



The Link

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A quarterly non-denominational publication to the body of Christ

It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

Contending Earnestly for the Faith

Bits & Pieces - Recipe to lift you up

How do I really feel about myself

That your Faith may not fail
Challenges to our Faith



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EDITORIAL

A passion is borne out of a vision.

We have a passion for the mark of excellence and the glory of God being shown in every one in the body of Christ. The Lord has given us a vision to arouse Christians to be the best they can be in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation.

We have a passion through this medium to sensitize the body of Christ, irrespective of where we belong, denomination, to be awakened to use the grace of God already given, and be the best for God.

This edition comes to you to awaken Christians to remember the faith delivered to our Fathers of faith, that our faith will not fail and what are the challenges to our faith at this end-time. It also comes with a motivation page that will make every individual to feel well about himself.

These articles are not published to give you new ideas and doctrines with which you can go and argue with others. Even though as we share the word, there will be doctrinal issues, we believe that God is more interested in His will being done in your lives. We are not interested in condemning, criticising or bringing down other men of God, ours is to do what God has sent us to do. **Allow God to have His way in your lives as you read these publication than insinuating what we did not intend.**

May you be blessed and quickened by the Spirit of God as you read. Remember that Jesus Christ is coming **SOON**, Maranatha.

We acknowledge all those who have contributed to the commencement of this work and whose words of advice and encouragement were considered golden to its successful beginning. May the Lord Bless you (Amen).

THE LINK is a non-denominational teaching magazine published quarterly and sent or delivered free to your home, churches, ministries, schools, establishment or any believer that request a copy. **THE LINK** carries no subscription or newsstand price.

IT MUST NOT BE SOLD.

This publication is published as the Lord provides through a group of brethren with a burden for the body of Christ.

We would like to know how this publication has been a benefit to you, feel free to write or call.

You can also send in your gift(s) to improve the quality of this publication.

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We love You. Remain in the Love of Christ.

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Contending Earnestly For The Faith

Segun Ajayi

If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do, says the Bible (Psalms 11:3). We are at a time when we need to check our foundation, and our very beginning to be sure we are not having a decaying or sinking foundation.

Faith is the bed-rock on which we build all we claim to be on. These are the days when every man or woman that professes to be born again Christian will need to go back to God and see whether or not he or she is really in the faith or he has believed something else.

In Jude 3, Jude a disciple of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, wrote to all those who have been called, who claimed to love God and are loved by God the father and kept by the faith in Jesus Christ (this include you & me), to struggle or contend for the faith. We need to defend stoutly and struggle for the faith delivered to God's people, because over the years several men of questionable character have since joined us to profess what we profess and are attempting to destroy our foundation and made it what it was not originally. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). **What is your faith like? Are you still building on the faith of the Lord Jesus, as it was delivered to the saints?**

We have an adversary who is all out to quench, steal, change or corrupt, and destroy our foundation (FAITH). We are indeed in a perilous time when we seems to be loosing all originality of what was delivered to our fathers of faith.

Have you asked yourself some of these questions lately? What is the faith like when it was delivered to the Apostles? What kind of faith is Jude talking about? As at the time Jude wrote has it changed or is it changing or corrupted? Where are we presently? Where are we missing it? Let us examine ourself; Are we in the faith? (2Corinthians 13:5).

What is that faith to contend for?

The faith was delivered only once by Jesus, unadulterated, undiluted. This faith brought us to God despite the fact that we did not merit to come to Him. We became justified by this faith and had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God..." (Romans 5:1-2).

We cannot say we have the faith until Christ is accepted by faith and He becomes real to us. This faith is the critical foundation and formed the bedrock on which our continual walk with God is built. After this foundation of faith, we have an assurance of salvation and a decision having been made to separate oneself to God and living a life of obedience to God's commandments. We make a U-turn from sin and decide to follow God in righteousness (living the right way to please God – A walk of Faith).

These Last Days

1Timothy 4:1-3 specified that many shall depart from the faith, being seduced by deceiving spirits, and giving heed to doctrines of devils. **Every departure from faith comes from errors in the spirit and mind.** What you take in takes root in

the heart and you become a victim of deception and this affect what you begin to do; As a computer slang, GIGO (Garbage-in Garbage-Out). This will give birth to what I call fruit of godlessness (2Timothy 3:1-5), a scheme of the devil at these perilous days. May we not become a victim in Jesus name (Amen).

Many are being deceived at this end-time even from the 'pulpit'. Many strange teachings abound now. Be aware the devil knows he has a short time and can device various means even using some 'men of God'. The devil and his agents becomes angels of light (2Corinthians 11:13-15), wolves in sheep clothing. Even genuine men of God should beware, the devil can deceive you with a 'new revelation' and you become his agent to deceive many. **Be careful of what you hear or read!** Be as the BEREAN Christian (Acts 17:10-11). Go back and confirm what you hear with the Bible. Test all spirits. May the Lord give you understanding in Jesus name (Amen). Let no man deceive you, Matthew 24:11-13. Your faith is so precious, please struggle to keep it, do not lose your foundation.

Many are being deceived because of what they need; miracles, signs, wonders, breakthrough, and bread. They can be packaged with a poison; after the miracles and all that you are looking for, what next. Do you still have the faith that freed you from sin and brought you to God firm on the Rock of ages, Jesus Christ or you now have your faith on the man of God and his wonders?

Brethren, beware of anyone that will preach another Jesus to you or teach you a strange (not found in the scriptures) doctrine. These men will enslave you to serve their bellies. (*¹⁷Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple [Romans 16:17-18]*). Beware; the excellent, eloquent speaker may lead you astray with his smooth and flattering speech. Go back and dig deep into the scriptures yourself. I believe you are not among the foolish (simple), you are born to overcome every sly of men, 1John 2:24-27.

The world and its standards and cravings are also there to contend with, being used of the enemy to lure us (1John2:15), but we shall overcome. Remember you are born of God to overcome the world (1John 5:4). Praise God.

It is the intention of God in these last days to preserve and grant us the grace to struggle for the faith delivered to us.

What to do

We are struggling against a myriad of unseen forces, we are contending against powers beyond our imagination, but we have a superior weapon to contend against the enemy and win the battle for our faith. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds (2Corinthians 10:4).* Praise God.

Remember that your faith is precious and other saints before you overcame. Peter, Paul, Jude and a host of saints before you overcame; you have this same precious faith and will definitely overcome.

So:

1. Hold fast the profession of your faith, without wavering, doubting and shaking. **Read Hebrews 10: 17-31.**

Confirm again and again that you know Christ and confess the faith in Him. *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).*

Even when you sin, ask for forgiveness, renounce the sin, decide you will never go back into it (repent) and ask God for His grace to say no to sin, Titus 2:11-12.

At such times the faith will be strengthened. The Holy Spirit will comfort and reassure you that you are a child of God (*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God [Romans 8:16]*). The devil may come to condemn you, He is always the accuser of the brethren, but you should submit to God, resist the devil (he will flee from you) and be steadfast in faith, 1Peter 5:9.

2. Run from Sin; flee every appearances of evil, 1Thessalonians 5: 22. Move your members; speak to your foot, Proverbs 4: 27. ***It is not a sign of weakness for you to run away from danger (sin will cost you your very soul). Old boy, build your strength by staying away from situation that can draw you to sinning.*** As you do this you can keep focused at walking by this faith with God. Keep contending for the faith.

Hi, do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. *Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God (Romans 6:12-13-New Living Translation).*

Sin is deceitful...It lures you and kills...it is a sharp, cunning weapon of the enemy. Contend For Your Faith!

God's grace has been given for us to be able to stay away from sinning (¹¹*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,* ¹²*teaching us that, denying ungodliness and*

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age [Titus 2:11-12]).

3. Take time to study the word of God, practice the word, teach others and by the kind of life you live, be an example of believer (*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity [1Timothy 4:12]*).

Proverbs 4:20, says you should attend to the word of God, make it your business, fix your heart on what you have learnt from it, and set standards and principles to live by, from the word of God.

Whenever you hear or read anything strange from what you have known confirm from the scriptures. In case you are in doubt, meet another brother or sister in Christ, an older Christian, Sunday school teacher, your Pastor etc. ***Establish what you will believe from the Bible.***

2 Timothy 2:15 (*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*)

Colosians 3:16 (*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord*”).

4. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you have not received the Holy Spirit, consult you Pastor, counsellor, or an older Christian. (See example in Acts 19:2-6). Be honest and receive the Holy Spirit and

experience His presence. He will lead you into all truth. He will convict you of sin, whenever you miss God's expectation. He will lead you in God's righteousness and prepare your heart in peace for God's judgement.

What a wonderful experience to have Him.

A wonderful Partner for a blessed walk of faith.

5. Build-up your faith continually by:
 - Praying in the Spirit; when you do, what you don't have the words to express to God, the Holy Spirit will pass in words you don't understand, tongues, to God.
 - Exercise your faith; request from God according to His word. Whenever you encounter God in His promises, request in faith, reminding God of His word, Mark 11:22-23. Requests continually until you have an assurance in your heart that you have what you requested, and thank God for it. Watch out for the result and give thanks, Colossians 4:2. As you believe, God will reward those who diligently seek Him.
6. Glorify God in your body, spirit, which are God's. Do not allow anything to defile your body; consider how you conduct yourself. ***What are your desires?*** Consider what you taste, touch, stare at, and what your heart longs after. It is what you allow that will determine what your action will be. Renew your mind continually with the word of God. Continue in well doing. Consider what your eye (a gate to your heart) stares (a continual looking) at; ***let your eye be single, be set and focused following the Lord.*** As you keep at following Him in faith, he will lead you to the eternal shore in Jesus name. ***Turn your eyes from evil to keep your heart, Proverbs 4:23.***
7. Do not go around looking for miracles. Stay where you are. In that Church (as long as the word of God is being instructed correctly, 2Timothy 2:5; 3:16) God will visit your situation. Keep praying. Remember Hannah (1Samuel 1:2-19) continued in prayer until God answered her. She kept calling on God in a place of worship, at Shiloh. Turn to God; do not turn after men of God. (Note: It is not wrong to attend various programmes organised by men of God, but your motive for attending is to seek the face of God not to seek for men of God.) God is the one that will give you your miracle. Jesus of Nazareth is still healing today and He will meet you at the point of your need. Continue to call on Him, you can even receive your miracle when & where you least expect it, even in your bedroom!
Praise God. With God all things are possible.
As you go around you may fall prey of a false prophet doing 'miracles, signs and wonders' and promising 'great things'. What glitters may really not be gold; it may be gold-platted, gold-coated. We are in a perilous time.

As you continue in faith, rooted and built in Him. Continue to walk to please God in all things. Let no man take what you have, its price is far above ruby. It is precious. It is of great and eternal value, as was delivered to our fathers of faith and delivered to you. Contend, struggle and lay hold on eternal life. God bless you and keep you in Jesus name (Amen).

See you on the glorious morning having kept the faith.

BITS & PIECES

From Various Authors-most unknown
(Compiled by Ranti Ogunkunle & Segun Ajayi)

How Would You Know the Saviour's Words...

- If you never felt pain, how would you know that I'm a Healer?
- If you never went through difficulty, how would you know that I'm a Deliverer?
- If you never had a trial, how would you know that I'm a Comforter?
- If you never made a mistake, how would you know that I'm forgiving?
- If you know it all, how would you know that I will answer your questions?
- If you never were in trouble, how would you know that I will come to your rescue?
- If you never were broken, how would you know that I can make you whole?
- If you never had a problem, then how would you know that I can solve them?
- If you never had known suffering, then how would you know what I went through?
- If you never went through the fire, then how would you become pure?
- If I gave you all things, how would you appreciate them?
- If I never corrected you, how would you know that I love you?
- If you had all power, then how would you learn to depend on me?
- If your life was perfect, then what would you need me for?

Four Wives

Once upon a time.....

There was a rich merchant who had 4 wives. He loved the 4th wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to delicacies. He took great care of her and gave her nothing but the best.

He also loved the 3rd wife very much. He's very proud of her and always wanted to show off her to his friends. However, the merchant is always in great fear that she might run away with some other men.

He too, loved his 2nd wife. She is a very considerate person, always patient and in fact is the merchant's confidant. Whenever the merchant faced some problems, he always turned to his 2nd wife and she would always help him out and tide him through difficult times.

Now, the merchant's 1st wife is a very loyal partner and has made great contributions in maintaining his wealth & business as well as taking care of the household. However, the merchant did not love the first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her.

One day, the merchant fell ill. Before long, he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his luxurious life and told himself, "Now I have 4 wives with me. But when I die, I'll be alone. How lonely I'll be!"

Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I loved you most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No way!" replied the 4th wife and she walked away without another word. The answer cut like a sharp knife right into the merchant's heart.

The sad merchant then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you so much for all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No!" replied the 3rd wife. "Life is so good over here! I'm going to remarry when you die!" The merchant's heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I always turned to you for help & you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!" replied the 2nd wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." The answer came like a bolt of thunder and the merchant was devastated.

Then a voice called out: "I'll leave with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go." The merchant looked up and there was his first wife.

She was so skinny, almost like she suffered from malnutrition. Greatly grieved, the merchant said, "I should have taken much better care of you while I could have!"

Actually, we all have 4 wives in our lives

The 4th wife is our body. No matter how much time & effort we lavish in making it look good, it'll leave us when we die.

Our 3rd wife? Our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, they all go to others.

The 2nd wife is our family and friends. No matter how close they had been there for us when we're alive, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave.

The 1st wife is in fact our soul, often neglected in our pursuit of material wealth and sensual pleasure. Guess what? It is actually the only thing that follows us wherever we go. Perhaps it's a good idea to cultivate and strengthen it now rather than to wait until we're on our deathbed to lament.

A soul can either go to heaven or hell. Ours will go to Heaven in Jesus Mighty Name. Amen. 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling...

Quotes on Complaining

Don't complain and talks about all your problems--80 percent of people don't care; the other 20 percent will think you deserve them.

~Mark Twain~

Quotes on Complaining

A heavy wagon was being dragged along a country lane by a team of oxen. The axles groaned and creaked terribly, when the oxen turning around thus addressed the wheels, "Hey there, why do you make so much noise? We bear all the labour, and we -- not you -- ought to cry out!"

Those complain first in our churches who have the least to do. The gift of grumbling is largely dispensed among those who have no other talents, or who keep what they have wrapped up in a napkin. -

~Charles Spurgeon~

WHOSE HANDS ARE WE IN?

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19.

A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about \$33 million.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A baseball in my hands is worth about \$6.

A baseball in Mark McGuire's hands is worth 19 million. It depends on whose hands it's in.

A tennis racket is useless in my hands.

A tennis racket in Pete Sampras' hands is a Wimbledon Championship.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A rod in my hands will keep away a wild animal.

A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

A sling shot in my hands is a toy.

A sling shot in David's hands is a mighty weapon.

It depends on whose hands it's in.

Two fish and Five loaves in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches.

Two fish and five loaves in God's hands will feed thousands. It depends on whose hands they're in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse.

Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce salvation for the entire world.

It depends on whose hands they're in.

As you see now it depends on whose hands it's in

So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because,

It depends on whose hands they're in.

A Good Marriage

Broken marriages begin to mend and communication is re-established when one of the partners is willing to make a breakthrough and say, "Lord, begin with me. I am the one who needs to change, to love more deeply and more wisely." Even if you think your spouse is 100% wrong, when you stand in the presence of Christ you will begin to see that you, too, have shortcomings. You will discern where you have failed to accept responsibility for the marital relationship, and you will be able to say, "God, change me." The Christian is committed to follow

Christ who went all the way in love, all the time. So, for a start, stop demanding that your partner change his ways. Let God start changing you. ~Lionel Whitston~

A good marriage is the union of two forgivers.

Pleasing Men or Pleasing Christ

A railway gatekeeper, who one cold night required every passenger to show his ticket before passing through to the train, and was rewarded with considerable grumbling and protesting, was told: "You are a very unpopular man tonight." "I only care to be popular with one man," was the reply, "and that is the superintendent." He might have pleased the passengers, disobeyed orders, and lost his position. He was too wise for that; his business was to please one man--the man who hired him, gave him his orders, and rewarded him for faithfulness, and who would discharge him for disobedience. The servant of Christ has many opportunities to make himself unpopular. There are multitudes that would be glad to have him relax the strictness of his rules. If he is their servant, they demand that he should consult their wishes. But if he serves them, he cannot serve the Lord. "No man can serve two masters." He who tries to be popular with the world, will lose his popularity with the Lord. He will make friends, but he will lose the one Friend who is above all others. He will win plaudits, but he will not hear the gracious words: "Well done!"

Decision of Character of Strong Men

At Harper's Ferry on one occasion the flood in the Potomac was so great that it threatened the destruction of the costly Railroad Bridge, which was seen to shake in its unsteadiness. When everybody present was looking each moment to see the bridge go down, President John W. Garrett, of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, arrived upon the scene. Appreciating the necessity of instant action, he gave an abrupt order for a loaded train of freight cars standing on a sidetrack to be run with the locomotive on to the bridge and kept there. "But, Mr. Garrett, that is a train-load of silk," said the local superintendent. "I don't care; run out the cars!" commanded the great master of railroads. "It would be easier to pay for the silks than to build a new bridge." The silk-train was run on to the bridge and the structure was saved. The difference between the success of one man and the disaster that comes to another often lies just at that point. The one is vacillating and uncertain, and the other bold to dare whatever is necessary in order to win. A certain holy boldness and audacity of faith is necessary to great triumph in spiritual matters.

One man's Folly

A rich man failed in business. He gathered up the fragments of his wrecked fortune and had in all a few thousand dollars. He determined to go to the West and start anew. He took his money and purchased a motor home, furnishing it in the most luxurious style, and stocking it with provisions for his journey. In this sumptuous vehicle he travelled to his destination. At length he stepped from the door of his motor home and only then thought for the first time of his great folly. He had used all his money in getting to his new home, and now had nothing with which to begin life there. This incident illustrates the foolishness of those who think only of this life and make no provision for eternity.

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HUMOR

A Cheerful Giver

We are assured in the New Testament that the Lord loves a cheerful giver, and nothing is more discouraging than to see people give grudgingly for noble causes. A story told by the late Eugene Field illustrates the thought. When Lawrence Barrett's daughter was married, Stuart Robson sent to the bridegroom a check for five thousand dollars. Miss Felicia Robson, who attended the wedding, conveyed the gift.

"Felicia," said her father, upon her return, "did you give him the check?"

"Yes, father," answered the dutiful daughter.

"What did he say?" asked Robson.

"He didn't say anything," replied Miss Felicia, "but he shed tears."

"How long did he cry?"

"Why, father, I didn't time him; I should say, however, that he wept fully a minute."

"Fully a minute!" roared Robson. "Why, I cried an hour after I'd signed it!"

Redemption

Some time ago an evangelist, travelling on the cars, was singing to himself the song, "I've been Redeemed." A fellow passenger, hearing, joined him in the song. After singing, the evangelist put the question to the stranger, "Have you been redeemed?" "Yes, praise the Lord," was the answer. "May I ask you how long since?" "About nineteen hundred years ago," came the reply. The astonished evangelist echoed in surprise, "Nineteen hundred years ago?" "Yes," was the reply, "but I'm sorry that it's not more than a year that I've known it."

Work & Pray

A squall caught a party of tourists on a lake in Scotland and threatened to capsize their boat. When it seemed that the crisis had really come, the largest and strongest man in the party, in a state of intense fear, said, "Let us pray." "No, no, my man!" shouted the bluff old boatman; "let the little man pray. You take the oar."

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QUOTES

Alexander Maclaren once said that, "more souls are won for Jesus Christ by saintly conduct than by any argument."

"A man may go to heaven without health, without riches, without honour, without learning, without friends; but he can never go there without Christ."

--John Dyer

Prayer is a golden key, which should open the morning and lock up the evening.

--Bishop Hopkins

HOW DO I REALLY FEEL ABOUT MYSELF?

(Ten golden rules to appraise yourself to be the best)

By Nneka Duru

1. Never think or speak negatively about yourself, for that puts you in disagreement with God.
2. Meditate on your strengths; learn to encourage yourself, for most of the time nobody else will.
3. Never compare yourself with anyone else. You are unique, one-of-a-kind, an original. Don't settle for being a copy.
4. Focus on your potentials, not your limitations. Remember the Greater One lives in you!
5. Find something you like to do and are gifted to do well, then do it over and over.
6. Have courage to be different; be a God-pleaser, not a people-pleaser.
7. Learn to handle criticism; let it develop you instead of discouraging you.
8. Determine your own worth before others do it for you.
9. Keep your flaws in perspective; you're still at work in a progress.
10. Focus daily on the one and only source of your confidence - God! Work on your relationship with Him.

STOP PRESS



Link THE LINK

We have a mandate to draw many sons of God together to fulfil a vision of building the whole body in diverse realms.

Brethren, we appreciate the good times we have had together and we will still have in being a part of an end-time army for God. We have enjoyed your fellowship and we believe God will like to use you as doors are being opened. **We believe you have something God deposited in you that is not common and God wants to use to build others.**

Let us know:

- Your Address, Phone & E-mail
- What is your area of Calling?
- What are you doing presently in the vineyard?
- If we need to reach you, how available are you?
- Other brethren, God is using and you in contact with

GOD BLESS YOU & KEEP YOU (AMEN)

Rufus Oladosu

Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, Simon! Indeed, satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as a wheat. But I have prayed for you *that your faith should not fail*; when you have returned to me, strengthen thy brethren".

It is very important to note that the intercession of Jesus for Peter was focused on the stability of his faith. He was not prayed for that he might escape the sifting but rather that during the process of sifting his faith which signifies confiding trust and reliance on God might endure.

In God's wisdom, the sifting process is an integral part of maturing His children. Since God is sovereign, He uses any means to divorce us of whatever notions, beliefs, and attitudes that are contrary to His plan for us as we submit to Him. In Peter's case, satan volunteered to sift Peter and it is imperative from the passage that he was permitted. Subsequent exploits of Peter, who used to be a wavering personality clearly reveals that Jesus' intercession for him was answered.

Several lessons can be learnt from the above-mentioned incident:

1. Tests and trials should make you better not bitter

James 1:2-4 says *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing"*

The Bible tells us what our attitude should be when we are being sifted: COUNT IT ALL JOY.

That may not be a rational response when you look at the situation from a natural plane, but when you view it through God's standpoint you will understand that sifting enhances the value of the wheat by removing the unwanted chaff. It is for your good. It is therefore imperative not to frustrate the purpose of God by resisting the sifting process by becoming bitter in it. It is meant to make you better not bitter. Wheat is threshed not because it's despised but rather because its quality is enhanced by it.

2. Trials are common to all

The testing of faith is not a matter of **if** but **when**.

No one whose life is of importance in God's reckoning will escape it. It is a process by which that which is of the flesh is jettisoned so that the character of God may come forth. It is not optional. You are probably going through it now. However, always keep the goal in view. The purpose of sifting is not hardship but perfection and maturity. Every trial you pass through should make you better than you were before it. Although God does not always keep us away from fire of trials, His presence guarantees your security and maturity in it and ultimately your benefiting from it.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."(1 Corinthians 10:13).

What to do that your faith may not fail

▪ Be built on the Solid Foundation

"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). The only foundation for a life of peace, stability and usefulness is Jesus

Christ. It is therefore necessary for every believer to know who Christ is for himself. They that do know their God shall be strong and they shall do exploits, Daniel 11:32. To stay strong, one has to send his roots down to the Living Water.

This is done in practice by daily reading and meditation on the word of God. When we take in His word, we assimilate His life.

It is regretted that because of severe pressures at working places, Church activities and other commitments, many Christians are loosely connected to their Source. Since they have no root, when the sun of trial rises up, they quickly wither away.

I am sure you know someone who was a firebrand but has now become a garbage bin. Be used of God to restore such a person. God will bless you as you go after them. Your own faith will not fail in Jesus Name (Amen).

Whatever is the circumstance, we must ensure we stay connected if we don't want to suffer regrets. Make whatever adjustments that are necessary and you will be glad you did.

▪ Be Prayerful & Watchful

Godly purposes can be frustrated by prayerlessness and care-free attitude. Jesus was sensitive enough to know the transactions in the realm of the spirit about Peter. He was not only watchful, but also prayerful. His life is a pattern for us. His words to us: *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*(Luke 21:36).

Just as the Scripture clearly reveals that the present time is the glorious period of the Church so also warns that it is the time of Apostasy (Acts 2:17-18 & 1 Timothy 4:1-2): See the two sides of the last days played out daily today. We witness daily great blessings and awesome demonstration of God's power in our Churches. Yet we observe amongst us corruption, deception and backsliding at an unprecedented proportion. How then can we stay afloat and not be drowned in the same dissipations? We should be watchful & prayerful. A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself but the simple man goes straight ahead, and suffers the consequences of his foolishness. Beyond prayer for mundane things, we should set up our prayer altars as bulwarks against satanic lures.

God's temple, which we are, should be a house of prayer for all nations. When it ceases to be so, it always turns to become a den of thieves and robbers. Simply put, this means we become cold in our prayer life, we inadvertently open the backdoor for all kinds of unclean & destructive spirits to enter our lives and make our body their abode.

▪ Be part of a Community of Men of Like Passion

"As Iron sharpens Iron" so says the Scripture (Proverbs 27:17), *"so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend"*.

If your faith will stay strong you need to be a part of a communion of men of like precious faith. It is comforting to have people who can stand with you and encourage you in times of trials. It is always precarious to be a lone ranger. The Bible says *"For if they fall, one will lift up his companion, but woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up"* (Eccl 4:10). It is pertinent for you to discover and build relations with people that God has sent to your life. Be available, to show care and share, to motivate and encourage, to strengthen and spur each other onto fulfill the divine plan of God. Great shall be your reward.

Challenges To Our Faith

Kunbi Ajayi

Dearly loved brethren, necessity is laid upon me to write about the need to defend stoutly the faith which God gave once for all His people to keep without change through the years (Jude 3). In this time and age there are so many challenges confronting our faith such that most of us have become Christians that do just what we like without fear of God's punishment?

What are these challenges against our faith such that without taking heed, God forbid that our fate will be like the nation of Israel that God saved out of the land of Egypt and then killed everyone of them who did not obey Him.

These challenges are as old as time, they are:

1. The same challenges that faced Angels:

The challenge of misuse of authority, misuse of liberty; using our authority and liberty as a cloak to work all manner of unrighteousness.

In the church today, men and women that God has elevated to the position of authority has forgotten the one that placed them there. They make proclamations like God, they make rules and laws that they themselves refuse to follow and as such, the body of Christ has ceased to be the pillar and mainstay of truth. It has become a political arena, there is now a mighty struggle and tussle for authority. Some of us Christians, though were once pure and holy, now willingly and willfully turned to a life of sin (Jude 6). Because of the accolades of men, the drunkenness and stupor that comes from a life of sinful abuse of authority and utilisation of divine position, promotion in the Church has become the centre stage of mighty wrestling bouts. There are no restrictions and rules in methods and tactics used to get to these heights of authority. We are no longer looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith but sad to say we have chosen feeble and fallen soldiers as our standards, as our icons and role models. Like the fallen Angels, many have abandoned their estate, their focus have been shifted from heaven, all because of a craze for authority and position.

May God have mercy on His Bride, the Church in Jesus name (Amen).

2. The Challenges of the Modern Day

'Sodom and Gomorrah' in which we live in, the challenge that is flaying and destroying youths, the old, the strong and the mighty, is another potent weaponry from the arsenal of the evil one. This is the challenge of immorality and perversion facing the Church.

Gone is the shamefacedness of chastity that characterised the early Church, now what we hear is "'gospel' of liberty according to saint lust". Everywhere you turn there is perversion; there is depravity even in the sanctuary, sometimes sad to say even on the altar. Now it is like for today's Christians the scripture "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil 4:5) has been removed from the Bible. Everywhere you turn, Christians, 'born again' though, have joined the pollution, on the streets, in the media and even in the Church. These Christians have an axiom to justify themselves for living: 'if you can't beat them join them'. Where is the sacrificial dedication as made by Paul that has counted everything loss just to gain Christ? Where is the heaven consciousness of Daniel not to defile himself with the king's meat? Where is the giving love of David that say, "I will not give God what will not cost me"? What do we have now? Liberty, we carry flagrantly the flag "God has made me free, I will not be entangled with the yoke of slavery". We use our liberty as a license to unrighteousness, lasciviousness and all manner of immorality. All over again we re-crucify Christ, with our dressing, with our conduct, with our music, our dancing and the technology God has placed at our disposal. What is our excuse we say coyly? It is the heart that matters, God looks on the heart and not the outward appearance'. May God have mercy on us lest our end be like that of Sodom & Gomorrah who suffer the punishment of fire.

3. The Challenge of Cain (Genesis 4:3-8)

When we refuse to live a life of holiness to get God's favour and approval, we hack down 'Abel' in the body of Christ. Men and women that have given there best to God we mutilate with our tongues, we kill them with rumours and slanders (Jude 16) forgetting that He who sees in

the dark as if it were light is watching and seeing us. On the last day He will ask you where thy brother, 'Abel' is. We need to re-examine ourselves, how much of envy and rivalry is destroying the good work of faith once delivered to us.

4. The Balaam's Challenge (Numbers 22)

Balaam because of filthy gain, he led the people of God to sin, making them to commit idolatry. In the Church of God today we have resulted to all manners of gimmicks and techniques because of mammon, money. No longer do men of God depend on God's provision; a lot resorts to all manners of tactics, to get money without considering the effect of these tactics on the lives of the people they are leading.. The love of money, the Bible says, is the root of all evil.

Thank God, Christ fed five thousand with five loafs of bread and two pieces of fish. That is utmost dependence on the resources of heaven.

Brother Paul, Peter, James & John are men with whom we would stand side by side to be judged by the same yardstick. They did not manoeuvre anyone to get money. Let the Church remember the old landmarks.

3. Challenge of Korah, the spirit of rebellion

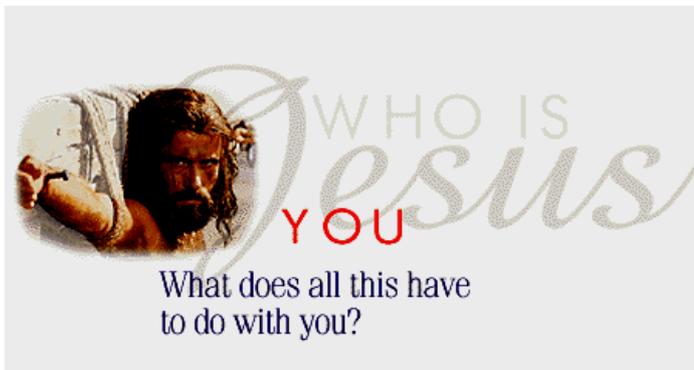
It is the challenge that has given birth to all manners of 'ministries,' 'churches' and rebellion. Most of them have a form of godliness, but deny the power (2Tim3:5), it is the challenge of the spirit of rebellion. Some Christians no longer endure sound doctrines, cannot subject and submit themselves to God-given ordinance and authority. That is why we have so many pastors and founders that bear no resemblance to the one they claimed called them. When these people join you in fellowship meals celebrating the love of the Lord, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are shameless. They care only about themselves. They are like clouds blowing over dry land without giving rain, promising much but producing nothing. They are like trees without fruit at harvest time. They are not only dead but also doubly dead, for they have been pulled out by the roots. They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the dirty foam of their shameful deeds. They are wandering stars, heading for everlasting gloom and darkness (Jude 12-13).

Believers, watch out, we are in a perilous time, these men are everywhere, they appear to be shepherds but they are wolves. Do not be deceived, satan and his agents are using such men as Angels of light.

With so much against our faith, what next: we must pray to God (Isaiah 1:18-27), we must do what the Word says (James 1:22). We must be willing to have a change of attitude. Develop a teachable attitude, be willing to learn from and obey God's word.

Brethren let us remember the words that were spoken by the Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, "building up yourself in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of Christ, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21).

Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our savior, be glory and majesty and power both now and ever. (Amen).



Is Jesus still interested in us? What does it mean to have a personal relationship with Christ, and in what way does it impact our lives? And how does someone go about making that kind of commitment?

Those are good questions, and typical of someone who understands the significance of Jesus. Here is some information to help answer these and other questions you may have about Jesus.

Jesus & you

They have a vital, personal relationship with him. Jesus Christ lives today and faithfully enriches the lives of all those who trust and obey him. Throughout the centuries, multitudes have acknowledged the worthiness of Jesus Christ, including many who have greatly influenced the world. French physicist and philosopher Blaise Pascal spoke of people's need for Jesus when he said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man, which only God can fill through his Son Jesus Christ."

Because of God's deep love for you, he has already made all the necessary arrangements. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you can enjoy a personal relationship. Jesus made it possible to bridge the chasm that separates us from God. The following four principles will help you discover how to know Jesus personally and experience the abundant life he promised.

God LOVES you and created you to know Him personally

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 17:3 "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

What prevents us from knowing God personally?

Man is SINFUL and SEPARATED from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death" [spiritual separation from God].

Romans 8:6-8 "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

A great gulf separates man from God. Man is continually trying to reach God and establish a personal relationship with Him through human efforts, such as living a good life, philosophy, or religion. But he inevitably fails.

The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

Jesus Christ is God's ONLY provision for man's sin. Through him alone we can know God personally and experience God's love

Romans 5:8 "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 "Christ died for our sins... he was buried... he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures... he appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred..."

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

But it is not enough just to know these truths...

We must individually RECEIVE Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; then we can know God personally and experience His love

John 1:12 "As many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith. This does not depend on anything you have achieved, it is the free gift of God; and because it is not earned no one can boast about it."

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (a spirit of repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and make us what he wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.

Jesus Christ is waiting for an invitation to come in to your life. In fact, he says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in" (**Revelations 3:20**).

Perhaps you can sense Christ knocking at the door of your heart. You can invite him in by faith right now. God knows your heart so it doesn't matter exactly what words you use. Here's a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know you personally. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life to you and ask you to come in as my Savior and Lord. Take control of my life. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be (Amen).

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, pray it right now and Jesus Christ will come into your life just as he has promised. Once you invite Christ into your life, he promises to never leave you.

Hebrews 13:5 "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"

To know God personally is the greatest decision you will ever make. If you've just asked Jesus Christ into your life, write and tell us about it. We would love to hear from you.

If you want to grow in your Christian walk, please start attending any Pentecostal church around you or write us for counselling.

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