acts 6:2-3
- Exorcism- acts 16:18
- Evangelism –Eph 4:11 ,2 tim 4:5
- Pastoral guidance- Eph 4;11
- Missionary –Eph 3:7
- Willingness for martyrdom- 1 Cor 13:3
- Helping – 1 Cor 12 :28
- Intercession –rom 8:26-27
- Encouragement –rom 12 :8 , Heb 10:24-25

I am very sure that you have the potential to accomplish the task entrusted upon you for he who started the good work in you is able to bring it to a good end...Philippians 1: 6. Amen.

**d) Desire to fellowship with others.**

Remember, the bible says, an iron sharpens the other; - Pro. 27:17. This implies that, in fellowshiping with others you get encouraged, rebuked, corrected, etc., with the intention of growing to perfection - Heb. 10:24. Hence, never forsake the gathering of brethren, for in such a place, goodness abides= Psalm 133:1-3. For sure, eagles will never gather where there's no cause! -Lk. 17:37, Mat.24:28.

**e) Hating sin and focusing upon Jesus.**

Once we get saved, sin should be our worst enemy/adversary. In fact, we shouldn't even be mentioned in it - Heb. 12:1-3, instead, focus upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus was tempted yet without sin- Heb 4:16

Don't forget that the wages of sin is death! - Rom.6:23 Isa. 55:7; Jet 29:11, Jude 1:4; Gal.2:4;Jn 8:48; 1Jn. 3:1; 1Sam.15:3,9,20-23.Rom 8:15;Pro. 28:13.

Sin is a reproach to any people - Prov. 14:34.  
In fact, the fear of God to hate evil= Prov. 8:13.

Ref: Prov.1:7, 2 Tim 2:19

**f) Desire for Holiness**

Immediately we get saved, we should know that we are patterned after God, who is holy, and hence, we too, should be holy - 1 Pet. 1:16. Indeed, without holiness, no one will inherit the kingdom of God - Heb. 12:14. Holiness will teach us to humble before God and mankind - Jam. 4:6-7; 2 Pet. 5:5-6; Mat. 5:48, Heb 5:14

Indeed the bible says that the more we humble, the more we shall be exalted and vice versa Lk 18':14

We were created to be like God in righteousness and holiness= Eph 4:22-24

**g) Desire for anointed praise and worship.**

This is a very powerful spice/ingredient in Christian life to maturity. It should be taken both at a personal level as well as congregational. Once saved, we should forget all about the worldly, defiling music, and yearn for the exhorting, soothing powerful music of God, which quickly takes us into the presence of the lord and soothes our hearts - 1 Chron 15:29

God dwells in the praises of his people= Psalm 22:3

We should have our minds renewed - Rom. 12:1-2. We need sweet melodies and praise hymns and songs to soothe us when lonely, downcast and discouraged, even when feeling high in the spirit- 2 Chron. 20:22. Love to sing, love to praise God, love to worship God, both in person, and even when in the company of others. In fact, God dwells in the praise of his people. So, you want to see God, look for him in his praise, he's also found in them = Jehoshaphat and the enemies who got confused and killed one another as the children of Israel did praise God.

Take this as a personal challenge - Do I love to praise and worship God? if not, then there's a problem and it's so difficult for you to grow in your spiritual life. You need it

during meditation and quiet time where, it's experienced either audibly (loudly) or non-audibly (silently).

Indeed, let everything that has breath praise the Lord -Ps. 150:6

The fall of Jericho was through powerful praise and worship= Joshua 6:1-5. 15-16

#### **h) Moving with a focus/vision.**

Once we get saved, our focus gets onto Jesus- Heb. 12:1-2- the author and finisher of our faith Thus; we should never allow anything or any-body to distract us from it. In fact, where there's no vision, people perish - Pro. 29:18. (Set goals/aims/objectives to get to heaven and work towards inheriting heaven- don't deviate!).

This is an ambition or goal/ target= 1Thes 4:11, 2 Tim 4: 2-5, Phil 3:13-15

holding promise for both the present life and the life to come= 1 Tim 4:8

#### **i)Contentment/Thankful Spirit**

A mature Christian is one who has learnt to thank God in every situation, knowing that all things (whether good or bad) work for good for them that love the Lord and who are called according to his purpose in Christ Jesus - Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:4-&This is One who doesn't easily get swayed, for s/he knows that the battle is the Lord's - 1 Sam 17:47.

A spiritually mature Christian is one who has learnt to say thank you Jesus in sickness, during a death catastrophe, in humiliation, torture, to name but a few

Indeed, Paul writes to Timothy saying; "Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content". - I Tim. 6:6-8, Job 1:21-22, 19:25

A mature Christian is one who will never retract and disown his/her faith even at the 'point of death, but instead, will say, Lord-thank you, for I know, all these things are working for my own good= Rom. 8: 26-27.

Don't be anxious for anything= Phil. 4:6-13

Contentment is a powerful indicator in spiritual maturity.

In fact, thankfulness is a secret to a joyful personality- you need joy in your life, just be thankful in all and enjoy everything. Be contented even in your own personality for you can't change anything= Jer.13:23.

Remember, you are fearfully and wonderfully made= Psalm 139:14

You only need one desire in your life= Psalm 27: 4, Psalm 42:1

Ref: 1Tim 4:4, 1Tim 6:17, 1Pet 5: 6

#### **j.Sound Financial Discipline**

Tithing and offering= Malachi 3:7-10...insists on investing in God the creator of the heavens and the earth, the father of all riches. Silver and gold belongs to the Lord.

### **5. REASONS FOR LACK OF GROWING TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

These can also be treated as causes of spiritual stagnation as well as indicators of retardation and are as follows:-

#### **a) Sin and love for the world= problem of nominal Christians**

Many Christians today are still the same, after many years of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and savior in their lives. Why? Because, they have still succumbed to sin. They are not ready to forgo the pleasures of the world and the sin that easily entangles them

- Heb 12:1-2; James 4:4; 1jn 2:15

“Adulterers and adulteress! f) Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore wants to be a friend to the work makes himself an enemy of God-James 4:4.

There are many people in the church today, who pay tithes, give huge offering and do attend services, but still lack God’s anointing, simply because, a sin, they formerly cherished, is still the order of the day. They are in the church choir, but great sinners! In the pulpit yet transgressors!

God is calling for a transformation— Rom. 12: 1-2

Satan will always pull you down even when trying to rise up, if you are still pegged onto a certain sin, he will always remind you of the same weakness and so discourage you, resulting to relaxing in the spirit, hence, unable to rise above your standard. You need to completely surrender all sins so that when Satan reminds you of your past, you can boldly remind him of his future, rise to your feet and move on with the lord - Is. 60..1. No condemnation any more – Rom. 8:1.

Read: Rom. 6:2, 8:15; Pro. 28:13; Jude. 1:4.

The soul that sins shall surely die =Ezekiel 18: 20

### **b) Sluggishness in the things of God = lack of Seriousness.**

Many Christians today are still spiritual babes because they don’t want to actively participate in the service of God. Probably, they would like to hide some sins in fear, fear itself or even stubbornness, though all shall be revealed -Lk12:2 or simply, they are lazy. Remember, the bible records that cursed is the man who slackly/lazily serves the lord.’ Jer. 48:10; prove yourself if not so! - 2 Tim **2:15**.

Peter is calling for seriousness- 1 Pet. 4:7. For you to grow spiritually, you need to be active and not lazy. Laziness has left many people infants in the church, when they could be many strides ahead, in the service of God= Heb.6:11-12--show diligence not sluggishness.

=> Let’s strengthen hands which hang down and the feeble knees - Heb. 12:12

=>A lazy man desires but has nothing - Prov. 13:4.

- Don’t hang your harps= Psalm 137:1-2

Ref .Heb.6:11-12

### **c) Getting mixed up in one’s vision for God and heaven= spiritual confusion**

Once you get mixed-up on what you want to achieve in the lord, and move away from faith in Jesus and inheriting heaven, it’s sure that, one will no longer find any joy in salvation. When this happens, chances are high that the same might backslide or cease to be active. Why, because, the same individual has had his/her original vision of God mingled with world pleasures causing ‘fog’ on the way, and deterring clear spiritual sight/foresight i.e. resulting to spiritual blindness.

Safeguard your vision for God and heaven in order to grow in the Lord - Rom 6:22.

Remember, God is not the author of confusion= 1 Cor.14:33

### **d) Cowardice/Fear**

This could arise from natural reasons like weak family backgrounds where people/children grow in a lot of fear and can hardly express their views. Once they get saved, unless, they yield to the spirit to have such things destroyed; they may remain ‘hooked’ in such bondage, resulting to stagnation. This could be seen as a psychological problem, but, you don’t need to remain in the same, otherwise, Jesus’ work on the cross was in vain - Mat. 28:19; 1 Jn. 3:8.

Don’t fear, otherwise you’re not perfect - Jn 4:18. The Holy Ghost will drive away



the fear and cowardice in us by yielding to him - Rom. 8:15.  
Again, God has not given us the spirit of fear - 2Tim. 1:7

The story of the spies= Joshua and Caleb= Numbers 13:1, 26-31= we looked like grasshoppers to them. Avoid!

God is bigger than the Goliath you are seeing ahead.

#### **e) Refusing to grow/procrastination.**

Some other people are funny! They get saved but simply refuse to grow! They completely don't want to grow in the fear that once they grow. They will be entrusted with the work of service in the ministry. So now, they refuse to grow, naturally. This is a weakness from the devil. Get out of such stubbornness and shine for your God. You were never called to warm the benches/seats in the church for nothing!

Brethren, let's arise and grow -2 Pet. 3:17-18

Arise and shine for your light has come= Isaiah 60:1

#### **f) Setting low standards for oneself (low self-esteem)**

This comes in as a result of creating an unsuitable or non-conducive environment for growth. Some people say that I was never called to be a pastor, evangelist. etc., and hence, sit down and relax. Others look at their family backgrounds and status and claim that low-status is their portion or endowment in life. This is a lie of the devil. They are deceived to believe that it is their fate.

Arise-Is. 60:1

God talks of arising above our standards, implying growth from a lower level to a higher one - Jer. 50:2. Such low standards had been set in Hebrews which the master seriously fights against and calls for an up rise - Heb. 5:12.

#### **g) Financial Disobedience**

Not giving and tithing as the Lord commands= Malachi 3:7-10.

This leads to too much work but less returns or none at all= putting in pockets with holes= losing everything despite work done= Haggai 1:5-6

### **6.HOW TO OVERCOME THE STAGNATION/ RETARDATION**

Simply, strengthen all the pillars/ steps in growing towards spiritual maturity.

Always desire to finish well in your new life in Christ Jesus.

Target: **FINISHING WELL-** "...He who started the good work in you is able to bring it on to a completion until the day of Jesus Christ..."- **Philippians1:6**

## **SECTION 3: REFRESHING MOMENTS – WAITING UPON THE LORD**

“Repent therefore and be converted; that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ...Acts 3:19.”

“And the next day we touched at Sidon and Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go to his friends to refresh himself.” –Acts 27:3

“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.” Gen.2: 3.

“And further, my son, be admonished by these of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh” Eccl. 12: 12

And Moses’ father-in-law said to him –...the thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear away both you and this people that are with you, For this thing is too heavy for you, you are not able to perform it all alone...Exo 18:12

“Calmness is the best cure (drug) for a disturbed mind.” – a common quote.

**Read: Jer. 33:6 —11; Job 3:17; Ps 37:7; Hab. 5:5 , Acts 9:31**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Normally, spiritual things / aspects affect the physical ones and vice versa. This is so because Paul alludes to it when he says, ‘that which I don’t want I end up doing and that which I would very much have liked to do, I end up not doing –oh, poor me, wretched man. Why? Because, the spirit is willing but the body is weak. In as much as we would like to please God by living holy life, the carnal body is there with its lusts ready to flatter our efforts.

This, if we can take good control of our lives as far as physical work is concerned, as well as taking stock of our walk with god, then we would always tell God to cleanse a given times. (Isaiah 1:18)

To refresh= to re-energize; to get new strength; to relax after a task; reinvigorate; refill

### **2. CONTEXTS FOR REFRESHMENT**

Here, what we would like to point out is the fact that the bible exhorts us to enter into refreshing moments/ times as in Acts 27:3 and at the same time cautions us against too much work without resting, stating that such wearies the body .Eccl. 12:12.

Hence, the two (2) contexts in which we would focus upon our subjects are:

i) The spiritual refreshment which is pegged onto repentance and forgiveness ..Acts 27: 3. As the Bible puts it, this brings us peace with God i.e. grants us peace of heart and mind and puts us right with God. This also prepares us for Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.

ii) The physical refreshment connected to relaxing / recreating/resting after a task. This grants us peace with oneself especially now that it makes one feel good and relaxed. This is as godly as repentance and that's why even God observed it after accomplishing creation work – Gen 2:3.

### **3. LEVELS OF REFRESHMENT**

1) Refreshing moments pegged on repentance and forgiveness from the spiritual angle **i.e.** repentance – Acts 3:19 and forgiveness- the key to healing - Matt. 6: 12,14-15

2) Refreshing moments in the physical context i.e. relaxing/recreating/resting  
-Acts 27:3; Gen.2:3;Exo.23:12;Exo.20:8-11;Exo.31:15

#### **Spiritual Refreshment**

This is concerned with repentance and forgiveness as applauded in the Bible – **Jer. 33:6-11**; 2Chron.7: 14, as well as Jesus Christ's second coming.

##### **i) Repentance**

Repentance brings/warrants on individual, some moments of refreshing in the presence of the Lord – Acts 27:3, and remember, in the presence of the Lord, is fullness of joy. Repentance allows you to make things right with God hence enter his rest – Heb.4:1-3. In fact once you go through a moment of repentance before the Lord, you come out of the same place renewed in strength and refreshed, knowing for sure that, at least, things are right with my creator – Eccl. 12:1, 13-14.

Once again, repentance produces peace of mind and heart. Any sin that is hidden nags one's conscience as long as the same conscience is still alive, otherwise, if it is seared as with a hot iron, nothing happens – 1 Tim.4:2. Anytime you repent, you feel nice and relieved. That is the refreshing moment, when you feel free and relieved – Matt. 11: 28.

##### **ii) Importance of repentance**

-It acts as a point of connection with your maker especially so when we are taken through the sinner's repentance prayer. At this point, we are once again bridging back our relationship with the father that was initially distorted. In other words, we are put right with our God — Acts 3: 19; Rev. 2:5.

- It is a point of re-charging or refreshing our lives with God's glory especially so as we experience sanctification. It shows the continual pledging of our loyalty to him, acknowledging that he alone remains to be our Lord and savior.

-It warrants healing, both spiritual as well as physical — Jer. 33:6, 11.

It acts as a point where we off-load our burdens — Matt. 11:28 says 'come unto me, ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' He continues to say that '.... My burden is light...' V. 30.

Psalm 103:2-3... “ Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquities , who heals all your diseases...”

## **ii) Forgiveness-The Key to Healing**

### **Importance of Forgiveness in Life**

#### **i. Recipe for love/true love. 2 Cor. 2:5-11**

True love will be made evident in the art and act of forgiving. Many a times, as human beings we err and hurt others as well as ourselves. We feel embarrassed and humiliated, used up and dumped. But then, even at such a time as that, God is calling upon **you** and me to forgive. It is true that it is tough to actualize but still God is calling upon us to forgive. Paul talks of showing/extending forgiveness in order to safeguard the emotions of other people such that they could sorrow and perhaps backslide, instead help them reconstruct their lives lest Satan takes advantage of their wrong and condemns them to nothing.

#### **ii. Forgiveness as a weapon in conflict/warfare.**

If you forgive somebody who has wronged you, you have in other words instilled discipline and reasoning in the same person. Instead of reacting, you simply 'let go' and the individual looks at you as so extra-ordinary. At such a time when, one could have expected revenge, you extend a hand of forgiveness to avoid quarrels whatsoever. No wonder, instead of reacting, Jesus restored the ear of the guard for he said I have enough angels in heaven, but for the sake of the gospel .....Luke 22:50-51; Mk. 14:47-49. This is a super-natural weapon for the weapons of our warfare, are not carnal - 2 Cor. 10:4-6

#### **iii. Forgiveness as a seed in a relationship/family set-up Gal. 6:7**

You shall reap what you sow'. Should you sow forgiveness, be sure to reap forgiveness in return. If you teach your spouse, friends, children, and the like to forgive, even at such when you in person wrongs them, they shall be ready to forgive, as they perfect the art. It is a seed that germinates and give rise to itself i.e. it reproduces itself; thus, plant forgiveness and expect to harvest forgiveness.

#### **iv. Forgiveness as a key in unlocking blessings (bailing one out of bondages)**

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors' - Matt. 6:12

Being in debt is something all of us fear. Why? Because, it makes our stay uncomfortable. It nags us of our minds and feel so insecure. Sometimes, we even risk being taken to court for being in debt.

This puts us in total bondage of fear and insecurity. Then out of such, the devil locks up our blessings from heaven, on the ground that, unless we settle our debts we can't be blessed. In practical terms, before one gets another loan from a bank or a loaning institution, she/he has to offset the previous, without which, no other loan can be extended or granted. God too expects us to forgive others before he can unleash more blessings to us.

Our being forgiven depends on our forgiving of others. This unlocks more blessings into our lives.

## **Requirements in Forgiveness.**

### **i. Willingness to settle accounts.**

The bible talks of settling accounts as soon as possible before our adversaries take us to the law courts where we shall have suffer to the letter. In this respect, we get to learn that it takes a willing heart to forgive, otherwise, forgiveness cannot come automatically or diffuse into an individual. It comes out of an intention. Settling accounts directs us to wrong doing whereby we are obliged to state whether we are ready to pay up or not. A state whereby we are called upon to cause things to happen. Thus unless you cause forgiveness to come, it will never come. It's never conveyed to another through osmosis. It takes a willing heart, a willing spirit. One that says, brother or sister, I'm willing to settle accounts, I'm willing to forgive. Read Matt. 18:23-35.

Willingness is an act and attitude of the mind and if your mind is renewed and led by the Holy Ghost, forgiving others will never be a big deal. It will be like a slice in a bread, a portion in an orange fruit. Forgiveness will be a hobby through Christ who strengthens you, for without him, you can never forgive. He strengthens your mind to WILL to forgive. An act of the mind through the Holy Ghost.

**Principle: - willingness to forgive is an act of the mind and can be abused if not carefully, thought of.**

### **ii. Readiness to release or 'let go'.**

Normally, the spirit man is locked up to many burdens, heavily laddened cause, people, and believers for that matter are not ready to 'let go'. They move around hawking others for wrong done on them. They are tied to so many people, carrying others in their pockets, on their backs, in the palms, etc. because they are not ready to release. This act is however reflected in the physical by people walking up so heavy and tired. Reasons - been carrying people even when asleep. That's luggage unfit for you. Surrender it to Jesus for he says, 'come unto me all who labour and are heavy laddened and I'll give you rest' - Matt. 11:28.

Many a times, our hearts are hurting because of the many ills and evils done upon us by others. Likewise, we hurt other people's hearts from the ills and evils we commit against them. All we need to do is learn to release and let go. Please, don't labour any ill feelings in your heart! That could lead to severe healthy malfunctions like heart attack, high blood pressure due to intense reflections, stomach ulcers due to increased acidity when gloomy and discouraged, to name but a few.

Readiness is connected to taking a step of faith. For one, you could be willing but not ready. It's one thing to WILL and another thing to be READY to forgive.

Willingness as earlier stated is a state of the mind hut readiness is a step of faith. You need to take a bold step and let go, otherwise you will always remain in bondage. You are yoked up in un-forgiveness hut unless you are ready to walk out of the same snare, you will forever be there. Thus, I'm not only willing, hut ready to pay the price to forgive, in order to have peace entrenched into our homes, relationships, workplaces, etc., both as a matter of intellect and faith.

### iii. Not being judgmental.

If God could have been so judgmental as to why did man sin, for sure no penitence could have been rendered to us. But Jesus/God decided to overlook all strengths and weaknesses in man just for forgive. Brother/sister, can you forgive with no strings attached?

The bible in Matt. 15:14 commends that we judge not that we may not be judged. It takes a powerful heart to overlook wrongs when committed. It takes the grace of God to say, 'I forgive you, because it's normally in the nature of man to significantly point out others' people's weaknesses compared to himself. Thus, the judgmental altitude is so much foregrounded such that the forgiving attitude/spirit is cocooned/overshadowed.

**Principle: The more judgmental you become, the more you weaken your power to forgive.**

### Jesus Christ's Second Coming

This will be characterized by a lot of devil-worshipping especially so during the last days. Some of the things to know about the so-called new age movement, popularly known as NAM are as follows:-

#### Indicators of Nam / Dw/Cult

- a. False teachings / Doctrines / fake gospels e.g.
  - Prosperity gospel at the expense of holiness
  - Man is god (pantheism)
  - God is world-less and thus unconcerned about man
  - No one is guilty — we are all innocent
  - Everybody has the truth — Jesus had his truth, I got my truth too.
  - No act is sinful (hedonism)
  - Witchcraft is a religion
  - The 'truth' is found in Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi Moslem and other eastern mystical religions, NOT Christianity.
  - People don't die — they simply reincarnate into something else like a dog, cow, tree, etc.
  - Salvation is not by grace alone (Eph. 2:5-9) etc.

**NB:** These perverted doctrines started during the days of Abraham through the mighty Babylonian king Nimrod (father), and his evil queen, Semiramis (mother.)

- b. Adherence to other superior! extra-biblical writings e.g. the pearls of great price; The Mormons doctrine and covenants - the Mormons, canon law, dogma, liturgy, etc. (Bhagavad-Gita 3000 Bc).
- c. Existence of a person who's trusted, esteemed and often quoted like Jesus himself e.g. Marion Branham of the Branhamites; Ellen G. White; Taze Russell; Joseph Smith; William Miller, etc. Here, the leader has the authority to change their theology at any given moment.
- d. To devalue the divinity of Jesus Christ - Jn. 1:1-14: Col. 1:15-19: Isa. 9:6: Jn. 1:33-34.
- e. The group is that is, they have the key to scripture interpretation. They have the right of scripture interpretation, and membership in the group determines entry into eternal life.
- f) Most of their teaching is on eschatology (doctrine on last days! things to occur

during the last days) — basing their teachings on Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 17; Ezek. 38,39; Dan. 7:12, Revelation, etc. They normally twist these teachings to fit their cult doctrines and to win membership.

g) Ardent fight for a universal, neutral bible that seeks to discredit Jesus Christ and Jehovah God himself. This is perpetuated by the fact that they claim man to be a god if he can only but, realize his full potentials to be god i.e. reach the ‘Christ consciousness’

a. ‘To conquer the world for their ‘Christ’ the Lord maitreya.’

The new age is dead serious about what’s going on. Satan has ignited / sparked in his followers an abnormal urge / thirst to become gods and so he and his cohorts accuse Christians as being great stumbling blocks or impediments in the attainment of man’s godhood.

They would either have the Christians converted to their religion or faith or face death / extinction completely.

b. **The NAM objectives**

To discredit Jesus and the Bible. The New Agers seek to portray or make Jesus Christ look like just a simple man who was also, like other people, guided by spiritual superiors. The thing or idea is to make Jesus look like nothing, something that is utterly impossible. They are simply fighting a losing battle.

c. **Some NAM practices/ rituals / beliefs**

‘Halloween’ nights, astrology, spiritism, black magic, witchcraft, homosexuality, bisexuality, free sex, mystery teachings (man is god), occultism, Eastern mysticism / shamanism, Reincarnation / karma, psychology (power of the mind), science and technology as revelation, pseudo-science hedonism, Evolution, pantheism, worshiping of the heavens, selfish (self-love) leadership by spiritually superior beings (Satan and his demons).

N/B: As a Christian, you need to know these things to be on the safe side.

Otherwise, through one or several practices / rituals / beliefs, you could be serving / worshipping the devil — thus a perpetuator of the ‘NAM project’.

**Others include:** numerology, levitation, astral travel, Hypnotism, nature/earth worship, magic words/mantras, decrees, goddess worship, palmistry, fire worship, other visualization, sexual licentiousness, necromancy, divination, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, other symbolism, transcendental meditation, yoga, martial arts- karate, judo, kung-fu, tae kwo ndo, Ji-jitsu, Aikido, acupuncture, radionics, chromo- therapy, ohija Board, ufology (UFOs) dowsing, black mass (Halloween), voodoo, etc.

## The NAM- PLAN

- i. **Its aim** — To bring or establish a one world New Age religion and a one world political and social order.  
Its intended to bring the prophesied anti-god religion system to reality in the last days — 1 Tim. 4:13.
- ii. **Strategies or targets (13 of them — the 13 — points master plan)**
  - ❖ To make it a revival of the idolatrous religion of ancient Babylon where falsehood / demonism flourished.
  - ❖ To mature with the arrival of the Anti-Christ and his number 666.
  - ❖ Demons / spirit guides to help in the inception - pave way to the ‘great world teacher’ the anti-Christ.
  - ❖ Working slogan: ‘world peace, love and unity.
  - ❖ NA teachings to be taught and propagated in every sphere of society around the world.
  - ❖ NA leaders and followers to spread the doctrine / ‘gospel’ that Jesus is neither god nor the Christ.
  - ❖ Christianity and all other religions to become party to this new religion.
  - ❖ Develop its own bible or revise the existing one to suit the plan.
  - ❖ Christian principles and doctrines to be discredited and abandoned.
  - ❖ Children to be spiritually seduced and indoctrinated, particularly, through the use of the classroom/ school.
  - ❖ Deception / flattery to be used in order to entice the whole world into believing that man is a divine god.
  - ❖ Science and the new religion to become one
  - ❖ Christians who resist the plan to be killed / exterminated in order to ‘purify’ the world.

### d. The NAM Vocabulary

NB: Have distorted / perverted meanings.

- God - impersonal every force; can either be a s/he; mother or father; god or goddess, etc.
- Christ -reincarnated a vatar messiah or messenger sent from the hierarchy to give the living on earth spiritually advanced revelation, etc. (ANTI-CHRIST)
- Angles -spirit guides, spirit counselors, the self, one’s higher self, aeons, muses, walk — ins, super beings, etc. (= Demons)
- Born - again - (Rebirth)— personal planetary transformation and healing (Hindu = kundalini)
- The second coming — Believer achieves Christ consciousness as a personal god or the appearance of the NA messiah, Anti-Christ on earth.
- Heaven / kingdom of god — spiritually cleansed and purified earth in which mankind has achieved ‘Christ consciousness’ and has become god.
- Hell — Non-existent according to the NAgers= it applies to judgment, sin and evil. This is complete distortion of the biblical truth

## THE NAM BIBLE / BIBLE VERSION.

The idea behind this bible is to revise or update the bible in order to make it more meaningfully / relevant to or in the modern times. This is done through radical



feminist groups and seeks to replace or substitute key concepts with unisex ones (a unisex or neutral *I* universal bible) e.g.

- Use 'sovereign' instead of 'Lord' and 'king'
- Our father or mother' instead of 'God'
- The child instead of the son (who is Jesus Christ)

**NB:**

- In Kenya this is purported to be advanced by the national council of churches (NCK)
- The new Agers are fighting for a gender sensitive bible, with the only objective of discrediting Jesus and belittling God, the maker of the heavens and the earth  
Ps. 121:1-2; Ps. 24:1-3.

a. Maintaining a sound Christian testimony regardless of threats.

Ref: Prov. 12:11 "... they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony ..." "Maintaining a sound Christian testimony is crucial as it acts as a challenge to the devil and the world as a whole. When the devil sees you, he sees a person who is true to his/her word of testimony and so only accuses unfairly — in which case we know the repercussions are great in heaven — Matt 5:11-12.

Even if it means being killed for the sake of your faith, just don't worry, for that's the gateway to heaven — Rev. 12:116 "... They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death".

## **b) Physical Refreshment**

### **i) Essence: relaxation/recreation/rest/leisure/entertainment**

Even though physical, it still remains spiritual. This is because, in as much as we term it physical, resting after work is spiritual! It is God ... The Spirit... The creator of the heavens and the earth... who rested on the seventh day... **Gen. 2:3**

On a very serious note, God commanded Israelites to work for six days and then rest on the seventh as it is holy:-

**Ex. 20:8-11** .. "...Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God ... for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day..."

### **ii) Importance of rest/recreation/leisure**

-It refreshes the body and mind warranting them extra force / strength to continue. This grants peace with oneself and thus, makes one feel good and ready for the next task ahead of him or her.

-It helps avoid body weariness something that can easily lead to some health disorders. Remember, much study (work) wears the body - Ecc. 12:12;

"And further, my son, be admonished by these of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh (body).

Read : Job 3:17; *Sam*5: 5

N/B:

Leisure gives an individual, the family and the community an opportunity of developing physically, mentally, spiritually, socially and culturally.

- Some of the leisure activities practiced today are:
- Games, sports and wrestling

- Drama and dancing
- Swimming
- Watching TV
- Films/cinema
- Attending parties
- Writing /receiving letters or articles for magazines! newspapers
- Visiting friends
- Festivals e.g. celebrating Christmas, Easter, etc.
- Singing
- Social work
- Chatting
- Reading

A Christian should always go for the constructive leisure activities only, which at the same time uphold virtues of holiness and glorify God.

#### **4. WAITING UPON THE LORD**

**Isaiah 40:29-31** “...He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increases strength, even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail, **but they that wait upon the lord** shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as the eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint.”

#### **5. EXHORTATION**

Let's all enter into his rest so that we can refresh, both spiritually as well as physically –Heb 4:1-3

“...Come now, the spirit says, and refresh yourself— Rev 22:17; Is. 1:18;

“... Come ye who are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”...Matt. 11:28.

“...And the spirit and the bride say.” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” -Rev.22: 17.

Remember:

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! – Rev.22: 20.

## SECTION 4: FINISHING WELL- 2 Timothy 4:7

### 1. Fighting the Good Fight

When we began our Christian life, we expect that we will finish our lives with just as much passion, vision, perseverance and joy as when we first began. This requires strong principles which always motivate and keeps one on track. These are:-

- Integrity.
- Accountability.
- Right focus.

He who started a good work in us is able to bring it to accomplishment. We only need to remain faithful to him for he himself is ever faithful. God will never put us to shame nor disappoint us in any way.

David says, since I was a youth to date, I haven't seen the righteous forsaken

Fighting the good fight requires that we stay steadfast. In fact, majority of the leaders start well but fail to finish well as a result of a number of factors namely:-

- Dropping Out... 2 Timothy 4:10 — Demas has deserted me.
- Reaching a plateau... Philippians 3: 19b — Their mind is on earthly things.
- Disqualification... 2 Cor. 7:10 — Worldly sorrow with no repentance.

This doesn't happen overnight but instead one step at a time until your conscience is totally dead and non-responsive to the voice of God. Here, the fear of God disappears and one moves with a lot of carnality and too-much-know-spirit/attitude.

As a Christian you ought to fight against four major issues which can negatively impact you and make you lose the fight. These are:- **Money, Sex, Power and Pride**

#### 1. Money (gold)

Money is not inherently evil. It can be a blessing, but it is also a great source of temptation.

- Timothy 6:10 — For the love of money is the root of all evil.
- Timothy 3:2— Lovers of money, boastful, and proud.

#### 2. Sex (girls)

This is a precious gift from God to be enjoyed in marriage. However, deviation from God's purpose normally results in disaster.

- Proverbs 2:16-19 — For her house (adulterous woman) leads down to death.
- Ephesians 5:3 — But among you, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality.

**3. Power (glory)**

Leadership is influence. However, the abuse of power has serious consequences for the leader.... Acts 8:9-23 — Simon the sorcerer

**4. Pride (glory)**

Leaders who enjoy great success in ministry are prone to temptation, but the warning is clear...Proverbs 16: 18 — Pride goes before a fall

The 3 Gs: Girls, Gold and Glory.

Furthermore, we are likely to lose the fight if:-

- ✓ We stop listening and learning.

Because of Solomon's sin, he came to the point that he wrote:

*What has been will be again, what has been will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes. 1:9-10)*

Solomon stopped listening to God and learning from God. Instead,

Luke. 2:52 — Jesus grew in wisdom, stature and grace

Matthew 11: 29 Jesus said, "Learn from me"

Proverbs 1:5; 9:9-10... Let the wise listen and add to their learning.

- ✓ We stop living by our convictions and our character weakens.

*As Solomon grew old... his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord... So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely. (1 Kings 11:4-6)*

Psalm 139:23-24 — Search me, O God.

Acts 4:20 — We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Daniel 3:16-18 — We [Three Hebrews] will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

- ✓ We stop walking in awareness of our influence and ultimate contributions.

*There is no remembrance of men of old and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow.*

***(Ecclesiastes 1:11)***

Solomon neglected his legacy. After his death, the kingdom was divided. His son and grandson who reigned after him were corrupt.

John 17:19 - For them I sanctify myself that they too may be truly sanctified.

Make God's Ultimate Your Ultimate: Transformed people who reliably reproduce the Christian life. (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

- ✓ We lose our intimate relationship with God.  
*Towards the end of his reign, Solomon abandoned the LORD and followed other gods. (1 Kings 11:9-13)*

## ii) Finishing the Race Well

It is one thing to start a race and finish, but finishing well can be a different matter altogether. Otherwise, one person can start a race and finish well while another can start and finish badly. The choice is yours. Finishing well can be achieved through a number of things as follows:-

### ➤ **Be a person of integrity**

Integrity is simply keeping your promises, to be a person who can be trusted to do what they say they will do. It means to be whole, complete, integrated. This is achieved when the values of Christianity come together with consistency in every area of our lives regardless of the circumstances. Be the right 'you' at all times in order to please God. Don't live a life of camouflage.

### ➤ **Be a person willing to be held accountable.**

This means that each of us is responsible for our attitudes, decisions and actions. (1 Timothy 4:16) Watch your life and doctrine closely.

### ➤ **Be a person that stays focused on the goal – never lose your focus**

*Hebrews 12:1-2...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith, who the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

## iii) Keeping the Faith

Hebrews 11: 6... but without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Keep the fire burning until the last minute when we sleep with our fathers of faith and God takes us home. Even if it means being killed for the sake of your faith, just don't worry, for that's the

gateway to heaven — Rev. 12:116 “... They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death”.

He who started the good work (of faith) in us is able to bring it to a completion until the day of Jesus Christ... Philippians 1:6

As we grow old let us desire to be more productive like the cedar tree of Lebanon and the palm tree...Ezekiel 31:3

Psalm 92:12...they will still yield fruit in old age, they shall be full of sap and very green.

There is longevity and vitality...Ps 92:12

Deep rooted...Ephesians 3:17

Usefulness to others...Ps 104:16-17

Resistance to decay...Ephesians 6:1-17

Full of unity...Ps 133:1-3

Please ,don't hang your harps... Psalm 137:1-2