

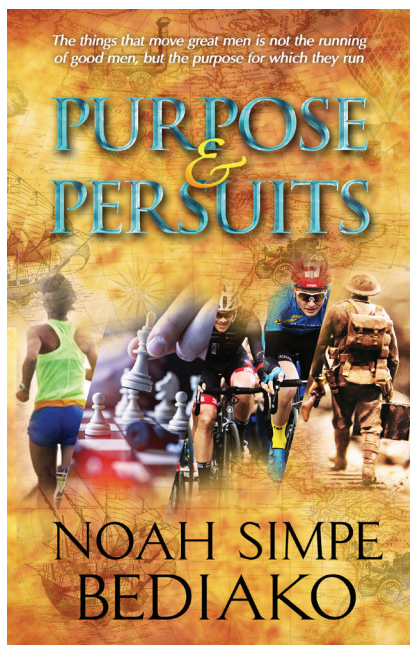
*The things that move great men is not the running
of good men, but the purpose for which they run*

PURPOSE & PERSUITS



NOAH SIMPE
BEDIAKO

PURPOSE & PURSUITS



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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

Purpose & Persuits

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Prologue

According to 2 Samuel 18, many years ago, Absalom, the son of David, rebelled against his father the King of Israel. It was a mutiny but the people of Israel came out in their numbers to defend the king and the kingdom.

2 SAMUEL 18:1–33 MKJV

And David numbered the people who were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

(2) And David sent forth a third of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, I will also surely go forth with you myself.

(3) But the people answered, You shall not go forth. For if we run away, they will not set their heart on us, even if half of us die. For now you are worth ten thousand of us. And now it is better

that you remain to help us from the city.

(4) And the king said to them, I will do what is good in your eyes. And the king stood by the side of the gate, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

(5) And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, For my sake be gentle with the young man, with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the commanders charge concerning Absalom.

(6) And the people went out into the field against Israel. And the battle was in the forest of Ephraim.

(7) And the people of Israel were killed there before the servants of David. And there was a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand.

(8) For the battle was scattered there over the face of all the country. And the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

(9) And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode on a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak. And his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heavens and the earth. And the mule under him went away.

(10) And a certain man saw and told Joab, and

said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

(11) And Joab said to the man who told him, And, behold, you saw him, and why did you not strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a girdle.

(12) And the man said to Joab, Though I should receive a thousand silverlings in my hand, yet I would not put forth my hand against the king's son. For in our ears the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware you who go against the young man, against Absalom.

(13) Or I would have dealt falsely with my own life, for there is no matter hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against me.

(14) And Joab said, I cannot stay here with you this way! And he took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in the midst of the oak.

(15) And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded and struck Absalom, and killed him.

(16) And Joab blew the ram's horn, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people.

(17) And they took Absalom and threw him into a great pit in the forest. And they laid a very great

heap of stones upon him. And all Israel fled, each one to his tent.

(18) And Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the King's Valley. For he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance. And he called the pillar after his own name. And it is called until this day, Absalom's monument.

(19) Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, And let me run and bear the news to the king, how Jehovah has avenged him of his enemies.

(20) And Joab said to him, You shall not bear news today, but you shall bear good news some other day. But today you shall bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

(21) And Joab said to Cushi, Go tell the king what you have seen. And Cushi bowed himself to Joab, and ran.

(22) And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said yet again to Joab, Yet whatever, please let me also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Why will you run, my son, since you have no good news ready?

(23) But he said, Yet whatever, let me run! And he said to him, Run. And Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and ran past the Cushite.

(24) And David sat between the two gates. And

the watchman went up to the roof over the gate to the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, a man ran alone.

(25) And the watchman cried and told the king. And the king said, If he is alone, there is news in his mouth. And he came apace and drew near.

(26) And the watchman saw another man running. And the watchman called to the porter and said, Behold, another man running alone. And the king said, He also brings news.

(27) And the watchman said, I see the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and comes with good news.

(28) And Ahimaaz called and said to the king, Peace! And he fell down upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be Jehovah your God, who has delivered up the men who lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

(29) And the king said, Peace to the young man, to Absalom? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and your servant, I saw a great uproar, but I did not know what it was.

(30) And the king said, Turn aside, stand here. And he turned aside and stood still.

(31) And, behold, Cushite came. And Cushite

said, Good news, my lord the king, for Jehovah has avenged you this day of all those who rose up against you.

(32) And the king said to Cush, Peace to the young man, to Absalom? And Cush answered, May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do you hurt, be as the young man.

(33) And the king was much moved, and went up to the room over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said this, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Many people are running around overtaking many others, but they are without a message or a purpose. Like Ahimaz, they always want to run as at other times, but those of us who are waiting by the doorpost are waiting with a desire, a purpose, and an expectation. We are not looking for good men, but for good tidings. Like, King David, the thing that moves great men is not just the running of good men but what tidings they are bearing.

The things that move great men is not the running of good men, but the purpose for which they run

Though Ahimaz was a good man, he could not move David because he had no message.

Beloved, each one of us existed in eternity in the mind of God, even before time. We were created on purpose to run with a purpose. Each person is born with a purpose. A purpose that we must fulfill in the true spirit of loyalty. It is to this end that our lives must be directed. We must live serving a purpose and not just passing through life.

Ahimaz, was just running for the sake of running, and hence could not move the king, but Cushai could move the king although he was not the usual runner. Cushai could move the king because he had a message. What is your message? Why are you running? Of what purpose is your speed? Why are you overtaking others? Is it of use this time? Perhaps you should wait until you have the message right.

This book is about achieving; it is designed to outline the working principles of running with a purpose. This book is about the unrevealed secrets of achievers. It contains the key that underline the achievements of men. These are

truths and wisdom to bring to pass the dreams of our heart.

We would therefore examine four things;

1. Who is an achiever?
2. The unspoken qualities of achievers
3. Steps by which achievers take mountains
4. Why you should read this book

Who is an Achiever?

Achievers are people who set goals and succeeded in doing them. They are by nature people who enjoy meeting their goals. You can also become an achiever by setting a goal, pursuing it, and attaining it.

Their philosophy is “success is not an end but a journey”. Hence, they still press on to higher excellence after one success.

Achievers are usually people who have succeeded and are motivated to go on being successful.

Taking its roots from the French word “achever”; it connotes “bring to an end or being the head.”

Achievers succeed in attaining their goals usually through effort. This is because achievements are not attained on a silver platter but with much effort. Achievements are not stumbled upon but purposefully pursued. By its very nature achievement is earned through pursuit. Success may be attained through inheritance, but achievement must be pursued.

It comes through a continual process. Days and perhaps nights of effort, work and focus.

You are designed and programmed by God to be an achiever. You were born to fulfill a purpose, a purpose in the program of God Almighty. We are mercenaries on earth, invading this planet to take over its kingdoms for our God.

Key Steps to Taking Mountains

The time is now, and the season has come for you to arise to take hold of your purpose and

pursue it to fulfillment. Friend, the destiny of countless people hangs on you. Fulfill your God-given destiny. You will make it if only you can take the following steps;

1. Dream

“Through the power of meditation, read between the various lines of life and focus on perceiving reality – Perception”

Achievers are actually dreamers. Beloved, it is true that everything begins with a dream. Unless we can see a thing, we cannot pursue it. Achievers hit their targets because they pursue neither mirages nor shadows. The first step towards being an achiever is perception.

All achievements in life begun with a dream which was translated into a vision that seized the right opportunities.

ECCLESIASTES 9:11

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to

men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Those who achieve much in life set out knowing clearly what they want in life. Without a clear picture for life, we end up chasing the wind. You must dream, capture the images of what you clearly desire.

Do you have a clear picture of what your life is all about? Consider athletes in Olympic games; none of them comes to the games without clearly defining what they will be doing in the games long before the actual start of the games. They train with purpose for months. During the events itself, they don't just follow their competitors idly. They purposefully choose lanes, spikes and other accessories for the appropriate event which they trained for.

In negotiation, the parties come to the negotiating desk knowing who they are meeting with and appropriately prepared for the task.

2. Step Out

Achievers are not afraid to step into the waters

of effort, because they know that everything, big or small, has a beginning which is usually small. Even the mustard tree, which is a great tree, has a small beginning. People who despise the days of small beginnings never accomplish anything.

ZECHERIAH 4:9–10

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

(10) For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Your beginning may be small but your end shall surely be great if you rest in the arms of the Lord.

JOB 8:6–7 NKJV

If you were pure and upright, Surely now He would awake for you, And prosper your rightful dwelling place.

(7) Though your beginning was small, Yet your latter end would increase abundantly.

Always remember that it is not so much of how you begin but how you end the pursuit.

ECCLESIASTES 7:8

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

You can begin anything, no matter how big from a humble beginning. You see, even the kingdom of God begins and spreads as a mustard seed.

MARK 4:30–32

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

The vision you plant today is set to become a big empire that will offer rest and respite to men

from all walks of life. If we will ever get there, then just begin by segmenting your dream into little manageable chunks and;

1. **Discover:** Discover what lies beyond your skin colour.
2. **Set Goals:** Begin by setting pure goals for each chunk
3. **Strategize:** Develop a strategy for goals you set
4. **Prepare:** Prepare to take-off with the goal

They decide on exactly what they want to see concerning every goal. They may not be able to do everything, but they set a single thing before their eyes, and go for it.

These men mobilize resources necessary for their pursuits. An acheiver may not have all the resources that others have, or even all that is necessary for their pursuit, but they stretch the available resources to create new opportunities in life.

Achievers commit themselves to pursue a course of action to the desired end through the power of decision and determination.

After they have determined their goals and are convinced about them, they focus all their attention and strength on the desired end. Consider the truth that there is profit in all labour;

PROVERBS 14:24

In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

Because there is profit in all labour, the time invested in reading this book is never wasted. It is an investment that will bear the necessary fruits in the long run. As you read this book, remember that there is profit in all labour. Exert yourself in your labour, strive, because there is profit in all labour.

3. Become

Becoming takes the following;

1. **Time:** Remember that it happens in the fullness of time.
2. **Principles:** It takes principles to fulfil hope.
3. **Decisions:** You need to make quality decisions.

4. **Winning:** Winning in the contest of life.
5. **Focus:** Maintaining your focus in the twist and turns of pursuit.

For most people, dreams are mere fantasies of the hearts, aspirations that are never fulfilled. To them, life seems to be a cycle of failure. They fail from one thing to the other. No wonder they lack drive and the force to push forward. An unfulfilled dream is no reason to despair and throw in the towel and be a victim of life. Rather, it is time to grasp good understanding and attract favour.

ECCLESIASTES 10:10

If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Wisdom is a principal thing in the pursuit of purpose. It is necessary for directing you, and hence enhances your efficiency. The Bible says that a sharp iron requires little strength. Wisdom, however, is the

Pursue with purpose, power, passion and wisdom for direction. Because wisdom is profitable for directing

greatest agent to sharpen the weapons of a man. Wisdom sharpens and directs a man. Wisdom is one thing that I have found to be very profitable in my life as a minister and pastor. It has guided me and brought me this far. Wisdom is a principal thing.

My Prayer for You

The concepts in this book are parallel. You will discover that this life is just a dream that turns out to be real at the end. I know that one day we shall awaken to this reality – the reality of either eternal peace or eternal suffering in Hell. Remember that the time of our life is a talent which cannot be wasted, because it is appointed unto us one day to die, and after, that judgment (See Hebrews 9:27).

It is my prayer that as you read this book you shall find out that this book is designed to act as a catalyst and direction to help you in the fulfillment of your dreams and heartfelt goals. Because hope deferred makes the heart sick, we must endeavour to achieve our goals to keep our

hearts active.

PROVERBS 13:12

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when
the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

It is Time to Dream Again

GENESIS 37:1–36

And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

(2) *These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*

(3) *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.*

(4) *And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*

(5) *And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*

(6) *And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you,*

this dream which I have dreamed:

(7) For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

(8) And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

(9) And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

(10) And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

(11) And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying. (12) And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

(13) And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

(14) And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

(15) And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

(16) And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

(17) And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

(18) And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

(19) And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

(20) Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

(21) And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

(22) And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood,

but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

(23) And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

(24) And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

(25) And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

(26) And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

(27) Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

(28) Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

(29) *And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.*

(30) *And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?*

(31) *And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;*

(32) *And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.*

(33) *And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.*

(34) *And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.*

(35) *And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.*

(36) *And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.*

Throughout the Bible, history, and cultures, dreams have great significance. Men and women of spiritual understanding never underestimate the role of dreams in achievement. They are means by which spirits communicate to people from different cultures, countries, classes and caliber, and faith.

Throughout the sands of history is the footsteps of great achievers and dreamers of dreams. You may call it imagination, but I call it dreams. I must emphasize without an iota of doubt that no single person ever achieved anything without first having a clear picture of what they wanted to accomplish.

Life, for me, is about knowing why you are here and pursuing it. This book is designed to help you run in life with a purpose. So;

1. What are dreams?
2. What are their sources?
3. How to make the dreams work

What is a Dream?

In Numbers 12:6–8A, we learn that dreams are dark speeches with obscure interpretation purported to have been received from God.

Dreams are a series of images, thoughts or emotions occurring during a sleep

– Wycliffe Bible Dictionary

I will then conclude that a dream is a series of images, thought, or emotion occurring in the subconscious mind. In the context of this publication, these images actually have obscured meanings, yet they reveal either the future or the total flow of thought about an idea or purpose.

If a visionary says, he has a dream to build a school. It means he has the total flow of thought concerning the building of the school.

It is actually a knowing of the possibility of fulfilling a purpose. The distinction between a dream and a vision is simple. A dream is actually comparable to purchasing the patch of

land for the building of the school, whereas a vision is the actual work of visualizing where to put what – the classrooms, canteen, halls, play field, offices.

Having a clear picture of where to put what is actually the vision. Visions are the pictures of the dreams. The dream is the model of the reality (an epitome). A vision, although shows the picture of the end, reveals the place of one thing relative to the other.

The chain is simple;

(1) *Dream* (2) *Visions* (3) *Opportunities*

A plan gives the details of how the vision may be established.

1. A dream is therefore a stirring of pictures dropped in one's spirit as a means to inspire and direct the course of his or her life, idea, or purpose.
2. A vision is the pictures of a dream that comes through the art of brainstorming.
3. An opportunity is an open door, occasion,

or chance that can be exploited to one's advantage.

Sources of Dreams

1. Spiritual Source

JOB 33:14-18

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

(15) In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in the slumber upon the bed;

(16) then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

(17) that he may withdraw men from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

(18) He keepeth back his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword.

After God speaks in one way, and then in another way, and men still do not hear Him, He speaks by a dream. Making dreams one of God's merciful acts for the sons of men.

2. Multitudes of Business

ECCLESIASTES 5:3

For a dream, cometh through the multitude of business;

We have to understand that man is a spirit. It is erroneous to think that the human spirit is so weak that it cannot act. Dreams that come through the multitudes of business occur by the mechanism of the human spirit or the sub-conscious mind. As men engage in many businesses, our conscious mind may overlook certain very important details which the subconscious mind captures.

There are times when we just set out in life, working for others, then while at work a need just dawns on us along with a workable solution. I read the story of a man who after years of working as porter, decided to build a plant to manufacture carts for sale. The multitude of his business brought him the dream of manufacturing carts for sale.

As a matter of fact, this is what the spirit plays back to us when deep sleep falls on men. In

my opinion, no dream should be dismissed as unimportant. If for nothing at all, all dreams reveal the state of the mind and spirit of a man.

Making the Dream Work

Dreams usually occur in the spirit of the dreamer. It however becomes useful when we are able to convert our dreams into visions which can be communicated clearly.

1. **Dream:** Get deep into the sub-conscious mind, get a clear picture of the ideas that need to be fulfilled.
2. **Get a vision:** Brainstorm, prospect and see far.
3. **Plan:** Planning at this stage is not planning the actions but getting the vision together.
4. **Pursue:** Settle to the business of fulfillment.

Visualizing the Dream

This is the art of precipitating a vision

Each of us must have a good idea of what we want from life. This is because, life is full of many opportunities, so it is expedient that we capture that specific thing that we are designed to fulfill; otherwise, we will keep running around chasing anything at all until we catch nothing and become confused.

The Art of Visualizing a Dream

Recognize that precipitating a vision is not just about jumbling up a few frivolous pieces of wishes and calling it a vision. Precipitating a

vision requires the ability to perceive things.

Before God gave Abraham the Promised Land, He required him to walk through the land, to prospect, because he can only possess as far as his eyes can see.

Without perception, we would climb a ladder which is leaning against the wrong wall

GENESIS 13:14–15

And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

(15) For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

You can precipitate a vision by discovering who you are, what you can become, and what opportunities you must grasp.

1. Discover who you are

Each one of us was designed and made to fulfill

certain purposes. There are certain things each person can do in a better way than others. Discovering that thing sets you apart from others.

2. Believe in what you can become

After discovering who you are, you must move further to ask the question of what you could become.

3. Decipher which opportunities you can grasp

Sometimes, there are so many things people could become but until the opportunity shows up or a door opens they would remain handicapped.

Why Should You Get a Vision?

PROVERBS 29:18

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

One indispensable thing in life is a dream. A man without a vision is dead and appointed for destruction. Each person must have a dream and live it. Every achiever must firstly have a vision, picture, or a design of what he wants to achieve. A life without a vision is catastrophic. People go into captivity because they lack vision. When vision is imparted, men exercise restraint and walk orderly. Vision orders a man's step and instructs him on the way to excellence.

It understands what tomorrow holds, so it is able to hold on and hang in today. It is the image which a person holds about his or her destiny. It is said that if you do not know where you are going, you walk anyhow and go nowhere. Your ability to see the future and use that information to drive your present decisions is what brings fulfillment.

To have a vision is to understand what is likely to happen in the future, and ordering your life today in a manner that creates a place for your

Vision is the captured future that has been made relevant for today's living.

purpose in that future.

A young lady who has a vision of marrying someday orders her life today to create some goodwill for tomorrow. Many women are having a tough time finding husbands because they had a misplaced vision. They “freaked” too long that when they wanted to settle down, things were too late.

What to Do with a Vision

HABAKKUK 2:1-3

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

(2) And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

(3) For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

When you know what you have to fulfill what should you do?

1. Pray and tirelessly wait for the vision
2. Formulate the vision clearly in words, pictures, and diagrams
3. Write and communicate the vision in bold, legible and concise but clear terms to all those you meet
4. Prepare and watch for the opportune time to hit the road

Grasp the Right Opportunities

Life is full of opportunities but not all opportunities are meant to be taken. Some of the opportunities are traps. An achiever therefore must be driven by his purpose and not by opportunities and circumstances.

Characteristics of Right Opportunities

In fact, having said that some opportunities are traps and snares, anyone who is running with a purpose should be able to tell which opportunities to grab.

1. Choose the opportunity that allows you to maintain your purpose
2. Choose the opportunity that allows you to avoid excesses and indulgence.

3. Choose the opportunity that allows you to avoid unholy passions
4. Choose the opportunity that allows you to maintain faith and loyalty to the core values of your source of power (Jehovah)
5. Choose the opportunity that allows you to maintain your need of divine grace to fulfill your purpose.
6. Choose the opportunity that allows you to let principle govern your relationship with people and not favour.

6 Things You Should Never Compromise

1. Purpose

Although Daniel had the opportunity to eat food from the king's table, he refused and purposed not to defile himself with the king's food and wine. Get a purpose today and refuse

Choose the
opportunity
that allows you
to maintain
your purpose

to defile yourself with the pollutions of your environment.

Achievers exhibit a sense of purpose. They show decision and the determination to push forward.

They have a purpose and determination to push ahead – a decision and determination to do something.

Daniel was still firm to his religion. Whatever they called him, he still held fast to the spirit of an Israelite. When God's people are in Babylon, they need to take special care that they partake not of Babylon's sins. Those who would excel in wisdom and piety, must learn betimes to keep the body under. Daniel avoided defiling himself with sin; and we should also fear that more than any outward trouble or confrontation with men.

2. Temperance and Modesty

You cannot know the benefits of avoiding excesses, of spare diets, and how much they contribute to the health of your body until you

actually try it. Conscientious temperance will always do more, even for the comfort of this life, than sinful indulgence.

Choose the opportunity that allows you to avoid excesses and indulgence.

Purpose places restraint and demands on a man. People with a purpose do not live like everyone else. They do not covet or seek the delights of the senses. Successful people have their purpose and goals clearly defined, and they allow their goals to place the proper restrictions on their lives.

I CORINTHIANS 9:24–27

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

(25) And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

(26) I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

(27) But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Those who run in a race do not just run but they run with a reason in mind. The apostle compares himself to the racers and combatants in the Isthmian Games which was well known by the Corinthians. So in this Christian race, we must all run in such a way that we shall obtain the crown. Therefore, there is the greatest encouragement to persevere with all our strength in this course. Those who ran in these games kept to a spare diet. They acquainted themselves with hardness. They practiced and exercised. Those who pursue the interests of their souls must also combat harshly with fleshly lusts. The body must not be allowed to rule.

3. Righteousness

The apostle presses through this advice on the Corinthians. He sets before himself and before them the danger of yielding to fleshly desires, pampering the body, and its lusts and appetites. If even as an apostle, Paul still needed a

Choose the opportunity that allows you to avoid all unholy passions

holy fear to keep himself faithful to the Lord, then how much more is it needful for our preservation? Let us learn humility and caution from his example, and let us watch against the dangers which surround us while in this body. Successful people are driven by their purpose and not by their passions.

4. Faith and Loyalty

It should be clear by now that although who we are and what we do matters in the outcome of our lives' pursuit, the role of God's grace is supreme in winning any contest.

ROMANS 9:15-18

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

(16) *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

Choose the opportunity that allows you to maintain faith and loyalty to the core values of your source of power - Jehovah, because you need divine grace to fulfill your purpose.

(17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

(18) Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Be willing to go through a test of your faith and convictions. Daniel told the King's stewards, "prove thy servant for ten days". Hebrews 11 boldly declares that our fathers worked great exploits because of their faith.

This is because;

1. Ability and strengths do not always guarantee success, but time and chance sometimes determine the outcome.

ECCLESIASTES 9:11-12

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

(12) For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons

of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

2. Preparation will not always guarantee us success. Victory is from God.

PROVERBS 21:31

The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

PSALMS 140:7

O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

3. Desire and pursuit does not always win, but it is God who shows mercy.

ROMANS 9:16

So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

It is clear that the outcomes of all endeavours cannot be determined by only the things we do. Remember always Ps 127.

PSALMS 127:1-2

A Song of degrees for Solomon. Except the LORD

build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

(2) It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Any visionary who wants to give birth to a dream in safety should walk by faith. Faith is the only thing that can securely and safely help you to sail your boat of vision ashore on the oceans of life.

I TIMOTHY 1:19.

Hold faith and a good conscience: which some having put away concerning the faith have made shipwreck

This is part of Apostle Paul's counsel to Timothy concerning achieving his life's purpose. He said, "Hold faith and good conscience ...". Putting faith away is what leads to a total shipwreck.

I TIMOTHY 3:9

Holding the Mystery of the faith in a pure conscience

Life is more or less like sailing on an ocean. The word of God is like a compass. Those who reject God's purpose are like ships sailing without a compass. They are bound to lose their bearing and perish at deep seas. Brethren who walk by the word and yield to God's purpose are like captains sailing to safety. Many ships on our ocean today are making shipwrecks because faith has been left out. You may have been through the boisterous and turbulent winds of life because of rebellion. God is waiting for you to return and sail smoothly.

Do not forget that the just shall live by faith. What then does it mean to walk by faith? Well, walking by faith is to take a step into a seeming void only to realize the rock underneath. It is a walk absolutely by what God's word says. Faith will keep you pushing on even if the results are discouraging. The circumstances and life situations can be manipulated by the devil, but faith in God which is

Walking by faith is to take a step into a seeming void only to realize the rock underneath. Faith is a walk absolutely by what God's word says.

based on the word of God can never be shaken.

Paul told Timothy that to be able to fulfill the prophecy, he should war a good warfare and hold fast to faith. Faith is that substance that evidences fulfillment and cannot fail. Hold fast to faith; exert your faith.

There is an enemy out there who will never allow you to fulfill that unique purpose. He wishes you never even discover that purpose, and if you discover it, his wish is for you to never fulfill that God-given purpose. To achieve his goal, he will visit your life with great subtlety and opposition to steal, kill, and destroy that purpose. Bear in mind that the enemy is a spirit who is very sophisticated in his ways. Therefore, trusting in man or in the arm of flesh can be disastrous.

5. The Anointing

This refers to your need for divine grace.

JEREMIAH 17:5

Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and make flesh his arm, and

whose heart departeth from the LORD

This is so because the arm of flesh will fail you. In this life, flesh has never won the war and can never prevail. Until you receive divine enablement, your divine assignment cannot be fulfilled.

I SAMUEL 2:9

He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness for by strength shall not man prevail

Strength will take you nowhere. The kind of things that you will confront in the pursuit of your dream and purpose require divine enablement and not just muscular reinforcement. In the days of Zerubbabel, he set out to rebuild the temple. He begun in the might of God but backslid and the work stopped. God sent a prophet to him with a word. The man Zerubbabel was reminded that the journey to fulfillment cannot be accomplished by might nor by power but by the spirit of God. The battle against your life's purpose is too fierce than what flesh and blood can prevail.

ZECHARIAH 4:6–7

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, this is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the LORD of host.

Who art thou, O great Mountain? Before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain:

When the Spirit of the Lord comes upon men, even great mountains can be scaled as though they were plain fields. In all thy getting, get the anointing. So the preacher said;

ECCLESIASTES 9:8

Let thy garment be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment

The oil upon your head is a symbol of power by which you can move forward to fulfill your God-given destiny. If we truly desire to fulfill our destiny and purpose then we need the anointing.

The sense of inadequacy is common feature among people going place and pursuing dreams. This is because God wants you to fulfill the purpose depending on Him. You must recognize

Him as the Senior Partner in fulfilling your purpose. These feelings of inadequacy would let you return in prayer and to trust absolutely in God.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure.

Both the willingness and ability comes from God. Any attempt to move in the vision without God will render you inadequate.

EPHESIANS 2:9–10

It is not of works, lest any man should boast.

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

There is a pre-determined counsel in which we have been ordained to walk. Every work God-determined is good and not evil. They are works ordained for each of us by name even before time begun. The works ordained for us are works of God. The feeling of inadequacy is normal and should not leave us feeling discouraged. Rather, trust God and draw near

to Him in earnest prayer.

Having answered yes to the various test questions, it is safe to move forward to the next session.

6. Helpful Principles

Success in our pursuits is determined by how we handle the opportunities that life presents to us.

DANIEL 1:17–20

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

(18) Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

(19) And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood

Choose the opportunity that allows you to let principle govern your relationship with people, and not favour.

they before the king.

(20) *And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*

Do not treat any opportunity as casual; it may be your test to promotion. The king just communed with them. It was not a formal test. It was just a social intercourse between a king and a group of students. Most of the formal examinations take us nowhere, but the casual ones usually do.

Seizing the Right Opportunities

1. Prepare in anticipation of the right opportunity

PROVERBS 21:31

The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

2. See the opportunity before it fully

manifests;

Opportunities usually present themselves in the form of problems and challenges. This is the reason why those who shirk responsibilities end up not having opportunities.

3. Give off your best at the least opened door

PROVERBS 22:29

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Joseph had to interpret the dream of a baker who could not offer him any financial rewards before he had the opportunity to stand before Pharaoh.

Most of the great promotions in life come through what we do with the informal communings that we have with kings. Daniel was such a man. He came in to Babylon as a slave, then he diligently declined to defile himself with the king's meat and wine. Even when no one was watching, Daniel remained loyal to his God, to his faith, and to his creed. No wonder at the end of the days, the king

found no man like Daniel.

DANIEL I:18–20

Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

(19) And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

(20) And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Discovering Yourself

To discover who you are, what you could become, and what opportunities to seize, you must understand the truths we will be discussing in this chapter.

JEREMIAH 1:4–7

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

(5) Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

(6) Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

(7) But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

To discover who you are, remember four things;

1. You are Not a Mistake

No matter the circumstances surrounding your birth, God created you purposefully. Men do not grow like trees. God uniquely made each one of us purposefully.

1. Your mother had a choice to make love
2. She had the power over whom to sleep with.
3. She even had a choice over your conception, but not over who you should be.

Get it! Over three million potential gametes were released, but by divine command, you were selected. God purposely and uniquely formed you

We are neither here by chance or mistake, but in the fullness of time, we dropped from eternity into time to live for a cause.

Even before your parents met, God had met you, interacted with you, and infused a divine chip into your DNA, for a purpose. The word, 'knew', is in the past tense. You are not just an occurrence. Your life here on earth is a major

event. Your mother might have given up on you and the world does not know you are here, but God knows you, and formed you for a specific assignment.

You are not just an occurrence, you are actually a major event.

2. You are Unique.

For the sake of completeness, God created all men to possess unique features and aptitudes. It would be disastrous to want to be someone else. Rather, strive to be the best you and excel in your own uniqueness. Imagine this! There are no two people with the same fingerprints. That is just the confirmation that all men were created to be unique in themselves.

God created
all men
to possess
certain
unique
features and
aptitudes.

To walk in excellence requires that you accept your personality and move forward to become the kind of man that God created you to be. Ignore people who look down

on and despise you. God knows who you are, and He can achieve His purpose through you.

PSALM 139: 14

*Praise Him; for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.
Marvelous are thy works and
that my soul knowest right well*

It is important to teach your soul to know that she is one of the marvelous works of Jehovah. It is useless to spend days unend becoming a carbon-copy of another man.

*Life is easier
when you are
you and love
being you. Our
uniqueness
depicts a careful
design by our
maker to fulfill
our life purpose.*

3. You are the Way You are for a Purpose

God created everything for a specific purpose. It is therefore disastrous to waste your brief life. Let your life span count for a purpose, just do not burn away but be useful. God knew Jeremiah for a long time even before he was born and He ordained him to be a prophet to the nations.

To accept yourself for who you are is the first step into excellence. God made you this way for a big purpose; nothing about you is a disadvantage if your life is totally handed over to the Lord. Jesus Christ is the potter and we are the clay. What the clay is made into is the sole decision of the potter and not of the clay.

It would be gross disrespect to challenge your Maker.

ISAIAH 45:9

Woe unto you that stiveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? Or thy work, He hath no hands

It is absurd to question God concerning why He made you the way you are. Rather, find out what He has got for you to do. The Potter is a master craftsman and has a reason for creating you. His purpose and vision should be your reason for living. Jesus said by the mouth of the prophets

We have no choice of what to become. God, The Potter, moulded us even before time begun. Just walk in that purpose.

that he has come to do that which is written about Him in the volumes of the books.

HEBREWS 10:7

Then said I, lo, I come (in the volumes (roll) of the books it is written of Me) to do thy will, O God

There is something written about you in the volume of the books that your life must fulfill. Do not just live. Let your life count for a purpose. David said these same words prophetically. There are volumes written in the records of God about you, and your life must fulfill them. Beloved! Move forward to fulfill that specific assignment.

4. You are Prepared to Make It

ROMANS 8:28–30

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

(29) *For whom he did foreknow, he also did*

predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

(30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Several processes are fulfilled in forming a vessel. The man is prepared in eternity and in time. Six basic processes take place. The first three processes take place before you are formed in the womb, and the last three take place after birth. The six processes are;

1. Calling
2. Sanctification
3. Ordination

4. Separation
5. Empowerment
6. Direction

Even before a man is formed in the womb, God predetermines what that child should be. It is equally true, however, that whether God's predetermined purpose will be fulfilled or not depends on; (1) the individual, (2) the

society and (3) the environment. Society and environment plays a significant role.

These three things take place spiritually before they manifest physically. Everybody is called, sanctified and ordained to fulfill specific assignments in their lifetime. Your calling, sanctification and ordination was even before you were formed. You were uniquely formed by the predetermined counsel of God. There is, therefore, a great danger in refusing God's call to service. For whatever you do, do it with all your strength to please God and benefit humanity.

God called,
sanctified, and
ordained you
before you
were formed in
the womb

GALATIANS 1:15-16

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,
(16) To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

*You must decide and determine to be
separated, empowered and directed*

after you become physiologically mature.

After birth and maturity, you would have to make a decision to follow the purpose of God. Jehovah will not impose His purpose on any man but men would have to make a concise decision to walk according to God's purpose. The apostle Paul, after the revelation, did not confer with flesh and blood. He instantly prepared to obey, without hesitating as to his worldly interests, credits, ease, or even his very life.

Before you were formed, God decided what you would become. Jehovah then sanctifies and ordains you for that purpose, but as to whether you would realise that purpose or not, depends on the decisions you make and the determinations with which you pursue those decisions.

Therefore, *decision* and

Calling, sanctification, ordination are all predetermined processes, but separation, empowerment and direction is by decision and determination.

determination are two great determining factors of fulfillment. Nobody is born a thief, a rapist, a murderer, or a fornicator. All men are born for a godly purpose, but our decisions as we grow up in life either makes us into the fashion of God's purpose or devil-shaped.

Bible talks about a war in heaven in Revelation 12. This whole war was fought because of a wonder that appeared in heaven. This wonder was about the birth of a male child who carried the purpose of God. All hell broke loose, but the archangel Michael and his host contained them. When Jesus Christ was born, Matthew says all hell broke loose again as King Herod was driven mad by the news of the birth of a king of the Jews. Some people are employed by the devil to kill everything that would be born of God. I know you have the desire to pursue your life's purpose, but you must acquire the ability to contain the devil boot for boot.

Beyond the layers of skin color lies in every man a God-given ability, talent, vision or a seed of achievement

Setting Pure Goals

Goals are statements of where we want to be at a specific time in the future. They are targets that provide us with a clear purpose or direction. Without goals, we are subject to the whims and caprices of our environments.

It must be clear to you by now that we cannot talk about achievement without talking about goals. Because achievers are simply people who set goals and attain them. They are goal getters.

A) Set goals that state your purpose and mission for life.

Each person has a purpose, which is his or her reason for existence. These goals clearly define the strategy of your life as an achiever.

B) Set unit and sub–unit goals

After which we set goals related to specific

projects or activities pertinent to the specific things we do. Do this for each;

1. Functional area of our life.

Say goals of marriage, goals for ministry, and goals for your career, etc.

2. Time frame of life.

- A) Long range – beyond ten years;
- B) Intermediate – between one to five years;
- C) Short range – within one year.

In the case of setting multiple goals, set strategic goals that follow each other logically. This helps you to manage them well.

c) Monitor progress towards goal attainment

Monitor progress towards goal attainment at all levels of life or organization. Often, achievers do not have a single goal, regardless of their size, diversity or location.

Brainstorming to Set Pure Goals

In setting pure goals, employ the power of perception to discover two things

1. Your typical characteristics and personality.

Access yourself and determine your strengths and weaknesses

2. The typical characteristics of your environment.

Scan the environment for all opportunities and threats

These two factors affect every person in one way or the other. They play an important role in the establishment of goals and their effect is in two ways.

1. Modification of goals.

This affects the initial goal setting process because you take another look at your original goals.

2. Modification of strategies to achieve the goal.

The process of brainstorming affects all ongoing activities aimed at goal attainment.

Even though each one of us has some strengths and weaknesses, in every pursuit, there are opportunities to grasp and threats to handle. They should not stop our dream yet we cannot just ignore them and hope to overcome them automatically.

Understanding the Environment

The forces in the environment which achievers should not overlook are of two genres; the general environment and the task environment.

I. The General Environment Forces

The general environment consists of five unique set of forces;

1. Politico–legal forces:

These are usually associated with the governmental and legal systems within which you live and operate.

2. *Economic factors:*

These include inflation, economic growth, interest rates, and even unemployment levels. They give us a good idea of how to set pure goals.

3. *International forces:*

They determine how much improvement should be put into your goals to match what your contemporaries are offering to similar projects. This knowledge about the international community helps us to explore available opportunities and avert threats.

4. *Socio-cultural forces:*

These determine the customs and values that characterizes the society within which we operate, such as consumer taste and preferences, employee's expectations and attitudes, the accepted role of the achiever and his vision in

that society. Sound knowledge of these forces helps you to set workable goals.

5. *Technological forces:*

Be interested in the rate of technological advancement. You cannot buy a typewriter in this computer age. Please, be abreast with time and technology.

2. **The Task Environment Forces**

The task environment also has five dimensions and consists of those specific organizations within the environment which influences the target institution. They are;

1. Customers
2. Competitors
3. Unions
4. Regulators
5. Suppliers

Barriers to Setting Pure Goals

The barriers which every achiever must overcome in order to set a pure goal include;

1. Setting *ambitious or inappropriate goals*:

Ambition is good but when wrongfully employed, it could lead us to set unattainable and impossible goals.

2. *Over-emphasizing quantity*:

The next barrier is setting goals which over-emphasize quantity and other easily measurable features.

3. *Setting over-ambiguous goals*:

Over emphasizing qualitative goals over quantitative goals also makes the goals ambiguous.

Overcoming Barriers to Setting Pure Goals

There is the need to overcome these barriers if we would ever achieve our dreams. Achievers do a few things to overcome these death traps in effective goal setting.

1. *Understand the Purpose of Your Goals*

Goals are targets – something to be aimed at but not necessarily to hit every time. They are not absolute levels of performances that must be achieved at all cost regardless of circumstances, but they are common guidelines to determine action.

2. *State Your Goals Properly*

Goals which are inappropriately stated will go wrong. Goals must be state properly, if they are to be most effective. State your goals in a concise, brief, specific and time-bound manner. To properly state the content of your goals, answer the following leading questions;

A. What is your focus?

- b. What is to be accomplished?
- c. In what period must it be accomplished?

3. Make Your Goals Consistent

Goals should be horizontal (between function and areas) and vertical (between levels of management)

4. Communicate Your Goals

Achievers communicate their goals to others whose contributions are important to the fulfillment of the goals. Without this information, others cannot work with you in a manner that effectively fulfills your goals

5. Celebrate Every Little Success

When you reward effective goal setting, it motivates and strengthens your quest to develop that skill. Good goals are further broken down to objectives. Objective must, however, be S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound).

Developing Strategy

It is not enough to have goals and aspirations, but to be able to plan and strategize on how to achieve those goals is essential. Therefore, we must understand that achievers never cease strategizing. They also keep defining their direction and scope over a long period. They employ directions to try to achieve an advantages for them through the appropriate use of resources within their changing environment to meet societal needs and expectations of stakeholders.

Achievers set a direction and a scope

A strategy is therefore the direction and scope of a person over a long term, which achieves some advantages for him or her through the configuration of resources within a changing environment, to meet the needs of society, and fulfill the expectation of stakeholders.

in which resources may be obtained and controlled to suit the opportunities and threats, as well as the foreseen strengths and weaknesses in the future of their purpose. They do not necessarily produce new resources to take advantage of new opportunities, but rather, they identify existing resources and competences which might be a basis for creating new opportunities in the society.

LUKE 14:28

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

They count the cost to ascertain whether there is sufficient resources to finish the building. Achievers are not tasked with creating resources, but with the process of budgeting. They are people who can design a direction in which the available resources may be stretched to fit the purpose. Should it be happen that the available resources are not enough, an achiever may strategically invest the available resources in order to generate what is required to fulfill the purpose.

Factors that Affect Strategies

To be able to draw this design to either stretch or fit their resources to purpose, achievers do the following, as an achiever;

1. Do not overlook environmental forces, which of course, are very unstable. Such forces, which includes inflation, interest rates, policies, regulations, competitors, etc. are constantly changing and becoming more chaotic.
2. Take into consideration the resources that are available, which you must bear in mind, are always very scarce and keenly sort after by all.
3. Factor in the values and expectations of those who have a stake in the purpose, which are determined largely by very divergent factors. Achievers do not ignore people because they know that people are important in the fulfilling of their purpose. As a pastor, what design I draw up must not disregard the influence of my church members.

Issues that Must Be Addressed

To effectively factor in these three factors that affects our design, you must address the following issues;

1. Search out the environment carefully to effectively position yourself in relation to others so as to achieve an advantage in the acquisition of the scarce resources. Find your niche and maximize the opportunities.
2. Sincerely list all activities they should be involved in order to achieve your goals. You must not go on a wild goose chase, but get involved in the right activities.
3. Every achiever understands that no man is an island; you must, therefore, match your activities to the environment in which you live. Operate in the provisions of the regulations and laws of the area in which you live.

The Art of Strategizing

In strategizing, there are three main activities that go on; (1) analysis, (2) choice, and (3) implementation.

I. Strategic Analysis

Strategic analysis is the process of seeking to understand your position in life. It is to examine yourself in relation to your environment, innate abilities and resources, and the expectations and influences of stakeholders of your life.

An achiever would not just say “oh I want to be the president”. Rather, he would examine himself in the environment, considering his inherent abilities and resources to see whether he can be the president. To do this, achievers answer three main questions;

1. What changes are going on in my environment now?

They must find out what changes are going on

in the environment and how it will affect their purpose. That is to say, they seek to understand how the environment is likely to affect their pursuit.

It is very often clear that not all options may work, because of the kind of environment within which we operate. Every achiever understands this very well and never neglects it. They know that for cultural reasons, not everything may be done.

2. What are my available resources and core competences?

Achievers are aware of what the available resources and their core competence are and sincerely evaluate to ascertain how these can provide any special advantages, or yield new opportunities – resources and competence. In the case of the Christian, the grace of God may be seen as a resource, spiritual gifts can also be seen as core competences.

Achievers realistically accept the fact that they can do only some things and not all things. They consider what their core competences are. We

may not be able to do everything, because we may not have the mental and logistical capacity to support certain kinds of programs.

3. What are the expectations of the stakeholders of my life, and how does these affect my purpose?

Achievers, being people-centered, are conscious of what the stakeholders' expectations are, and how they affect the future development of their life and purpose.

After undertaking the analysis they then move on to make the strategic choice.

2. Strategic Choice

In choosing strategically, the achiever formulates possible courses of action, evaluates them and then makes a choice.

A) Formulate a course of action

In formulating possible courses of action,

achievers do well to design those courses of actions that would satisfy the values and expectations of all the stakeholders, including partners, investors and even beneficiaries.

They try to identify the competitive advantages available to them and design lines of action that makes use of them.

They brainstorm with questions like, “What things do I do better, and gives me an urge over others who want to pursue similar purposes?” Say, you want to be the president of your nation; what edge do you have over other aspirants.

Answers to this question may arise from the things you can do better or resources you have.

These brainstorming processes lead the achiever to generate various options for subsequent evaluation and selection which is basically based on an assessment of the relative

The rare people who are able to make use of the special competences they possess which could be used to enhance their pursuit, even if it does not offer an advantage, are those who turn out as achievers.

merits of all the options. They then carefully select the option that is built upon their strengths, overcome their weaknesses, and take advantage of opportunities, while minimizing or circumventing the threats that their purpose faces.

B) Evaluating options

1. Perform a suitability assessment:

This involves assessing whether your resources, capabilities, and the environment within which you operate are compatible; or if the resources may have to be stretched to yield new opportunities.

2. Perform a feasibility assessment

This is simply assessing the extent to which the strategic plan could be put into effect. This informs the achiever as to whether or not he requires new skills, which should be acquired, or whether new people should be hired to help him.

3. Strategic Implementation

The last process in the achiever's strategic implementations is concerned with both the planning of how to put the selected option into effect and manage the required changes.

In other words, this is, translating the strategy into purposeful actions through; (1) a personal redesign and structuring of activities, (2) the planning of resources and (3) managing the change resulting from the strategy.

Key Questions to Answer

1. What changes must occur to adapt you for the new strategy?
2. What are the key tasks?
3. What changes need to be made in the resources?
4. Is there a need for new skills?
5. What changes must occur and how should you adjust?

Preparing for Take off

Now, in the real action of pursuit, with all that we have discussed above in place, just start with prayer.

Start with Prayer

In your pursuit, begin by appealing to the highest spiritual power you submit to. In the case of Christians, we plead with Jehovah to guide and strengthen us against the odds and turbulence. This is where we draw strength.

1TIMOTHY 1:18

The apostle Paul told Timothy to take charge according to the prophecies which went before him, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.

After prophecies have dropped from heaven, the devil comes to try the word in our spirits. Satan's purpose is to prevent you from fulfilling your purpose. Therefore, the apostle said we should war a good warfare to ward off the devil in his bid to destroy your purpose.

It doesn't matter how long you prepare yourself or confess faith, without warring in prayer your dream would be aborted. In 2 Timothy 2, we are told that in warring the good warfare, the world and everything in it must be put aside.

2 TIMOTHY 2:4

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

There are times when for the sake of fulfilling your life's purpose, certain pleasures must be forsaken. Some of the things the vision may require of that we forsake will not necessarily be sinful.

The scriptures say; "No man

It is expedient to carry excess baggage when the journey is too tiring and stressful by itself

that warreth [No soldier on service] entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen (enrolled) him to be a soldier”.

Even in the natural, before a woman gives birth, much prayer, supplication, and warfare is required. Especially in Africa and other parts of the world where the healthcare system is undeveloped, and where witchcraft is glamorized and given free expression, it takes intense spiritual warfare to deliver safely. The Bible says that no man warring entangles himself. Rather, he frees himself from all entanglements and ensures that he safely wars to see victory. Similarly, my beloved, you must arise and war the good warfare.

Prayer, I say, is the most difficult task of the Christian faith. People could pretend to be praising God and be away with it. You could pretend to be living in holiness, when in fact, you are busily sinning. You could even pretend to be praying if you're not expecting any answers as would be the case of someone in need of deliverance or healing from terminal diseases. But you cannot afford to pretend when you

need answers to those prayers. Therefore, maintaining a good conscience is the most potent drug to prevent miscarriages.

Mobilize

As we have learned, every good strategy is based on conditions in the environment, the expectations of stakeholders, the available resources, and our core competences. In the pursuit, therefore, mobilize and gather the available resources and core competences upon which your strategy is based.

Remember, it will require the effective configuration of these resources to bring achievement.

Move out in Faith to Dare the Giants.

I read a car sticker that said, “Believe, begin and become.” Dreaming is good but if you refuse to wake up from your dream, you’ll die in your sleep with your dream. There comes a time

to step on the face of the waters; a time when it is worth it to take the risk. However, it is important to move in gradually and stage-wise.

Do not be scared of the giants; many of them would have no option than to make room for you when your time is up. Remember that you gain nothing if you pursue nothing. So, arise and move forth with this word.

ISAIAH 60:1-5

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

(2) *For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*

(3) *And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

(4) *Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.*

(5) *Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.*

It Takes Time

The vision is for an appointed time

Until the fullness of time is fulfilled, many things will not come to fruition. This is why you must allow time, and God will make all things right. Keep pace but do not rush things.

HABBAKKUK 2:1-4

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

(2) *And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.*

(3) *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

(4) *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not*

upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Hasty Pursuit Brings Poverty

Hasty pursuit leads to poverty and failure.

PROVERBS 21:5

The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.

There is Time for Everything

Time is one thing that makes things happen. There is a time for everything and a season for every purpose. It is for us to understand the time appointed for us.

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

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

King Solomon pondered the sovereign design of God and concluded that all the events of life are divinely appointed. He understood that the various events and times of life work together to create that beautiful picture, along with all the

events that break the monotony of life. Reading Ecclesiastes 3:1–22 reveals that by the time God is through with us, we will understand the true beauty of life. As we remember the times of weeping and sorrow and see how far we have come, we come to acknowledge that it has all been part of a beautiful life.

Successful people persevere and hang in throughout the changing times and seasons. They keep focusing on the issues that matter, because they agree that weeping and mourning may endure for a night, but the sun will surely rise in the morning, and everything will be bright and different. Never forget that when the time of God is fulfilled, nothing can stop a dream that has been worked on.

Time Makes Things Beautiful

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

God has given man an eternal perspective so

that he can look beyond the routine of life. Nevertheless, He has not revealed all of life's mysteries to man. The routines of life may be very frustrating but if we understand time as total entity and not just a segmental concept, then we are set to play the game of life according to the rules. It is not always helpful to see time as a segmented duration, rather, see it as an endless ring. Like a wedding band; it is not joined at any point. This means we may always come back to where it all begun.

ECCLESIASTES 9:11–12

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

(12) For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

It Takes Principles

There are certain things that successful people never ignore. They are the main agents that protect the purpose of our hearts. Like I often say, “the conception of a purpose is like how a woman takes seed”; Great care must be taken to keep the baby intact. This is not an allegory, but I will do my best to tell you some things successful people do not ignore. These things are like vitamins, although they are only needed in small proportions, their absence creates very serious problems.

PROVERBS 13:12–19

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

(13) Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

(14) The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

(15) Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

(16) Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.

(17) A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.

(18) Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

(19) The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

I can identify six key words in this text which inform us on how to see your desire happen.

1. Walk in the word of God daily: They are the unchanging truths that are able to preserve your life in your pursuit.
2. Keep the laws of the wise: These are laws that govern your realm of undertaking.
3. Seek good *understanding*: You need to seek good understanding into matters that relate to your dream
4. Deal with *knowledge*: Make sure that you carefully interpret and apply every fact, data, information that you receive, into the

pursuit of your dream.

5. *Work with a faithful heart*

6. *Honour instructions*

1. Walk in the Word of God

Daily:

The words of God are the unchanging truths that are able to preserve your life as you pursue your dream. Sometimes, the demands of pursuing your dream may be too high that you neglect the keeping of your soul. Walking in the word preserves your life. They outline commandments that you must fear. Remember, it is useless to gain the world and lose your soul. See Matthew 16.26; Mark 8.36–37, and Luke 9.25;

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

2. Keep the Laws of the Wise

These laws govern your realm of all undertakings. Every realm of pursuit is

governed by laws outline by others who have walked that path in the past. Economics already have laws, medicine also has laws, and engineering is no exception. This is why whenever you are undertaking any kind of research, you are required to do a literature review. It is intended for you to discover the laws of the wise.

These laws enshrine the truth generated through the experiences, failures, and successes of the prudent. There is no need to reinvent the wheel since there is no new thing under heaven.

3. Seek Good Understanding

Seek good *understanding* into matters that relate to your dream. You may have discovered the law of the wise, yet you must pray and maintain fellowship with the Holy Spirit. This is because great men are not always wise, however, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty (the Holy Spirit of God) gives them understanding.

JOB 32:6–9

And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite

answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

(7) I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

(8) But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

(9) Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

EXODUS 35:30–31

And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;

(31) And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;

4. Deal with Knowledge

Apply the knowledge (facts, data, information) which you receive. Never be intellectually dishonest. The application of sound knowledge is paramount in your success and accomplishment.

HOSEA 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge

Knowledge is an indispensable tool for winning the war of life. Ignorant people would without exception be destroyed. After you to capture a picture of the future, it necessary to start acquiring the necessary know-how. So, if I want to be the president, I have to acquire knowledge on governance, I have to understand the nitty-gritty of politics and presidency. Otherwise, I will mess up even if God, by a miracle, makes me the president.

Knowledge that is taught after God's percepts births faith and not pride.

Earthly knowledge puffs up, but in life, we need more than just earthly knowledge, because in the pursuit of our purpose, some of the things that confront us are way above the understanding and comprehension of man. So the complete knowledge you need to acquire is a combination of scholarly and

A man who has only Christian faith and no scholarly knowledge may not be able to make his godly knowledge relevant to everyday living.

biblical knowledge.

In much the same way people with only earthly knowledge are limited in their pursuit. They become handicapped when matter higher than the mind confronts them.

Now there is a big difference between knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom is given by God but knowledge is learnt or acquired. It does not matter where you learn it, if you acquire it you own it. Knowledge is expensive and costly. Much must be invested to acquire it. We must also understand that the body of knowledge is dynamic, therefore, constantly upgrade your knowledge to match the changing trends.

It does not matter where you learnt is from. If you acquire it, you own it

5. Work with a Faithful Heart

Wrong attitudes kill right vision.

Attitude is key to success. Without the

right attitudes, a people will fail in all their endeavours but with it, every purpose we set out to fulfill shall prosper.

PROVERBS 22:29

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Diligence brings a man before kings and not ordinary people. In the days of Nehemiah, even in the face of serious persecution, the work progressed because the working class had the mind to work. They had the right attitude and mind setting. Good work goes on well, when people have a mind to do it.

NEHEMIAH 4:6

So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

Many African economies have failed because of our own attitudes. In my country, Ghana, wrong attitudes towards work alone can account for about 75% of the collapse of many enterprises. Diligence is one thing that creates

the difference between the successful and the failures. So, in the pursuit of vision, attitude is necessary and needful to success.

Harness the power of pursuing dreams with a single heart, concentration, and focus. In order to be above the menace of spiritual miscarriage you need to rise up and keep the charge and commission of your life. Every pursuit comes with its own responsibilities, demands, and its comensurate lifestyle. A man called to be an intercessor cannot live like a preacher. Although they have both been called to serve God and their generation, these two ministries are not the same.

LUKE 16:10-13

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

(11) If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

(12) And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

(13) No servant can serve two masters: for either

he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

1. Be faithful in little things.

Be faithful with little beginnings and in little things.

2. Be faithful in that which is another man's.

Quite often you learn the secrets to achievement working under and with another man.

3. Be faithful in money matters.

Negligence and indifference can lead to the miscarriage of your hopes and dreams. Men and women of vision must be careful how they live their lives. Successful people are not negligent and indifferent about their dreams. They are committed to their purpose and diligently pursue it. You cannot be negligent and expect success in your purpose.

Every pursuit comes with its own responsibilities, demands, and lifestyle

PROVERBS 13:4

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Successful businesses and institutions have diligent and committed employees. One major reason for the economic decay in many African countries is indifference. The people are simply very indifferent about what goes on around them. They report to work two hours late and read newspapers for one hour, they work for one hour and go on break only to return and gossip for two hours; They work for another two hours and close and go home. The Bible says;

PROVERBS 10:4–5

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

(5) *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

In my own survey, I discovered that any group of committed and diligent people achieves five times as much result as the negligent and indifferent. Diligence brings and adds value

to increase. It preserves the achievements of the successful and makes them into valuable achievements.

PROVERBS 12:27

The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

In 1 Timothy 1: 19, the Scriptures tells us that throwing away good conscience will shipwreck your faith and vision. God always requires us to have the right motives. Even in our acts of prayer and giving, the motives behind the act determines the kind of answers and results we will receive.

We have come a long way through the previous chapters rediscovering what we ought to do before we come to the birth of our dreams. Beloved there is a commission on our lives to be fulfilled. The Lord has committed the task of saving the world to us, and everything must be done to see this work done. Return to missions and bring out the solution in you to answer the challenges of the world.

Remember that Nehemiah and the captives could sail above all odds and rebuild the broken walls because the Scriptures says, *“So built we the wall: So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half thereof: for the people has a mind to work.*

Maintain a good conscience and follow God’s purpose for your life, and you shall surely achieve great things.

6. Honour Instructions

Superiors, authorities, and leaders in a field of endeavour often are the ones who give instructions.

It Takes Quality Decisions

Life is about decision-making: Our destinies are nothing but the path traced by the seemingly little decisions we make.

Therefore, do not grope in darkness as a worm. The time has come for us to walk by insight and prophetic direction. By prophetic direction, I do not mean going to a prophet for a word, but building a relationship with God until you know His voice. There are no formulae or procedure that can lead you into God's purpose.

Jesus said, "*I am the shepherd and my sheep know my voice*" (John 10:1-18)

Communication is the act of mutual discourse. It is the process of creating a common understanding; Talking to God and listening to Him talk back to you. Knowing the voice of the

shepherd comes from communication. God's purposes are revealed by His Holy Spirit to a man who is sharpened by prayer, fasting, and faith. You can locate God's purpose for your life and walk into it by the Spirit of God. Note that the purpose of God cannot be duly known but by His Holy Spirit

I CORINTHIANS 2:9–10

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

(10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Let us walk wisely, because, "there is a way that seems right to a man but the end there off is death".

Be Born Again

The first step to discover God's given purpose is to get saved. Until a man is saved, he is still dead in trespasses and sins and is unable to

understand or accept spiritual things. Men are born dead in transgression and trespasses. We know that dead men cannot talk, hear or see.

Our relationship with God is one of the strongest relationships. It is a blood covenant relationship. When Christ died on the cross and rose again, He purchased sonship for all who believed, would believe and have believed. It is the precious blood of Jesus Christ that has purchased for us our redemption. He grew in confidence to come before God.

Build Fellowship

Once we get saved we are enlightened to see clearly. We must then establish a relationship, fellowship, and worship with other seekers and saints. It is futile to seek our God's will without first developing father-son, sheep-shepherd relationship. As your fellowship grows warmer, your purpose unfolds more completely. As you develop more of God in your heart, God's good pleasure unfolds in you by a supernatural outworking of His Spirit. His will, His desire and His purpose is formed in you by a divine

working within you.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13.

For it is God which works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure

There will never come a time when we will not need to make a decision. In fact, deciding not to make a decision is a decision in itself. Remember that life is actually a flow of decisions. Living for even a microsecond require volumes of decisions. This is the reason why your whole life will go wrong if your decision-making process goes wrong. Because each action in life is generated by hundreds of little decisions.

I have always said that our lives are nothing but a composition of the results of many little and seemingly unimportant decisions that we have made over time.

Steps to Quality Decision Making

1. Recognise the Need to Make a Decision

The first step to making quality decisions is to recognise the need to make decisions. This occurs when there is a *problem* or an *opportunity*.

2. Diagnose and Analyze the Causes of the Problem or the Situation that is Generating the Opportunity at hand

Analyze all underlying causal factors associated with the situation at hand. Ask yourself, why is this happening? You may need to ask why for many times for each action you need to take. Now, why is it so important? You see, if we do not know why we are doing what we are doing, anybody can persuade us to stop doing it and get us to do something else.

I have come to know that every problem tree has

a root, which is often buried in the causes. If we understand why, then we can kill the problem from the root.

3. Develop Alternative Solutions

1. Find out how many different ways the problem can be solved.
2. Get knowledge about each alternative. Gather as much as is possible.
3. Ascertain the repercussions of each alternative

4. Proceed to Select the Desired Alternative

1. Understand the working of each alternative.
2. Educate yourself about the merits and demerits of each alternative.
3. Establish the feasibility of each alternative
4. Select the best alternative that you have what it takes to effectively implement.

5. Implement the Chosen Alternative

A decision is nothing unless it is implemented.

6. Evaluate the Feedback

Every decision we implement will yield some feedback. We, therefore, have to evaluate and take feedback, so that we can make new decisions that counteract the problems created by old or previous decisions.

Biases to Avoid

1. Avoid Being Influenced by Initial Impressions

Many decision-making processes go wrong because we get too carried away by our initial impressions. Several, years ago, I was privileged to be part of a team of consultants who were tasked with the duty of taking inventory and advising a buyer on the worth of a building she intended to purchase. When we arrived

at the site, I immediately thought that this venture was not worth her while, but I could see that the more senior officers with me were composed. Interestingly, at the end of the project, I realized what a big mistake I would have made if I had allowed myself to be blinded by my initial impressions.

Lots of people have over-looked several opportunities that time released unto them, all because they were fooled by the initial impressions. The prophet Samuel would have missed it in Jesse's house.

I SAMUEL 16:6–7 CEV

When Jesse and his sons arrived, Samuel noticed Jesse's oldest son, Eliab. "He has to be the one the LORD has chosen," Samuel said to himself.

(7) But the LORD told him, "Samuel, don't think Eliab is the one just because he's tall and handsome. He isn't the one I've chosen. People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts."

Go beyond the initial impressions. First impressions may not take many important details into account. It is always important to

take a second, a third, fourth, fifth, or even a hundredth look at the same thing.

2. Avoid Making Decisions to Justify Past Decisions

Avoid making decision merely because you want to justify a past decision. It is your own life, and you are accountable only to God and yourself. If your past decisions are faulty, be bold and accept that fact and correct them.

You only deepen your sorrows by continuing to justify past mistakes with new decisions.

Unfortunately, many people fall into the trap of making choices that justify their faulty past decisions. Do not waste precious time and energy trying to make a fiance fit for marriage when you should not even have dated them in the first place.

Sometimes, simply because we do not want to accept that we made a mistake, we continue to make a series of flawed decisions in an effort to

correct the past.

3. Avoid Seeing What You Want to See

There is always the tendency to see things that affirm your thoughts and biases. Do not “witch hunt”, rather, open-mindedly assess the situation and then decide. You may have thought I was a thick and tall man, but that should not blind you from seeing and accepting that I’m actually average in stature. Better still, you may have cause to believe that I am a thief, but that should not make you second-guess every action of mine, because, I may be right this time.

People often look for information that supports their existing instincts or point of view, and do not even consider any information that proves anything contrary. This bias affects where we look for our information, and when

Be honest with yourself about your real motives and examine all the evidence with equal severity

considering information, we tend to give too much weight to supporting information and too little to information that conflicts with our established viewpoints.

4. Avoid Perpetuating the Status Quo

Avoid making decisions based on what has worked in the past. Explore new options, dig out new information and investigate new alternatives.

5. Avoid Being Influenced by Faulty Problem Framing

There are times when decision-making goes wrong because of how the problem is framed. Instead of saying, “there is 30% chance of failure, say there is 70% chance of survival. Sometimes, it is not just the 30% and 70%, it is so much of what we stand to gain or lose. For instance, think of a company that decides to go for an insurance policy that will save them 70 billion Ghana Cedis, when there may be just 1% chance of fire. Yet looking at the potential loss

they could incur in case of a fire, they decide to go for a policy that costs them 500 million Ghana Cedis.

In much the same way, there might be a 20% chance of fire that may destroy a stock worth 50 million cedi, and the company would decide not to go for the policy. In each of these cases, the decision can be influenced by how the problem is framed. That is why we need to go past that and understand the reality.

6. Avoid Over–estimating Your Ability to Predict Uncertain Outcomes

Interestingly, you will discover that most people make decisions having over–estimated their ability to predict some very uncertain outcomes. It is dangerous to have unrealistic estimation of your ability to understand risk and make right predictions all the time.

PROVERBS II:14 DARBY

Where no advice is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Characteristics of a Good Decision

Three things that must characterize the things you stand for are;

1. Will your decision stand the test of time?
2. Will your decision improve the quality of your life?
3. Will the things you stand for pay off in the end?

I can assure you that if there is any one thing that must form the basis of all your decisions, then it is the word of God. It always yields results.

The three Hebrew boys stood for something in the days of the Babylonian captivity. They refused to bow to the image of the king. They stood for the person of the living God of Israel.

The thing they stood for had the ability to stand the test of time, it did improve the quality of their lives, and finally the payoff was big. They were promoted to great honour. The Son of God came down to honour their faith and joined their worship. I see the Son of God coming to

your rescue too. I see Him coming into your fire to worship with you. May all eyes see your honour and promotion in Jesus name, Amen!

Now, the only thing that fulfills all three criteria is the word of God.

1. The word will stand the test of time;

MARK 13:31 DARBY

The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away.

2. The word imparts faith which makes not ashamed;

ROMANS 10:8–11 DARBY

But what says it? The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach:

(9) *that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

(10) *For with the heart is believed to righteousness; and with the mouth confession made to salvation.*

(11) For the scripture says, No one believing on him shall be ashamed.

3. Trusting the word pays off;

JOSHUA 1:8 DARBY

This book of the law shall not depart from thy mouth; and thou shalt meditate upon it day and night, that thou mayest take heed to do according to all that is written therein; for then shalt thou have good success in thy ways, and then shalt thou prosper.

Trust the word
and you will
never regret it.
I trusted the
word and my
life is different
now

It Takes Winning in the Contest of Life

We are involved in an unseen contest. It is;

1. A contest for the best but scarce resources of life.
2. A contest for the best positions in life;

This is because, even with the best resources, we may not yield the best results if we are in the wrong position.

3. A contest to yield the best results;

Like Daniel, we are ushered into a contest, the outcome of which determines our fate in life for a while. Usually, it lasts until another opportunity presents itself, and then we change our disposition. Daniel, came into Babylon as a slave but with the opportunity to either live as a prince or continue as a slave for a time. Some of the people we began with will soon begin to rule

as princes, but others will continue as slaves and be ruled over. Now, what did it take for Daniel to arise and rule in life?

The book of Daniel chapter 1 is an honest declaration of what God has given me for this generation. It is, in fact, the executive summary of the story of the life of Daniel, a man with an ordinary beginning, yet, he rose to a very high status in a society in which he entered as a slave.

I. Believe You Can Win from Wherever You Started

From Daniel's life story, I've learned that;

1. The circumstances and events of our lives are not always the way we hoped they would be.
2. Our fate on the field of life depends on how we fare in the business of life.
3. Many of us get stuck in the mud of life's twists and turns because we ignore God.

In Daniel's case, he began life at a tender age away from his home and parents in an

unfamiliar land as a captive. No matter where you may be now, or what your life's circumstances may be, this study about Daniel's life reveals deep truths that can transform our life forever. I declare to you that you can win on the field of life, no matter what your life's circumstances are, without having to compromise your unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ. You can touch higher heights by your faith. Amen!

Always remember that you can make it, irrespective of your life's circumstances, without compromising your faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Discover What it Takes to Win

1. It will take who we are and what we have;

When the Prophet Daniel came to Babylon as a captive, he perceived that although he wore the attire of a slave, he was of the descent of

the kings of Israel. He employed the grace of perception to identify himself in the big picture of God, hence establishing his purpose.

DANIEL I:3-4

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

(4) Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

He perceived that;

1. He was a child of Israel and of the king's descent.
2. He was without blemish, well favoured, skillful in all wisdom, cunning in knowledge and understood science.
3. He had the ability to stand in the king's palace and could learn the learning and tongue of Chaldeans.

He understood that these were the reasons why the King of Babylon spared his life. He also understood that although the King of Babylon had this in mind, God had planted him there for a purpose. He, therefore, purposed not to defile himself.

DANIEL 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Perception leads to identification. It brings about goal definition. Right perception birth the right goal formation, and hence, the right results. He did not allow the colour of his skin, the type of his clothes, or the name people called him to shape his perception. Rather, he separated himself from the masses. This perceptive ability led to identification of purpose and he separated himself for that purpose.

Daniel's perceptive ability led to identification of purpose, and he separated himself unto that purpose

Bear in mind though that all the young men who were brought in at the eunuch's command had the potential to rule too. They were all of the king's seed. Now, in much the same way, you are of the king's seed also. You were created in Christ Jesus, and you have the very nature of God. We are also of the king's seed, even though we may be captive to certain things. Very soon, however, we shall begin to rule over the things that tried to hold us captive.

ROMANS 7:15-18

For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

(16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

(17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

(18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

We can make it. We have what it takes to make it. We are designed to succeed.

2. It will take preparation;

For Daniel, it took over three years of nourishing, but for you, I cannot tell how long it will take, but you must hang in until it happens.

DANIEL 1:5

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Preparation is one of the greatest secrets to achievement. When the mantle was cast upon Elisha, although he obeys immediately, he followed and under-studied his master, Elijah.

Training and preparation is one of the most potent drugs for every visionary.

If God told you to serve Him as a doctor, you can't just wait until you are 26 years, then you'll put on a white overcoat, and set out to be a physician. There is every reason to begin by training yourself for the assignment from an early age. Training and preparation is one of

the most important drugs for every visionary. In fact, it is such a potent drug that too much of it can kill the visionary, yet too little training results in complications which arises from incomplete development. You need just enough.

Timothy followed Paul and heard many things. He was trained to become the fulfilment of the prophecy over his life. When God speaks to you, begin training and preparing yourself for the task.

Lack of Preparation

Lack of preparation can shatter dreams. A period of preparation in anticipation of God's purpose is Biblical and spiritual, and in fact, it is the first guarantee of success. God rarely uses things He has not prepared. Even the fish that swallowed Jonah was prepared.

JONAH 1:17

Now the lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.

Prepare formally or informally. Whatever the case is, you must give yourself to training.

Preparation Sharpens You

Preparation sharpens your giftings, abilities and talents, and reduces how much effort is required. Preparation brings efficiency.

ECCLESIASTES 10:10

If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.

Skill reduces the pain or “*wahala*” of a workman, as we call it in my country, Ghana. Skill sharpens a man, and with a little effort, much is accomplished.

Some may cast insinuations againts this, and quote this verse in the book of Ecclesiastes;

ECCLESIASTES 9:11

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

True, favour does not come to men of skill. Yet, you notice that it says, “... but time and chance

happens to them all...” and this is when skill will be needed. Skill will always be needed when the fullness of time and the chance arrives. Independent of the fullness of time, a man can achieve very little, but in the midst of time and opportunity, skill is needed to birth your accomplishments.

The issues of life, and the length of our lives are quite unpredictable. No one can guarantee success or foresee how God will deal with him. It is very possible for a man who is well equipped and labours diligently to still fail. This is because, chance does not operate apart from God or in competition with God. Rather, chance happens to men without our cooperation or planning.

So, the winning of a race or a battle, the ability to acquire bread, riches, or favor, does not lie within the resources of any of us. We must all understand that to obtain victory, wealth, or influence, lies beyond the control of any man, but it lies with God alone,

Even after
you have
recieved devine
providence, skill
will be needed
to add value to
what is divinely
provided.

in His divine providence.

3. It will take what we do in the palace of life

Although Daniel was a slave, he was well favoured in the palace. Just like Daniel, we must be able to handle the grace and favour that God gives us.

ROMANS 6:15–16

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

(16) Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

As saints, we are not designed to live on miracles; rather, we are design to live by the blessing. The work of grace and miracle is like a hospital's emergency ward. Grasp opportunity and get the best out of it. What you need is not healing, but divine health. What you need is a livelihood, and not a miracle. Miracles set the stones rolling but it takes a blessing to get life going.

Recall the story of Elijah and the widowed wife of the prophet? After she filled all the containers with the oil, she was instructed to go and sell the oil, pay her debtors, and live on the rest.

2 KINGS 4:7

She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

"... Live on what is left" does not mean spend the money. To me it means create a livelihood out of what is left. To create a livelihood could mean starting a business.

It Takes Focus

What is Focus?

Focus is the ability to adapt to the available level of illumination to be able to see clearly.

You will achieve your purpose if you maintain this kind of focus through the twist and turns. Maintain focus even in distracting environments regardless of the cost you have to pay. I am teaching on this topic because the ability to focus on one thing is one of the most important qualities for success in the pursuit of purpose. Focus is even more essential, considering the fact that we are born to pursue and fulfill various and different purposes under a heaven, where the conditions are never ideal. This truth will, therefore, help us to keep our

hearts and eyes on the goals of our lives, and not to be sidetracked by our ever present detractors and distractions.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12–19

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

(13) Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

(14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

(15) Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

(16) Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

(17) Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

(18) (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they

are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

(19) Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Once we are focused, nothing can stop us. Our detractors may be many but they are not powerful enough to stop our pursuit if only we can keep our eyes and hearts on the source of all strength – God.

Look around you, and consider any achiever around; you'll notice that they have focus. In the face of many contradictions and pain, they still kept their eyes on their goal. Their convictions about the goal urged them on. We must understand that focusing a camera in optimum light is not a difficult task. The challenge is when the level of illumination and stabilization diminishes, this is when a good camera and much expertise is required in order to be able to come up with a professional standard shot.

Under this heaven people who can adapt to situations and utilize the available resources are the ones who achieve their aim.

The Benefits of Focus

I. Focus Clarifies Vision

Focus generates clarity of vision, which strengthens our minds to endure. Whenever the lens of the camera is well focused, it achieves a sharp image without all the blurriness. In the same way, focus strengthens our minds to endure and fight forward. The Bible says that Christ had to focus to endure the cross and to despise the shame.

HEBREWS 12:1-2

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which doeth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

(2) Looking on to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the same, and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

From the Scriptures, we realize that focus bestows the ability to withstand and endure

trials and challenges. If we are also able to focus and concentrate all our efforts on the purpose of our lives, we shall be able to ignore all the beckonings of sin and fleshly appeals.

Beloved, whenever you become weary and faint in your mind, always recall that others who have attained similar results suffered but they emerged triumphant.

This text in Hebrews releases the key. It says that, “by steadfastly looking to the other achievers, we would be rejuvenated to press on”.

Christ's
persevering
obedience
of faith was
embedded in
His ability to
focus.

Successful people do not despond and sink under trials, nor do they fret and repine, but even in the dark moments of life, they bear up in faith and patience.

2. Focus Brings Concentration

Focus leads to concentration, which brings effectiveness. Although the rays of the sun scorch at noon when the sun shines in its

strength, focus generates concentration and concentration ignites fire. In elementary school, we were taught that if you focus the rays of the sun it will generate heat and even light a fire.

The same rays are shining everywhere and the world is not on fire, yet when the rays are focused, it creates fire. This is exactly what happens to our effort when we pursue our purpose with focus.

Although Nehemiah and the men were slaves, they could achieve so much in a short while because they always had just one thing on their minds. Until recently, I thought of Nehemiah as a great man of God who had all the power and resources with which to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem for God. But then, the Holy Ghost began to speak to me about him; that was when I realized that I am even better than he was, because he and all his men were slaves. Yet, he had one thing that I must also acquire – focus. Although he had to rebuild from rubbish and shambles, anytime he stood by the shambles and broken walls, he thought of only one thing – rebuild.

3. Focus Maintains Direction

The Apostle Paul also always had one thing on his mind. His testimony shows that he did only one thing. He clearly states that he forgot the things that are behind him, and presses on towards his goal. As he was subjected to his many trials, and though all that he suffered – fastings, hunger, shipwreck, flogging, nakedness, and near-death experiences, one thing kept him going; he had his eyes on the goal and mark set before him.

PHILIPPIANS 3:13–14

Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

(14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Je'-sus.

The one goal of his life kept him on course and directed. The overwhelming desire to reach forth unto his purpose for life kept him going. Be focused, and remember that God will never

bring us into a race if He won't be around to help us to run it.

Perceiving Distractions

As we pursue our vision, several elements in the environment will distract us. The enemy will try to use situations, people, and events to distract you. Exploring how he uses these things to fight us will help us react in the most appropriate way for victory.

People You Should Look Out For

Watch out for the following kinds of people;

1. People who wish they had what you have.
2. People who have lost what you are keeping
3. People who could be negatively affected if you are able to fulfill your purpose.
4. People who stand to benefit if you fail in your pursuit of the purpose.
5. People who are not ready to make the sacrifice that your pursuit might require of

them.

6. People who belong to a cartel that your persiut is attempting to break up.

Why Would Some People Try to Distract Us from Our Pursuit?

1. Because of envy and jealousy

Do not forget that there are people who wish they had what we have. Some of the people distracting you in the marital home are doing so because they wish they were also married. Sometimes, simply because they lost their marriages, they think yours should not work too. They envy you because they have lost what you are striving to keep. Envy and jealousy are the prime reasons for the operation of many detractors.

2. Because your vision affects them

If it is obvious that they would be affected by the fulfillment of your purpose, then they are

most likely to oppose it. Captors would always hate deliverers. It is obvious that the captor stands to gain a lot if the deliverer fails. He will, therefore, try every means possible to distract the deliverer. Bar-Jesus tried to distract the proconsul as the apostle Paul tried to preach to him, because of what he (Bar-Jesus) feared to lose.

ACT 13:4-12 DARBY

They therefore, having been sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and thence sailed away to Cyprus.

(5) *And being in Salamis, they announced the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also as their attendant.*

(6) *And having passed through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain man a magician, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus,*

(7) *who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. *He*, having called Barnabas and Saul to him, desired to hear the word of God.*

(8) *But Elymas the magician (for so his name is by interpretation) opposed them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith.*

(9) *But Saul, who also is Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixing his eyes upon him,*

(10) *said, O full of all deceit and all craft: son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness; wilt thou not cease perverting the right paths of the Lord?*

(11) *And now behold, the Lord's hand is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell upon him a mist and darkness; and going about he sought persons who should lead him by the hand.*

(12) *Then the proconsul, seeing what had happened, believed, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.*

Lord.

Bar—Jesus feared that if the proconsul stumbled upon the truth, he (the sorcerer) will lose his influence over such a great statesman.

3. Because your pursuit might require them to make certain sacrifices

A wife could distract her husband who wants to enter ministry, because she wants to have him all to herself. Such people are not ready

to make the sacrifices that the pursuit of that vision might demand. Peter tried to distract Jesus from dying because, perhaps, He could not afford to make the sacrifice of commitment. Peter was simply not ready to carry a cross and follow.

MATTHEW 16:21–25 DARBY

From that time Jesus began to shew to his disciples that he must go away to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised.

(22) And Peter taking him to him began to rebuke him, saying, God be favourable to thee, Lord; this shall in no wise be unto thee.

(23) But turning round, he said to Peter, Get away behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me, for thy mind is not on the things that are of God, but on the things that are of men.

(24) Then Jesus said to his disciples, If any one desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

(25) For whosoever shall desire to save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Be careful and vigilant, and check for possible

motives for which some people would try to dissuade you from pursuing the dream of your life. Fathers may convince their children to learn a trade rather than furthering their education, because they are not ready to pay school fees.

4. Because of selfishness

People who belong to a cartel that our vision attempts to break apart would try to distract us, because they want to protect their selfish interests. I have seen parents distract their own children in their matrimonial homes for a selfish gain.

Six Main Tools the Enemy Uses Against Us

We will understand this better if we study the book of Nehemiah to pick out the tools that were used against him. The main weapons used against us are quiet similar to those used in the days of Nehemiah. When Sanbalait and Tobiah rose against the pursuit of building the walls of Jerusalem, they used these subtle and

sophisticated weapons to fight them.

1. Ridicule and mockery

NEHEMIAH 2:17–20 DARBY

And I said to them, Ye see the distress that we are in, that Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

(18) *And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me; as also of the king's words which he had said unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. And they strengthened their hands for the good work .*

(19) *And Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobijah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it; and they mocked us and despised us, and said, What is this thing which ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

(20) *And I answered them, and said to them, The God of the heavens, he will prosper us, and we his servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.*

2. Indignation and anger

NEHEMIAH 4:1–2 DARBY

And it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we built the wall, he was angry and very indignant, and mocked the Jews.

And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? shall they be permitted to go on? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, when they are burned?

3. Misrepresentation and false witnessing

Some will try misrepresenting your motives for pursuing the vision. The brother of David did it to him and Nehemiah suffered the same.

NEHEMIAH 6:1–14 DARBY

And it came to pass when Sanballat, and Tobijah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had built the wall, and that there was no breach left in it (though at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates),

(2) that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, Come, let us meet together in the villages

in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

(3) And I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down.

Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?

(4) And they sent to me four times after this sort; and I answered them in the same manner.

(5) Then sent Sanballat his servant to me in this manner the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand,

(6) in which was written: It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel, for which cause thou buildest the wall, and according to these words thou wilt become their king.

(7) And thou hast also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning thee at Jerusalem saying, There is a king in Judah! And now it will be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

(8) And I sent to him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

(9) For they all would have made us afraid,

saying, Their hands shall be slackened from the work, that it be not carried out. —Now therefore strengthen my hands!

(10) And I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who had shut himself up. And he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple; for they are coming to kill thee; even in the night are they coming to kill thee.

(11) And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, could go into the temple, and live? I will not go in.

(12) And I perceived, and behold, God had not sent him; for he pronounced this prophecy against me; and Tobijah and Sanballat had hired him.

(13) Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have wherewith to spread an evil report, that they might reproach me.

(14) My God, remember Tobijah and Sanballat according to these their works, and also the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets who would have put me in fear.

4. Fear and terror

Many of your distracters would try to incite fear and terrify you. They know that fear would create doubt and work against faith. We are, however, told that we have not received fear to be timid but of love, power of a sound mind.

2 TITUS 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

I rebuke fear to loose its hold now! I see power entering into you now, receive a sound mind and walk in that grace, Amen!

5. False prophetic manipulation and occultism

NEHEMIAH 6:10–14 DARBY

And I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who had shut himself up. And he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple; for they are coming to kill thee; even in the night are they coming to kill thee.

(11) *And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, could go into the temple, and live? I will not go in.*

(12) *And I perceived, and behold, God had not sent him; for he pronounced this prophecy against me; and Tobijah and Sanballat had hired him.*

(13) *Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have wherewith to spread an evil report, that they might reproach me.*

(14) *My God, remember Tobijah and Sanballat according to these their works, and also the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets who would have put me in fear.*

6. Deceit and appeal of the wages of evil

Balaam was distracted with the reward of iniquity, he loved the reward that Balack promised him and he lost his wisdom.

2 PETER 2:15–16 DARBY

having left the straight way they have gone astray, having followed in the path of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness;

(16) *but had reproof of his own wickedness—the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbad the folly of the prophet.*

Situations that Could Distract You

I. The pomp and pageantry of the world outside your world

Inasmuch as we, as Christians, think the carnal world is a distraction, the devil also sees my preaching as a distraction to his agenda. Why? Because, we are moving in opposite directions. The devil knows that friendship with the world is enmity with God. It is more difficult to focus in this world today, than it used to be some years back. This is because there are many more beautiful things and the world is passing at a faster rate. Many good saints have neglected the course of the gospel because they loved the world.

2 TITUS 4:9–10 DARBY

Use diligence to come to me quickly;

(10) for Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present age, and is gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

Why did Demas forsake Paul? It is because he loved this present age. The appeal of this present age distracted him.

2. The pressure and the appeal of money

Money and her appeal is the greatest distraction in our day. I have actually come to know that people who love money lose all sensibility and conscience.

2 PETER 2:15–16

Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

(16) But was rebuked, for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

Remember that one eye cannot focus on two things concurrently. No man can serve two masters.

MATTHEW 6:24 DARBY

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and will love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

- 3. Our own flesh and its lusts**
- 4. The politics and sociology**
- 5. Disasters and difficult moments**

How to Focus

As I have said already, maintaining your focus on the goals of your life is one thing that ensures that you get the directions right. Throughout the history of man, it has always been needful to maintain our focus.

Remember the episode on the wilderness when Israel suffered the sight and venom of snakes. It was only the man who could look up to the brass serpent that lived. Israel, on that day needed to keep their vision and focus on the

brass serpent. Is it any different today? No it isn't! In today's world of both political and economic instability, it is clear that just as the brass serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so has the Son of Man been lifted up.

JOHN 3:13-16 NKJV

“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

(14) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

(15) “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

(16) “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Any man who is able to look unto the Son of Man shall live and not perish. This is the fact that is reiterated by the writer of Hebrews, admonishing us to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Beloved, if only we can look up to Jesus, we shall be strengthened in our minds against all the odds of this life.

While we look to and focus our attention on Christ, then shall we be able to walk in the midst of the storm. Do you remember the incidence of Peter walking on the sea? As long as his eyes were on Christ and not on the storms, he kept walking on the sea, but immediately he lost his focus on the man who bid him come, he feared, and began to sink. Peter sunk because he doubted, and he doubted because he could not keep focus. If we shall survive the journey through the storm, then we must focus on our goal.

It is not enough, however, to just tell you to focus. I must also teach you how to keep focus. Keeping focus depends on your (1) objectives and (2) convictions.

1. Set Clear Objectives.

Most importantly, we can maintain our focus when we know exactly what we are aiming at. No photographer, (even the experts) can focus the lenses of their camera, when the object they need to capture is not clearly defined. We can only focus when we know what we seek to

capture. There may be so many objects around me, but if I intend to focus then I must define my target. So, focusing is all about objective; what may be an obstruction to you might be someone else's target. It is, therefore, important to set a clear target.

Until we clearly know what we seek to achieve; we will be unable to focus. Jesus knew exactly why He had come to planet earth. And remember that your objective must be S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound)

2. Have Strong Convictions About Your Objectives

This is the most important factor that will enable us focus on our purpose. In fact, I have friends who are lawyers, engineers, doctors, etc. who are soundly succeeding financially in their chosen careers. Now, while each of them works they are focussed. I must also be able to focus on my goal as a pastor, if I want to achieve my purpose.

One thing that has kept me focused all these

years is the convictions I have about what I am doing. I am fully persuaded that it is worth it to put my whole life into it. I am fully persuaded that what I am using my life for is worth it. I am convinced that the reward that my Lord has prepared in store for me is the best I could achieve for any worthy work. This conviction is what keeps me focusing on my goal. Through all the changing scenes of life, I have kept my focus. Conviction is the main things.

Conviction is not about creating a phantom believe and trust, but it is created in us by the Holy Spirit as He bears witness with our spirits. As I read through the passages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit ministers to me about those who excelled, and showed me how they maintained their focus and conviction.

Daniel

Although he came to Babylon as a boy, he had a strong conviction about who he was. He knew that he was only labelled as a slave, but in fact, he was of the king's seed. Changing his name did not affect his self-image. He knew who he was and was guided by that.

Joseph

Although he came to Egypt as boy, sold as a slave, he had convictions, that being called a slave was only a label. He knew that God has made him a king. His dreams strengthened his convictions and through all the moments of glory as an overseer of Potiphar's house, to the moments of glory in the prison because of the false accusation of Potiphar's wife, he still remained resolute and focused. He knew that he will surely rule. He was so focused that not even the advances of his master's wife would make him bend.

Nehemiah

He was so much convicted about completing the wall that nothing could shift his focus. Nothing could stop this slave. Just one thing was on his mind, to arise and build. He came on the king's permission to build, and nothing else could get his attention.

Beloved, time and space would not allow me but countless men of faith have shown how their convictions strengthened their focus.

3. Believe in the Pay off

One of the main ways to maintain focus in distracting environments is to be convinced about the value of the pay off. It helps you to ignore the appeals of the distractions. If, for instance, a young woman wants to become a lawyer or a doctor in the future, she must believe in the pay off so much that she can ignore the appeals of sin and other teenage nonsense.

Until we have an overwhelming faith in the payoff of our purpose, we cannot maintain our focus. Christ could endure the contradiction of sinners because He saw the joy that was set before Him, He believed in it and was determined to grasp it. The Bible says that He endure because he wanted to see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

I must believe in the result of being a faithful husband if I want to be able to ignore the appeal of a strange woman. We have all started a journey, we are pursuing a purpose, but we can only end well if we see the end and are overwhelmed by the desire to possess it.

4. Differentiate Between a Call to Attention and a Distraction

Use the power of perception to tell the difference between a call of attention and a distraction.

This means we must be able to read the times. We have already discussed the ways of keeping focus in a distracting environment. It is, therefore, important that we are able to decipher the different voices and beckonings we encounter. This is because, as we set our hearts to pursue a purpose, so many voices will try to get our attention. To some of the voices we must pay heed, but to others, we must ignore. The greatest tool, needful to achieve this is perception. I have already told you how Sanbalat and Tobiah sent false prophet and prophetess to convince Nehemiah to run off from the project. This great man of faith could only maintain his focus through all these distractions because he had the right sense of perception.

Many young Christians have been abused and used because of lack of perception. Some were

unable to tell out the defference between a sexual advance and a genuine show of care. They ended up sexually abused and used.

As Peter walked through the storm, he needed to understand that, the man who told him to come was well aware of the storm, and had more than adequately provided for his safety. He did not perceive that the storm was nothing compared to the word which said “come”. Jesus had a strong sense of perception. Even though Peter had just spoken by a revelation of the Father, He was able to identify the voice of Satan when Peter tried to persuade Him not to die.

Sadly, Israel could not keep their focus, because she could not perceive the voice of Satan. Jezebel, the prophetess, and Balaam, the prophet, were able to use sorcery to derail them from their purpose. They sinned and went astray after other gods, all because they lacked perception.

5. Believe in Your Own Uniqueness as a Person.

I have come to understand that each person that is born to plant earth has a unique destiny. Even every identical twins do not share the same destiny. This is one thing that Christ knew that made Him stay focussed. I remember one day, when His brothers wanted Him to go to Jerusalem and show that He was the messiah. See His reply to them in John 7: 1 -9)

Noticed that after He had said this, He abode in Galilee but His brethren went. He did not go just because everyone else was going, not even the persuasions of His brothers could make Him go. He was focussed. He would not be distracted. He went only when He percieved that it was time to go.

6. Make up Your Mind

Make up your mind concerning what you seek to achieve. The task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem progressed because the people had the mind to work. They were decided and would not be stopped.

NEHEMIAH 4:6

So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had the mind to work.

Ruth could not be distracted concerning her decision to follow Naomi because her mind was made up. Naomi rescinded her decision to convince her when she saw that her mind was made up.

RUTH 1:18

When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

Many of our distracters would stay away when they see how determined we are to pursue our course. If I were asked how we could pursue our purpose in a distractive environment, I would just say, Focus! Focus!! Focus!!! That is all about it. Focus!

The Dangers of Losing Focus

There are very serious repercussions of losing focus. Many have paid dearly for losing focus,

and we must do all in our power to maintain our focus.

1. Stagnation and Death

All that Lot's wife needed in order to make it on her journey to Zoar was focus. She disobeyed God's only instruction to them not to look back. She was distracted and could not get to safety because she had not learned the secret of looking straight ahead. She could not just ignore the wealth that burned in Sodom. She turned back in her heart, and turned in her body too.

Beloved, we have been warned by Christ to always remember Lot's wife. This is our time and the moment to keep our eyes on our goals.

LUKE 17:32

Remember Lot's wife

2. Becoming Weary and Fainting in Your Mind

HEBREWS 12:3

Consider him that endureth such contradiction

of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your mind.

3. Failure and Poverty

PROVERBS 28:19

He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain person shall have poverty enough

PROVERBS 12:11 NKJV

He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread, But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding.

If we shall be able to finish our course and be able to achieve the things we set our hearts to do, then we need to focus our attention on Jesus. Recall again how on the wilderness, all that could save Israel from the venom of the fiery serpents was their ability to focus their attention on the brass serpent that was mounted up by Moses. We must lift up our eyes to the gracious Lord who was lifted up just as Moses lifted up the serpent.

We would waste our energy if we keep worrying

about the things that go on around us. We should just keep our focus on the man who hanged on the tree. For He has said that;

JOHN 3:14-15

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up:

(15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life:

As we run the race of life, let us keep focus. Know where we are going, and be sure it is the right place to go and keep going. We would surely get there. It is my prayer that the Lord shall help you to focus as you rise to the task of your life and build.

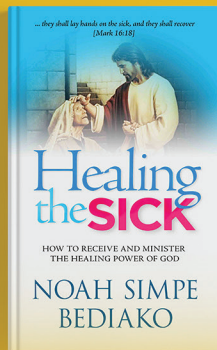
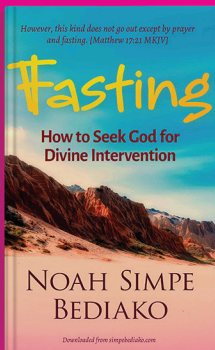
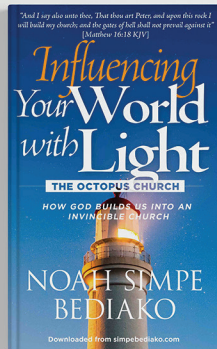
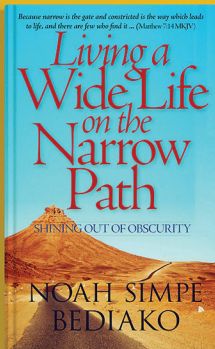
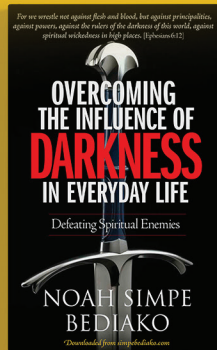
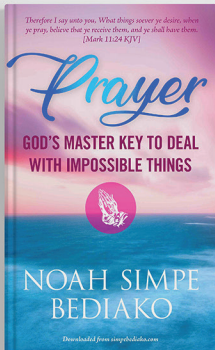
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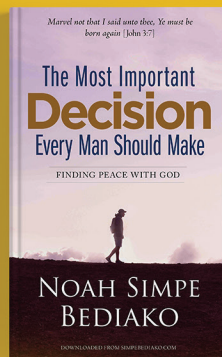
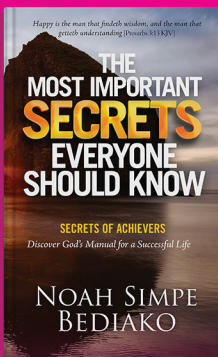
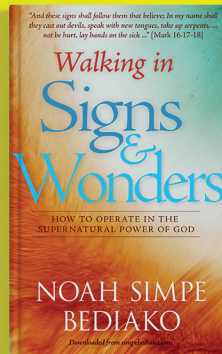
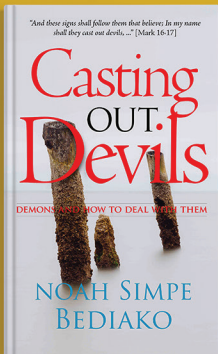
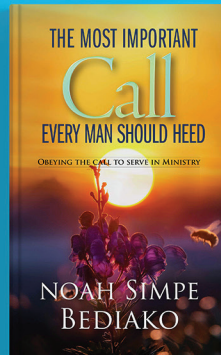
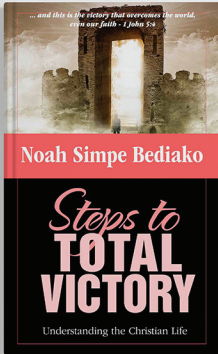
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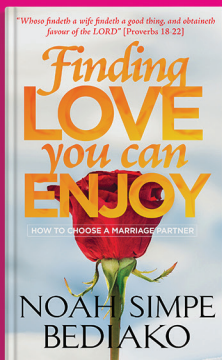
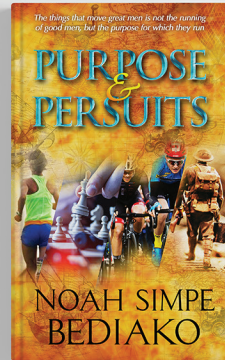
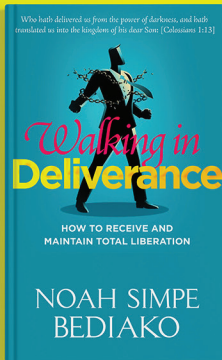
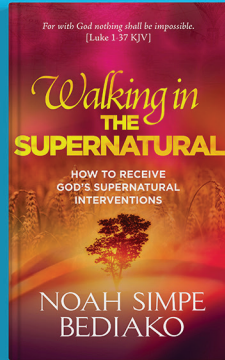
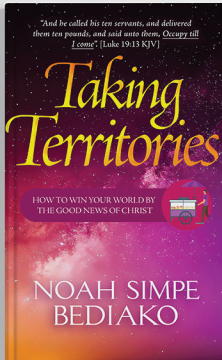
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PURPOSE & PURSUITS

Achievers commit themselves to pursue a course of action to the desired end through the power of decision and determination. After they have determine their goals and are convinced about them, they focus all their attention and strength on the desired end; *“In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury”* (Proverbs 14:24)

Because there is profit in all labour, the time invested in reading this book is never wasted. It is an investment that will bear the necessary fruits in the long run. As you read this book, remember that there is profit in all labour.

“Pursue with purpose, power, passion and wisdom for direction. Because wisdom is profitable for directing”

The Author

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