

Foreword by Edwin Offei-Danquah

# VESSELS

*Are you fit for the master's  
use?*

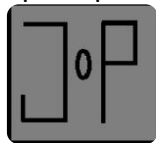
Jeffery Opoku

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Jeffery opoku

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Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the bible.

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**I dedicate this book To the Sweet Holy Spirit of God**

I thank you for your immense help and support. You've always been there for me. You are such a wonderful friend and companion.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**F**irst and foremost, I express my profound gratitude and appreciation to my very good friend and companion, The Sweet Holy Spirit Of God for being there for me throughout all my years in this life. Without Him, this book never would have been written. He is the cause of this wonderful work and I give him all the praise.

I am also very much grateful to my mentor, the second person of the trinity, JESUS CHRIST, for His love for you and me. You and I are nothing without Him.

Also, to the Final Authority, and the Creator of the universe, YAHWEH, I say thank You. I shall forever adore and worship You.

I can never proceed with this wonderful work without expressing my earnest indebtedness to my beloved father, Rev. Dr. Wisdom Kpehor, for his prodigious support. In fact, he has contributed a lot to what I am today. Truly, you are a great father. I could not have accomplished such an undertaking without you by my side. You have being a wonderful father to me all these years and personally, I believe your kinds here on earth are very few. No doubt about that.

And to the first woman I ever loved, my beloved mother, Mrs Georgina Dadzie, I say thank you. Without the help of God through you, I would never have been in the position to write a book as this. You are actually the one who taught my infant lips to pray and to love God's Holy Book and day. It is by your example that I learnt how to surrender my knees to the ground in absolute submission to the Triune God. I am forever grateful to you.

And to all who helped in making this book a success, I say thank you.

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## **PREFACE**

**T**here are many books and teachings on the anointing today with very little being said on character. This book is therefore written with deep insight from God's word to enlighten believers and the entire Body of Christ on the importance of character and its necessity in the life of every son or daughter of heaven.

This is especially because God is not after a people that can only manifest his power. He is after those that will exhibit His manner of life. He is after a people that will seek his face and not just his hands . . . He is after a people of character and not of power.

Character is the secret behind the success we see in Jesus' ministry. It was what made Him accomplish and sustain his mission here on earth. From the moment He was baptized by John to the day He ascended up on High, it was his character that sustained Him. I believe the church needs more enlightenment with regard to this topic but hardly do we find one.

The rareness of this topic in the body of Christ and its negligence by the pulpit is what has motivated me to frame this design. I pray this book will be a blessing to you.

Before you begin reading this book, I want you to pray and ask God for protection and guidance. Ask Him to confirm to you what is true and also to deliver you from any mistake I have made.

I will also plead with you not to take anything written in this book at face value. I want you to question its contents and to analyze it carefully in the light of the scriptures before assimilating its fact.

My prayer for you as you read this book is that your eyes may be opened to know what Christ expects of His Church and His vessels at this time and age.

It is my greatest wish that as you read this book, you become a vessel unto honor fit and sanctified for the master's use. All thanks and glory be unto God and our Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever. Amen.

Jeffery Opoku.



## **FOREWORD BY EDWIN OFFEI-DANQUAH**

Jeffery Opoku is a venerable giant in the field of basic rubrics in Christianity enlightening us over the years regarding the moral sensitivity, leadership ability and overall growth concerned with the Christian. His newest masterpiece “The Vessel” is a treasure for pastors, evangelists, deacons, church leaders and all the like who are in the business of working for the kingdom of God. This book integrates insights regarding the conduct of Christians with respect to the anointing (the oil) and how the Christian (the vessel) wielding such power, should conform to biblical standards. Jeff has the gift of making complex spiritual analogies accessible to the reader through his books.

Church leaders, upcoming Christian leaders and members of the body of Christ with the hunger and thirst for things pertaining to the Kingdom of God will find this book a gold mine as it takes time from chapter to chapter to dissect and to bring to light sensitive issues on the subject of the character of Christians and how important it is to God that we not only do His work but His will also.

In the first chapter of this book, “The Character and the Anointing”, Jeff establishes a relationship between the character which he calls the vessel and the anointing which he calls the oil. The most interesting fact is he uses his personal life experience as a baby Christian to teach us on the adverse effects of being ignorant of the fact that the anointing must be coupled with the right kind of character. The moral crusader, Brother Jeff, in chapter two of his book, describes the three influences of the anointing(oil) on the individual(vessel). He explains the verity that we are subject to these influences and relates it to a statement “without character desiring an anointing is calling for trouble”.

“Character: the prerequisite for ministry” is the focus of the third chapter. It emphasizes the view that, for a

Christian to be established in his ministry and in the body of Christ, character cannot be left out in his daily dealings. He explains that for our ministries as Christians to be fully successful, we need to meet these three criteria: wisdom, godly character and the ability to teach the Word. In Chapter four which is my favorite chapter, Master Jeff relates science to the word of God. This chapter captioned “Performing litmus test on vessels” shows that the people(vessels) around us should be tested as the bible said in 1 Timothy 3:10. The author outlines practical steps to prove the vessels around us in this chapter.

In the last chapter “Building a Strong Character”, the writer asserts the importance of building a strong character fit for the Master’s use. This incorporates the procedure to build such a strong character.

Jeff is a brother and spiritual mentor to me. I have been blessed immensely by this book and other writings of his. Character is a sure solid foundation for us as Christians. This book provides a road map of how to channel our efforts to all spheres of our lives to develop our character to prove ourselves worthy of our calling.

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## Chapter 1

### CHARACTER AND THE ANOINTING

The anointing and the presence of the Holy Spirit is a necessity in the life of every believer. This is due to the fact that it sharpens and equips us for a perfect, victorious and a glorious life in Christ. Without it, we believers are incapacitated and spiritually disabled. We are highly incompetent for any spiritual discipline without it. In fact, we are not too different from the outsiders without it.

That is why Samson told Delilah the prostitute on the very last occasion owing to the pressure given to him that, his strength would be gone from him and would become *as any other man*, the very moment the locks on his head are shaven.

Samson was a mortal man just like us and was even subject to like passion as we. There was nothing physically strange about Samson that any man lacked except for the fact that he was born a Nazarite, which was quite uncommon then and even now.

What distinguished Samson from the other sons of men was the fact that He had some kind of Supernatural aura, strength and force backing his life. This was what separated him from the other sons of mortals. The kind of strength and power he wielded was very uncommon to the men of his days.

That's why he could say, ". . . If I be shaven, I shall become weak and ***be like any other man.***"

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*"That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I [have been] a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: If i be shaven, then my strength will go from me, **and i shall become weak, and be like any [other] man.**" (Judges 16:17)*

The hair on Samson's head is just like the influence and the presence of the anointing and the Holy Spirit on the life of the present day believer. Therefore we like Samson can also say that without the Holy Spirit or the anointing, we are and will be like any other man.

This is because it is the anointing that defines our life and grants us empowerment as Christians. The day we will lose the Holy Spirit is the day we will lose power, strength, influence and intimacy with God. We will be like the ordinary man.

The church is even more or less a social gathering without the presence of the Holy Spirit. That's why King David was very strategic in his prayer to God after his fall by entreating God not to take His Holy Spirit away.

David in agony said: "Cast me not away from thy presence and **TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT AWAY FROM ME**" (Psalm 51:11).

David was very particular about this prayer because he knew the consequences of losing the Holy Spirit. He knew all that happened to Adam, Samson and even his predecessor - Saul - when they lost the influence of God's divine Spirit and was not ready the least to go through

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that ordeal. He happened to be a witness himself to how Saul was tormented day and night after the Spirit of God had left Him.

*“But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him (1 Sam. 16:14)”*

He also knew how Samson suffered affliction, torment and mockery after he had lost the source of his power – the locks of hair on his head. David was therefore distraught concerning his plea: he didn’t want to be a victim. You and I can’t also afford being a victim.

The anointing undeniably is very imperative in the life and ministry of every believer. The church can’t even do with its absence. Without it, there is no church, no power, no believer and no witness.

That’s why Jesus charged His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem but rather to wait for that promise of the father in sending down His Holy Spirit. Because He knew without His Holy Spirit, there will be no power available to them. They will be like ordinary men and will labor in vain to establish His Church.

*“But **YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and **UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH.**” (Acts 1:8)*

This tells us how superior, influential and powerful the anointing can be. But even with that, we see men like Samson and Saul messing up their lives.

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So my question here is why do some men and women of God with powerful anointing fall into scandalous sin and condemnation even when they have such powerful influence over their lives?

The problem, I know, is because such men and women lack character. They have not taken time and pain to develop a godly character.

We live in a generation and in a dispensation where believers have placed too much premium and importance on the anointing and the giftings of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing wrong with that. I love the anointing and I always thank God for it. But this is what we have to bear in mind: that no matter how anointed we may be, if we lack a strong, solid and a godly character to stiffen it up, we will only end up destroying ourselves. We will be messing up big time.

Samson for example fell, not because there was a problem with the anointing. He fell because he lacked the needed character of discipline, decency and obedience.

Many of the problems of believers have to do with a vessel problem and not a defect in oil. Our character is what determines the influence of the oil - the anointing - we carry. This makes the correlation between character and the anointing very strong.

Therefore, in desiring the anointing, the first thing we have to work on is our vessel by exercising ourselves first unto godliness. Because until we have taken the time and pain to develop a solid and a godly character, there is no way God will trust us with a serious anointing.

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In his book, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Peter Tan wrote: “The anointing that God puts on His servants is such a precious commodity that God expects consecration from His vessel before He puts it upon them.” He was making reference to character in that comment he made and it is very scriptural.

This makes character building a strategic and a stepping stone to unlimited access in the supernatural. But unfortunately, many folks see it not as so.

They are interested in the manifestations of the Spirit more than the fruits of the Spirit. The oil rather than the vessel. The mantle rather than the body (vessel). And of course charisma rather than character.

Many folks in Christendom today are too obsessed about the anointing. Some even leave the comfort of their homes to stay on mountains tops and in forests, seeking the face of God for it. Some can be there for as long as three to four or five years praying and seeking the face of God through fasting and thirsting for the anointing. They neither eat, bath nor pomade themselves. All they do is to holler in prayers from morning till evening expecting some supernatural power to fall on them.

They are all good and I write not condemn any. But the truth here is that, there is rather a diplomatic way of approaching such request and in doing so it necessitates that we do the first things first. Until we have done what is supposed to be done, there is no way we can be blessed with what we seek. But unfortunately, many folks don't understand it that way. They rather believe by fasting themselves to death and by being harsh on their body, they will receive some kind of “power.”

I attribute this ignorance to lack of Wisdom and also youthful exuberance.

**My own experience.**

I happen to be a victim myself. I fasted and waited on God for three good years expecting to receive some kind of anointing. I was only a secondary school student then. I would fast from 6:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the evening every day without even taking a sip of water.

All this while, I was also a nonresident student, I would journey all the way from my house to school spending hours in buses and several hours walking. I didn't know I was killing myself then.

Those days were my crazy moment as an adolescent believer. I was so desperate and thirsty for spiritual power. At some point in time, my own mother and sister even began to suspect me because I wouldn't even pomade nor comb my hair.

As a means of deterring me from that miserable lifestyle, there were even times she refused me money for school as I refused to take breakfast. She always gave me an option every morning to choose. That is either I will take a breakfast or will have no money for school. Anytime she proposed that option, I just ignored her and looked for money elsewhere and went. This was how stubborn I was. She would later suspect that I was an occultist.

I grew so lean and malnourished to the extent that, if you had known me before, you would begin to fear for me. You would either think I have been attacked by a deadly virus or was being abandoned to die.



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I was engaged with questions at every corner of the street both from relatives, friends and sympathizers. They asked me questions like, “Is there anything wrong with you? Are you sick? Why have you grown so lean?” and many others I don’t even want to mention.

My mother reported me to several elders and pastors but they all couldn’t convince me the least because I felt I knew what I was doing. I would listen to them all right but would later turn back living my old life.

I can remember vividly that one evening, my mother came back from a prayer retreat with bottled water in her hands which was so unusual of her. When I asked for its purpose, she told me it was given to her by a visiting prophet for her personal use. I believed her because she further explained to me that it was for a prophetic direction that came up.

Unknowingly, I was the cause of that water. She had told the prophet the problems she was having with me and as a remedy, the prophet gave her the bottled water. He told her to sprinkle it in my food anytime she cooks for me.

She was told by the prophet that I was under a strong occultic spirit and that the only way she could deliver me out was to be sprinkling the water in my food, which will expose and liberate me with time.

That couldn’t be by the spirit of God because it wasn’t true. I was only on fire for God. I wonder the spirit at work in that prophet then. If we were to be in the Old Testament era, he would have been stoned to death. I would have personally enforced that.

But then, I opened myself for all this to happen because I lacked wisdom then. However, as I began to mature in Christ, I realized I had it all wrong and was off at a different tangent.

God in His wisdom, who knows all the heart of men, knew I would have messed my life up had He given me that kind of power I was seeking. Perhaps, it could have infested me with pride as a young boy and would have shattered my ministry for good. I see that as a great deliverance from evil.

Moreover, I failed in doing the first things first. I was seeking for an oil without a vessel to contain it. I didn't know I was calling trouble for myself.

#### **Correlation between the vessel and the oil**

The word character is not often seen in scriptures. Most of the time, when we come across it, it points to a different connotation other than what we are looking at in the scope of this book.

Despite the scarceness of this word in the bible, it will intrigue you to know that it is given considerable attention in it. It is just that, the Bible speaks of it allegorically or figuratively.

One way it speaks of it is by referring to it as a vessel. It happens to be the main vessel that carries the oil: not the converse. (The oil also happens to be a symbol of the anointing.)

The correlation between the oil and the vessel is a mutual one in that they both benefit from each other.

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However, there are instances where they don't get on well with each other. They become harsh on themselves. When that happens, they are both ruined and wasted as the bible describes.

In one of Jesus' answers to the disciples of John and the Pharisees, He said, “. . . **NO MAN PUTTETH NEW WINE INTO OLD BOTTLES: ELSE THE NEW WINE DOTH BURST THE BOTTLES, AND THE WINE IS SPILLED, AND THE BOTTLES WILL BE MARRED: BUT NEW WINE MUST BE PUT INTO NEW BOTTLES.**” – (Mark 2:22).

In the above scripture, what Jesus was simply saying was that, an oil or wine has to be placed in its suitable or rightful vessel. The reason He gave was very simple: that is to avoid ruining the vessel and the subsequent spilling of the oil.

When an oil or wine is not put into its rightful vessel or bottle in the natural, it is likely to be spilled. This happens after it has ruined or marred the vessel like Jesus said.

The same way spiritually, we are likely to lose the oil (anointing) we carry if our character doesn't suit it. This is why we don't have to despise character. Because it has such a great influence on the oil.

Many young ministers today have either despised, rejected or are ignorant of the impact their character have on the anointing they carry. They care less how they live their life as long as the anointing still flows. They see nothing wrong with themselves fornicating or committing adultery, as long as they can still give a word of knowledge, wisdom, and can discern the spirit behind every manifestation.

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I once heard a prophet say to a bartender, “Don’t look at what I do. When the time comes for me to drink, I drink, referring to alcohol, and when it is time to prophesy, I prophesy.” This is amazing. Isn’t it?

At one time also, I heard one evangelist say that he visits the night club every Saturday evening to see what goes on there for himself. I wouldn’t even have been much bothered supposing he had said, he went there once. But he said emphatically, “I go there *every* Saturday evening only to see what happens in the house of Satan.”

“I never knew Satan’s house was that lively and refreshing” he continued preaching.

As I listened to him intently, I just said in my heart, “your own mouth has started betraying you.”

Just as Solomon asked, the question is, “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” or “Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?” The answer is a BIG NO. That man will either end up burning his clothes or bruising his feet.

Such always end up losing the anointing. They also end up ruining their lives and ministries.

How we live our lives as men and women of God is very important. It has an influence on the anointing and we shall be judged for it as well. We shall be judged for every single thing we do in and with our bodies.

This is why we have to be selective in the type of music we listen to, the places we visit, the companies we keep, and most importantly, the character we present or put up. Because it can either make us or unmake us.

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But unfortunately, many Christian folks don't understand and see it that way. Once they are anointed, they care less what happens to their body or what they do with their body and therefore get into error. Hardly do they know that what is done with the body is as important as what is done with the anointing. Because we shall equally account for them as we will do for the anointing.

The Apostle Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthian church wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; THAT EVERY ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS **[DONE] IN [HIS] BODY**, according to that he hath done, WHETHER [IT BE] GOOD OR BAD." We have an account to give for every single thing that happens to our body.

Just as we expect God to supernaturally anoint us, He also expects consecration from us. One way we can do that is by exercising ourselves unto godliness just as Apostle Paul wrote to Pastor Timothy.

Character does not come with the anointing package. It is something we have to develop ourselves just like Paul said, ". . . exercise yourself. . ." We are to exercise ourselves in it.

God for example, gave Adam many things including a garden, a wife, a congregation of wild lives, trees and other stuffs which in this particular context can be portrayed symbolically as the anointing.

On the day of his inauguration as the Senior Pastor of Eden, he was commissioned by the General Overseer-Jehovah- to have all the created things under subjection and to bear rule over them. (Gen.1:28). More

importantly, He was also told to *work, dress and to keep the garden (his church)*. God presented to him the dos and don'ts of that garden.

***"And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden TO DRESS IT AND TO KEEP IT. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden THOU MAYEST FREELY EAT: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."***  
**(Genesis 2:15-17)**

Just as seen in the Scripture above, God told Adam to *dress and keep* the garden.

Adam truly fulfilled the ministry of the garden dressing. He did that by naming the animals, feeding them with food, trimming the bushes and the herbs, nourishing the weak creatures and by making sure, the rivers were flowing freely and stuff. Adam really worked and dressed the garden as the resident pastor of Eden.

He actually had no problem with that assignment because of the anointing he carried. He was supernaturally empowered by God to do that. Notice that God breathed into Adam in Genesis 2:7 and that was a form of supernatural and spiritual empowerment.

Adam depended on the anointing to work and dress the garden. The anointing and the Spirit he had made that very simple for him. But when it came to the ministry of keeping, he failed totally as the ordained pastor and

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shepherd of His local congregation. He couldn't subdue nor keep his church members under subjection. He gave names to all the animals including the serpent and the woman, but then he couldn't have them in subjection. He also pruned and dressed all the trees but also couldn't resist their temptations.

All these befell him because he lacked a vessel. Adam failed completely in the ministry of keeping because of his character. He couldn't have the woman and the serpent in subjection and ended up disobeying God. Adam messed up completely even though he carried divine inspiration.

What went wrong? Very simple. It all had to do with character. He lacked discipline and decency.

He had an anointing to work and dress the garden but then, he lacked the needed character to keep it. God only gave him the anointing but never included character. He made character an alternative for him.

You see, God is a perfect gentleman and never overrides our will. He allows us to decide for ourselves. He doesn't compel us to love Him, neither does he compel us to worship Him. He allows us to decide for ourselves.

This is what exactly transpired in the Eden. God gave Adam the liberty to make and take his own decisions. That is why God could say, "Of every tree of the garden **thou mayest freely eat**: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat** of it." In other words, God was telling Adam he was responsible for his own decision and actions because after all, the bible bears witness that: THE Heavens are His but **the Earth hath he given to the CHILDREN OF MEN.**

As seen in Genesis chapter 2:16, God said to Adam, “**thou mayest** freely eat . . . but of . . . **thou shalt** not eat.” The words **mayest** and **shalt** were used by God in telling Adam that he had a choice to make and that it was his alone. He was indirectly telling man that he could either decide to obey or disobey or also choose to be faithful or rebellious. It is quite amazing. He never imposed anything on Him when it came to the issue of decision making which happens to be an aspect of character.

Notice that when God said, “ . . . *thou mayest freely eat*”, it was different from his earlier statement to Adam which said, “**BE FRUITFUL, MULTIPLY, SUBDUE . . . AND HAVE DOMINION**”. Clearly, we can see that the former looks like an advice while the latter undoubtedly appears to be a command.

In the former statement, all what God was saying was, over to you: possess your own vessel the way it pleases you. But at the end of the day, Adam portrayed a character and took a course that matched not with the anointing he carried and fell by losing everything.

Adam could dress the garden but then failed in keeping it. It was all because he lacked the character of decency and discipline.

Many preachers in our dispensation happen to be victims of this adamic plague: they are good in dressing and addressing people with the sweet fragrance of the oil they carry but when it comes to keeping and stabilizing them in Christ, they fail. It is so because they lack character.



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There are many pastors today who are very good in starting projects and churches but in the long run, they end up losing all that they've labored for.

With the anointing upon, they are able to make innovation and spark revolution but the absence of character alone kills everything.

As ministers of the gospel, our greatest focus should be in how best we can keep and not how we can dress.

We shouldn't only be known by the anointing we carry. We also have to make ourselves known by our character.

It is the anointing for example that makes a preacher attractive to a congregation but it takes character for the same congregation to approve him. It is just like a young man who feels attracted by a woman's beauty to marry her. After they've married, it takes the single factor of character to sustain the marriage covenant. Beauty doesn't sustain marriage; it is character that does. Other than that, the most beautiful women would have had the most stable marriages. But it doesn't always happen that way. We need the anointing and we also need character.

With the anointing, we show forth the power of Christ but with character, we showcase His pattern of life. The combination of the two will make us better people on earth. That was what made Jesus' ministry unique. He was a man of character and of power (dunamis and exousia). He knew when to walk on water and when to walk on land.

### **The Importance of the vessel to the oil**

As much as an oil or ointment is important in every household, the Holy Spirit and the anointing is also important in the life of every believer.

We discussed early on that the oil - anointing - and the vessel are involved in a mutual relationship. The vessel needs the oil and the oil needs the vessel. But in my own opinion, I believe the oil needs the vessel more. Because as a matter of fact, any vessel can be without liquid but hardly will any liquid exist by itself without a container to keep it.

Owing to this I shall seek to explain how important the vessel is to the oil.

From our knowledge of matter, we know that liquids have no definite or defined shape: they are free moving and unstable. They are very wild when left alone. They are only tamed and defined when they are inside a vessel.

Physically, liquids are shapeless: they have no shape. They only mimic the shape of their vessels or containers they are poured into. When a liquid for example is poured into a circular bowl, it appears circular and when it is also poured into a cylindrical container, it appears cylindrical. The shape they assume is dependent on the shape of their vessel.

Liquids are not very stable. We can verify this by pouring a sample of liquid-water- on the ground and observing its motion thereof. We will notice that they all move in different directions creating different branches and heads not knowing exactly where they are flowing to. They are undefined and very unstable.

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That's why when someone really wants to leave you with a curse; he does so by pronouncing this unique feature of liquid, specifically water, upon you – the curse of instability.

Reuben - the first born son of Jacob - was a victim of such pronouncement. The pronouncement upon Reuben can be analyzed in two different perspectives. That is either as a curse or as a word of caution.

I want us to briefly consider it because it has a lot to say to us especially under this particular context.

Jacob said to Reuben: "Reuben, thou [art] my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: **UNSTABLE AS WATER**, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou [it]: he went up to my couch."

Jacob pronounced this curse as some would say on Reuben due to the grudge he was harboring in his heart against him: Reuben went to bed with one of his concubines, Bilhah.

When analyzed in that direction, all Jacob was saying to Reuben was, "Reuben, just like the instability and unsteadiness of water by itself, you will not excel." Of course this sounds like a curse.

But looking at this pronouncement again in a different sense, you will find it to be a word of caution and an advice, not a curse. What Jacob was implicitly saying to Reuben was, " Reuben, you are not too different from water in that, you allow your motives, feelings, temper

and its likes to warp your judgments, convictions, and actions: if you feel like having sex, you have it. If you also feel like insulting you insult. There is no self control in you just like how water by itself has no control. You have no visions and ambitions: you flow to where you so wish.”

The man of God went to say: “Reuben, if you continue to behave like water, which has no control by itself, you will not excel. If you continue to live your life without Jehovah - a life with no direction, you will not prevail.”

When the scripture is looked at this way, it becomes a word of caution and not a curse. And I strongly believe that this was what the man of God was really insinuating. Jacob was cautioning him, other than cursing him. Yes it is true that Reuben lost his birthright – a symbol of preeminence in power - to the sons of Joseph but that doesn’t mean he was cursed. Losing your position to a person of a lower rank at your work place doesn’t mean you’re cursed. Does it? No.

Notice what Jacob said to Reuben in Genesis chapter 49:3. He said, “Reuben, **thou [art] my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. . .**”

The Message Bible goes at it this way: “**Reuben, you're my firstborn, my strength, first proof of my manhood, at the top in honor and at the top in power . . .**”

What Jacob meant by this was, “Reuben, you are my first born and through you, I was made a man. In my weakness, you became my strength and in my failure, you showed up as my success. You are at the top in honor and at the top in power . . .”

Who is Jacob speaking to here? Is it not Reuben? He kept referring to him as his strength and the first proof of his manhood. If that was what Reuben was unto Jacob, then I personally don't think such a person deserves to be cursed. Jacob didn't curse him either.

When Jacob said, “. . . unstable as water thou shalt not excel”, he was rather cautioning other than cursing him. With regards to the incidence that had previously happened, all Jacob was saying to Reuben was, “Reuben, you could have chosen to resist the temptation of sleeping with my concubine. But because you lacked self-control *and stability like water*, you couldn't resist that temptation. You went right ahead and climbed my bed, defiling it. But if you continue in such unstable behaviors, ***thou shalt not excel.***” As simple as that. Isn't this the best advice a father can ever give to a backslidden son?

But whichever way we look at this pronouncement, what really matters to us in this particular context is the phrase, “UNSTABLE AS WATER.”

Like many liquids, water is very shapeless, unstable, and undefined. The Oil – a symbol of the anointing – operates in like manner. It is very unstable, undefined, and of indeterminate dimension. Once it comes upon the head, it flows where it wills. ***“It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, [even] Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments”*** (Psalm 133:2).

The anointing just like water is unstable. It only becomes stable when it is put in a vessel - a godly individual or a person of character. Character is what shapes and molds the anointing. It makes the anointing more stable and

defined. The oil (anointing) can't exist by itself. It needs a vessel. Without a vessel, it is unstable and unsteady. So in a nutshell, what a vessel does to an oil is that it molds it. Under this context, it means, character molds the anointing.

Also, one thing a good and available vessel does to an oil is that, it multiplies it. We can verify this in 2 Kings Chapter 4:1-7. A woman who happened to be a wife of one of the sons of the prophet lost her husband. The creditor came in to take her two sons to be bondmen because of the outstanding debt left behind by her dead husband. After crying to Elisha for help, Elisha asked, "What can I do for thee? What have thou?"

**"A pot of oil"**, said the woman.

What the Prophet Elisha then said was, ". . . **Go, borrow the vessels** abroad of all thy neighbours." The woman obeyed and did exactly what the prophet told her to do. Miraculously, what followed afterwards was a multiplication of oil. That indeed was supernatural. No doubt about that. However, it has a lot to say in the natural. That is, without a vessel, the oil is subject to its original quantity and level. It cannot multiply by itself. A good vessel will breed extra oil with the least oil put into it. It might not be true in the physical but spiritually, I can assure you that it holds. It also works perfectly for the human vessel and his oil (anointing).

The oil is very dependent on the vessel for multiplication. As the oil finds enough space in the vessel, it will multiply to fill any vacuum. If there is little or no space for it to multiply, it stops flowing. Notice what happened to the widow's vessels when they became full; the oil stopped flowing.

**“AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE VESSELS WERE FULL,** that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, [There is] not a vessel more. And **THE OIL STAYED.**” – (2 Kings 4:6)

The Good News Translations of the Bible says, **“WHEN THEY HAD FILLED ALL THE JARS,** she asked if there were any more, “That was the last one,” one of her sons answered. And **THE OLIVE OIL STOPPED FLOWING.”**

This simply tells us that when we become so full of ourselves, then is no way we can receive more of God.

Another importance of a vessel to an oil is that, it contributes to its weight. Oil by itself is light and weightless. Much of its weight is dependent on the vessel that contains it.

The oil can be very little, small or light but when it is poured into a heavy vessel or container, it assumes the same weight and receives equal glory as the vessel. I once considered two equal liquids of the same amount that is 500 milliliters. The liquids were the same in quantity and type. They also weighed the same. But after pouring them into different vessels or containers and considering their net weight, I noticed an increase but complete change in their respective weight: one weighed more than the other. It was then that I realized that, one was in a metal bottle whilst the other was in a mere plastic container. The two different vessels redefined the weight of my liquid and made them look as though they weren't the same but they were.

## VESSELS: ARE YOU FIT FOR THE MASTERS USE

It is the same with character and the anointing. The kind of vessel we possess adds to the weight of the oil we carry.

Right from church history, we see that folks carry the same and equal anointing to function in the same office but then the impact of their works were very different. The secret is simply the vessel behind the oil.

Seven men - deacons - for example were chosen by the Apostle to oversee the affairs of the table. They were all prayed for by the Apostle. They equally received laying on of hands by the same Apostle. But among these seven, only two were seen making mind-boggling impact. They were Stephen and Philip: Stephen became a great miracle worker while Philip became a revivalist. Do you know the secret? The secret is simply the vessel that stands behind the oil. It redefines the oil by fellowshipping with it

So you see, operating in the same office, gift or ministry does not guarantee an equal impact. It is a matter of the vessel – the person – that stands behind the gift.

Advancing, it is imperative to know that, a good vessel protects and preserves the oil. It protects the oil from defilement, corruption and unwholesome attack. Its absence opens up the oil to corruption.

The absence of the fruits of the Spirit in most ministers is the reason for them being morally, financially and verbally corrupt. These men and women are powerfully anointed but then they lack character. They often fall prey to the attacks of the Devil.



## *Character and the anointing*

This is where many ministers of the Gospel miss it. They think by reason of the anointing they carry, they automatically escape the attacks of the Devil. This is not true at all neither is it scriptural. The devil the Bible makes mention of, is a man attracted to the anointing. He is not moved by the anointing, neither is he moved by the grace or power we carry. He is ever ready to attack, accuse and oppose when he sees us with the anointing. He has no respect for the Oil or for Divine Protocol and the reason is very simple.

He himself used to be very anointed: he was the most anointed, perfect and powerful of all creatures. This man carried so great an anointing to the extent that, he could even move up and down in the midst of stones of fire. He was ordained and anointed as the mighty angelic guardian. The Bible bears record that, he was wiser than Daniel and nothing could be hidden from him.

***“Behold, thou [art] wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone [was] thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou [art] the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee [so]: thou wast upon the***

***holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.” (Ezekiel 28:3-4)***

The Amplified Version in verse 12 of Ezekiel chapter 28 describes him as the full measure and pattern of exactness giving the finishing touch to all that constitutes completeness.

So you see, he once used to be a powerful and anointed man of God. He is thereby not moved by the virtue we have. He has no respect for them at all.

If he is to be a respecter of the anointing, he wouldn't have thought of attacking the Messiah – meaning the anointed one – in the wilderness and tempting Him.

***“And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God. . .” – (Matthew 4:3).***

If he is to be respecter of the anointing, he wouldn't have also thought of fighting the Archangel Michael and his team with his team.

***“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.”- (Revelation 12:7)***

And above all, if Lucifer was to be a respecter of power and Divine protocol, he wouldn't have thought of dethroning God.

***“. . . I will sit also upon the mount of congregation . . . I will be like the most High.” - (Isaiah 14:13-14)***

## *Character and the anointing*

The devil is a rebel and has no respect for spiritual authority. That is why we will be making great mistakes if we think the anointing will cause us to escape his attacks. Because he is ever ready to attack those with power – the anointing – than those without it.

What stills him is the Blood of Jesus, the Name of Jesus, the Word and other divine elements. Aside these, he is threatened by class of men and women of God with character who can wonderfully exhibit the fruits of the Spirit (the recreated human Spirit).

Saul for example made several attempt on David's life to kill him. His reason was because he was anointed to take his place (1 Samuel 24:40). He kept pursuing after the young man David and it was all because of the Kingly Anointing he carried. But notice that throughout this pursuit, the only occasion that made Saul fear David was when he saw him in full demonstration of discipline and decency – the character of his success.

**"WHEREFORE WHEN SAUL SAW THAT HE BEHAVED HIMSELF VERY WISELY, HE WAS AFRAID OF HIM."** – (1 Samuel 18:15)

So you see, Saul's attack on David was as a result of the anointing but his greatest fear was because he saw his character. This is what I simply mean when I say character preserves the anointing.

The manifestation of a godly character – the fruits of the spirit - does not only scare the devil but it also provokes God to show us His salvation. Psalm 50:23 says, ***"Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God."***(NKJV)

Therefore, to put the devil to fear and to engage the salvation of God, every child of God should endeavor to build up a godly character. It will preserve and protect the anointing – the sweet divine fragrance of God.

In this end time, the devil is on the loose. He is after ministers to destroy particularly those that lack character. He himself happens to be a monster today because he lacked character and seeks to make the monster out of people. Dear friends, we can resist him by exercising ourselves rather unto godliness.

**WATCH OUT! CHILD OF GOD.**

#### **Reaction between the vessel and the oil**

Often times, when edible stuffs are packaged in tins, containers, or disposable bags, certain chemical and physical reactions take place. These reactions can either be favorable or unfavorable. It is the cause of food poisoning in many instances: the chemicals in the vessels like tin, sachet, or plastic container sometimes migrates or leaks into the food contaminating it.

Plastics vessels or containers like Polyethene and polystyrene are capable of causing food poisoning when hot meals are served in it. Such plastics are highly dependent on heat and have weak forces – Van der Waal forces- holding their inter chain together which easily break on heating and hardens on cooling. By such chemical behavior, they end up releasing toxin into food.

In the storage of natural and physical oil for instance too, it is best and safe to use stainless steel or dark glass with tight lids. Using reactive metals like copper or iron to store oil can cause potential chemical reaction and

## *Character and the anointing*

thereby makes the oil unsafe or corrupt. Wow! I still remember my high school chemistry.

Just like the natural vessels or containers we know to sometimes react with contents put into it, the anointing also reacts with the vessel it comes into contact with. Like I said early on, this reaction can either be favorable or unfavorable. It can either corrupt the anointing or add to its efficacy.

Note that it doesn't take a person's whole personality to corrupt or defile the oil upon his or her life. Just a single manifestation of character can corrupt the anointing. It does so by violently and turbulently reacting with the oil. Galatians 5:9 says, "***a little leaven leaveneth the whole lamp***"

We also read in Ecclesiastes 10:1 that, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: [***so doth***] ***a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom [and] honour.***"

This exactly was what happened to Lucifer: he lost his perfection because of his iniquity (pride).

***"Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."*** (Ezekiel 28:17).

In Ecclesiastes 10:1, we see that FOLLY AND DEAD FLIES - a symbol of corruptness in character - does not only corrupt the anointing but it also, changes the sweet fragrance of the oil. It causes it to send forth a stinking savour or odor.

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*Dead flies* in that particular scripture may represent ungodliness in character, and the *ointment of the perfumer* as the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The scripture will therefore read, “An ungodly character causes the anointing of the Holy Spirit to send forth a stinking odor.”

When the vessel is proud and promiscuous, it has an impact of the oil and when it is also humble and holy, it has an impact on the oil. The former corrupts and defiles the oil causing it to send forth a stinking smell whilst the latter enhances and beautifies the anointing.

## **Chapter 2**

### **THREE INFLUENCES THE OIL HAS ON THE VESSEL**

**A**nytime the word ‘anointing’ is made mention of, what immediately comes into mind is the release of power and authority. It is very natural. That is how most of us see it to be. It is true however.

We see it as all that is needed to have a calm and a stable life and ministry. We see it as a tranquilizer that is able to save men from certain depression and frustration both in life and in ministry. It is very true and I’m even tempted to say it is scriptural. Of course, even Bible and history attests to that. There are countless incidents in the bible where we see the anointing operating fully in the positive power dimension.

But there were times also in the Bible including church history that the anointing was seen inviting troubles to visit the vessels upon which they were resting. This time it wasn’t operating only in the positive power dimension. It operated otherwise and created problems for the vessel.

The anointing we receive from God is dual in its operation. It can bring us relief as well as stress. It can also make us as well as unmake us. It can transform our lives and it can deform them as well.

Depending on the vessel, it can either be a blessing or a burden. It is all dependent on the character and personality of the vessel that operates it (Without character, desiring an anointing is like calling for trouble).

But irrespective of character, there are three basic troubles the anointing is likely to call for every vessel that

operates it. Like I said, these troubles are irrespective of character but then it takes character to deal with them.

No matter who you are, I repeat, no matter who you are, once the anointing touches your head, there are three troubles it is likely to call for you. Irrespective of who you are, it will come. Even Jesus had them to battle with.

The anointing will call for the trouble but then it takes character to overcome such troubles.

Aside the anointing empowering us to fulfill our ministry and destiny, there are three things it is likely to do to us (that is to the vessel that carries it).

I am not trying to discourage you from desiring the anointing. I only want to inform you more on it. And I have devoted this whole chapter to do just that.

With the anointing,

- a) You are opened up for attacks, temptations and scrutiny by both men and the devil
- b) There is a temptation to be proud.
- c) There is a temptation to misuse power.

**You are opened up for attack.**

Just like explained in the previous chapter, Lucifer is known for his attack on God's anointed. He is warned not to touch them but he attacks them.

The devil does not attack anything. His targets are men and women of reputation, power, influence, affluence, beauty, charisma and so on. I hardly see him in scriptures



*three influences the oil has on the vessel*

after the oppressed, the sick and the poor. Perhaps, those are his end products so to speak.

His attacks on men are for the fulfillment of his three fold ministry: that is to steal, to kill and to destroy.

He has nothing to steal from the poor and nothing more to do to the dead. He seeks to fulfill his bloody ministry only on the rich, the healthy, the living and more especially the anointed of God who are a threat to his kingdom.

In the natural for example, I have never seen a robber in his right senses after the poor. He only targets those rich folks who have money to bury in the earth. They are also after the magnificent buildings in the city to rob and not after “summer hats” and wooden structures along the highway from Cape Coast to Accra.

It is also the same with the devil. He is after the most influential, powerful, and anointed. Your name becomes automatically shortlisted in his files once he spots you with power. At the least drop of oil on your head, he is ready to attack you.

He has been an attacker right from the pre-adamic age. According to scripture, all his attacks were on mighty men and women of God. He either attacked them himself or through men.

The people of God - the Israelites - fell victim to one of such attacks of the devil in the wilderness. The reason for such attack was because they carried supernatural strength and were a threat to Moab – a type of Satan’s kingdom.

Notice that he didn't attack them personally. He did it through a heathen king called Balak – the king of the Moabites. What Balak did was to hire a prophet of God against them to curse them.

*“And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan [by] Jericho. **And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they [were] many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all [that are] round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor [was] king of the Moabites at that time. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which [is] by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: **Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they [are] too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, [that] we may smite them, and [that] I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest [is] blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.**”***

(Numbers 22:1-6)

This is how tactical and strategic the devil can be. When it comes to him attacking you, he is ready to hire prophets - servants of God as yourself- against you.

Another mighty general that fell victim to the attack of the enemy owing to his status in life was Job. The devil attacked and killed all his children including his livestock. He also destroyed all his assets and left him stricken with boils. The reason he eyed Job was simple: he was divinely blessed and protected.

For Job, the devil attacked him personally. The purpose of that attack was to get him cursing God which he never did. After the Devil himself has tried and failed, he began to attack him through his own wife. *“Then said his wife unto him, dost thou still retain thine integrity? **Curse God, and die**”* (Job 2:9).

This is how wicked the Devil can be. He even uses our loved ones and close associates to attack us. But thank God that in all these moments of trials, Job never sinned.

David - a man after God’s own heart - was also attacked by the devil on diverse occasion. For David, his attacks were as a result of the oil he carried and his achievements on the battle field.

He was attacked by the devil through Saul who spent most of his years pursuing after him to kill him. Saul began this attack the very day he saw and heard David being awarded a doctorate degree in battles. He couldn’t imagine himself being awarded a diploma. It was from that very day that he sought to kill him.

*“And the women answered [one another] as they played, and said, Saul hath slain*

*his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed [but] thousands: and [what] can he have more but the kingdom? **And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.***  
(Samuel 18:7-9)

Another strategic object that engaged the attack of Lucifer was stones. He was desperately after this lifeless objects to destroy. This sounds ridiculous. Isn't it?

It may sound ridiculous but the bible bears that witness.

He was very much afraid of these lifeless objects – stones – and even saw them as a threat to his kingdom. I know the question you might be asking here is, “what is it about stones, and why is the devil so interested in them?” Very simple. The devil heard by reason of the mouth of John the Baptist that God was able by them to raise up children unto Abraham.

*“And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, that **God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.**”-* (Matthew 3:9)

His fear for these lifeless objects became more intense when he heard Jesus also say, “. . . **if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.**”- (Luke 19:40)

After becoming conscious of this, he began attacking stones. I presume he was shocked and surprised when he

heard such testimonies given about them. “How on earth can ordinary stones worship before God and also become heirs to Abraham”, he thought.

It was then that he started attacking stones. He did that by provoking Jesus to turn them into bread. However, he failed.

***“. . . If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”*** – (Matthew 4:3)

Not only did he attack ordinary stones, he also attacked the Chief Corner Stone - Jesus. He did that by tempting Him on several occasions. They were all because of the anointing He carried.

There are many other personalities he attacked in scriptures of which you and I know. It is only that we can't make mention of them all.

The devil didn't attack such great personalities in the bible just for tempting sake. He did it purposely because, he saw something unusual, powerful and threatening about them. There is no way he will leave us alone once he spots us with power, affluence, beauty, anointing and so on: he will definitely strike.

Let me step on your toes a little, my dear readers. Make a careful observation of women. You will find out that, it is the beautiful ones among them that are always fornicating, prostituting and committing adultery. Often times, those who are not very beautiful are able to stay chaste till they get married. You may ask why it is so. Very simple. It is the beautiful ones among them that are often attacked. The devil attacks them himself or does it through cunning young men to destroy them. Several

temptations go their way: they receive dates and proposal almost every day. Any gentleman at all will like to stop them by the street and ask them out. The devil is after them to destroy and it's all because they carry influence. Unfortunately many lose their virginity thereby.

But other sisters are still virgins and perhaps it is because no man has ever proposed to them. May be no soul has ever stopped them on the street to take their address or contact before. They have little or no attack from the devil and his humanly inspired agents. They have an attack-free life till they finally get married and hence the reason for their chastity.

So you see, the devil doesn't just attack anything. He is after men and women of power and influence to destroy. His attacks are in several ways and we have to watch out for them.

I pray that God empowers you to stand against his wiles.

### **Pride**

One major temptation that comes with the anointing is pride. Pride is not of God. It is of the Devil. Hardly does it come by itself. It is a temptation that comes with power and virtue. Notice the scriptures below.

***"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to [his] destruction . . ." – (2 Chronicles 26:16)***

***". . . thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:" – (Ezekiel 28:5)***

The very first scripture speaks of King Uzziah. He became proud because of his strength. The last scripture also speaks of Lucifer. For him, his pride came as a result of his riches. So you see, hardly does pride come by itself. There is always something that call for its attention and that is virtue.

Pride is one of the greatest temptations that can ever befall us. If we are able to resist or triumph over it, any other attack from the devil is likely to be fruitless.

Pride is never a trait or a character. It is a spirit. I call it the **real devil**. Because, that was what made the monster out of Lucifer. He is a devil today because of pride. Like the scripture says, iniquity was found in him. Pride is the most dangerous disease that can ever attack the Christian gentleman or lady.

The devil himself was overpowered by it and he fell into its condemnation. He therefore unleashes that weapon against the anointed of the Lord. He knows pretty well that he can get us out of God's Will if he succeeds in getting it over us.

In injecting this deadly virus into our bloodstreams, He does so in three series of steps. They are;

- He gets our eyes of God and His authorities.
- He gets us concentrating more on ourselves: our achievements, beauty, anointing etc.  
He creates the impression that we are self-sufficient and does not need any one.
- He establishes a sense of equality between us and God or Superior authorities.  
He tries to say we are all the same or even better.

When he succeeds in injecting these three viruses into us, these symptoms follow.

***Symptoms of pride***

Any time you see this symptoms manifest in your life, know that the devil is on you. It signifies condemnation is near. You may possibly have these feelings;

1. There is an unflinching desire to do things by your own power. You feel so self dependent.  
There is also a prevalent use of the pronouns **I** and **Me**. Notice “the five I wills” of the devil.  
“**I WILL** ascend into heaven”  
“**I WILL** exalt my throne”  
“**I WILL** sit also upon the mount of congregation”  
“**I WILL** ascend above the heights of the cloud”  
“**I WILL** be like the Most High”
  
2. There is a desire to set yourself above your fellow workers of equal rank.  
“ . . . for their pride . . . they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of Host” (Zephaniah 2:10)
  
3. There is a desire to seek equality with the high powers around you.  
“ . . . thou [art] a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God” (Eze. 28:2)  
“ . . . I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14)
  
4. There is uneasiness in according people the honor or the respect due them.  
“ . . . Behold, I [am] against thee . . . which hath said, my river [is] mine own, and I have made [it] for myself.” (Ezekiel 29:3)



*three influences the oil has on the vessel*

*“ . . . Thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth **in the day of thy pride**” (Ezekiel 16:56)*

5. There is a feeling of perfection. There is also a Know-it-all attitude.

*“ . . . the pride of thine heart . . . saith . . . , who shall bring me to the ground”*

6. There is a feeling that others can't do without you.

7. There is a feeling to contend at the slight provocation.

*“Only by pride cometh contention . . .” ((Proverbs 13:10)*

8. There is a hardening of the mind and heart. You feel awful when corrected

*“ . . . His heart was lifted . . . and his mind hardened in pride” (Daniel 5:20)*

Watch out for these symptoms. It signifies condemnation.

Always remember that pride is a spirit. It comes as a temptation to those that carry influence and power. Once you are beautiful, it will come. When you are also anointed, it will come. Unless may be you don't want to be anointed or endued with power. Because once these are upon you, it will come. But thank God for humility. With it, we can conquer pride.

May God empower you to overcome pride as you proceed reading this book.

**Temptations to misuse power.**

Another strange temptation that befalls anointed men and women is the temptation to abuse or misuse the power they carry. This happens in three circumstances. That is under;

1. Pride (already discussed)
2. Provocation and challenge
3. Pressure and challenge

***Provocation & challenge***

We live in a world today where it is very easy to take offense in people.

And in ministry today, it is not something strange. Because people will definitely provoke you. You might as well provoke others too.

The way we ministers of the Gospel deal with provocation and bitterness of late is very important. It has a lot to say about our level of maturity and knowledge in Christ.

Anytime a servant of God is angry, bitter or provoked, the anointing is automatically stirred up and fuelled to defend or attack. The vessel carrying the oil feels a great urge to demonstrate power. This is a temptation. It's not from God but rather the devil. In fact James tells us plainly that God doesn't even tempt us. We are tempted when we are drawn away and trapped by our own evil desires.

There is a great temptation of you using your God given office for personal defense other than for its intended

purpose: which includes the perfection of the saints, the work of the ministry and the edifying of Christ's Body. It is very easy and seductive to deform lives with your prophetic utterance than to edify, exhort and to comfort them.

Balaam the prophet once fell prey to this attack. He was called upon and hired by Balak to curse the people of his own God. This is what Balak said to him: *“. . .come now therefore and curse for me this people (the people of God) for they are too mighty for me”*

As servants of God, the devil sometimes incites us against our own people at the least provocation to curse them. He just like Balak - his son according to John 8:44 - knows that he whom we bless is blessed and he whom we curse is cursed. For this reason, he incites us to curse each other at the least provocation.

Many preachers are moved to demonstrate power and ability at the slightest provocation. At the slightest provocation, they feel compelled to call down the heaven. They always end up abusing the anointing they carry.

Elijah the man of God is a perfect example of such (2 Kings 1:9-18). It happened this way: Ahaziah, the king of Israel, fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber and was as a result sick in bed. Instead of him consulting any of the prophets in Samaria, he rather sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron. Elijah the man of God knew this through a word of Knowledge delivered to him by an Angel. So he went to meet those messengers saying, "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?" The man of God was Provoked because

of the actions of Ahaziah. By a word of wisdom from the Lord, Elijah further said to those messengers, “Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD. . . thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”

After these messengers had delivered the words of Elijah to the King, he became angry and as a result gave 51 soldiers warrant to effect his arrest. These messengers found Elijah no where than on a top of a hill. They stood at the base of the hill and said: **“Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.”**

They kept on bidding Elijah to come down but Elijah was still adamant. Then said the captain of the soldiers to him: “Are you really a man of God? If you really claim to be a man of God and are not afraid of the king, then come down. Why are you hiding?”

This is where Elijah was provoked. He couldn’t stand them challenging his authority as a man of God and of course, many preachers today can’t stand it when they are being challenged. They are tempted to demonstrate power thereby.

This is exactly what Elijah did. He said to the captain of the Soldiers, “Did you say I’m not a man of God?”

“Yes, we don’t think you are”, said the captain of the soldiers.

“Ok, you wait and see”, Elijah screamed angrily.

Very desperate to prove himself, Elijah said, **“ . . . If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.”** After this decree, came fire

down from heaven immediately and consumed the captain and his fifty.

Another bunch of Soldiers were sent to arrest Him and just like the First, he called down fire upon them. It was only the last group of Soldiers that were able to calm him down. They only were able to engage his mercy.

With a very bitter spirit, Elijah killed a hundred and two soldiers. Why? It was because of provocation. The man of God was provoked.

What Elijah did to these hundred and two soldiers was a wrong demonstration of power. He did that because of provocation. He was provoked because of the challenge that was thrown to Him. We have to be careful anytime we are provoked. Many preachers of late can't stand the face of challenge. Challenge them or deny them their titles and they will curse you to death.

I once heard a prophet say on the radio, "I am a prophet and not an evangelist. I want you to accord me my title. Dare call one of those young prophets, evangelist and they will curse you to death. So don't try calling me an Evangelist." Such a prophet can't stand the face of challenge.

There is a need to exercise ourselves to deal with provocation and challenge maturely.

Aside Elijah, Jesus was equally confronted with such temptations. But he handled his as a very mature person.

In the case of Jesus, he was very hungry as a result of his forty days and night fast. But since a hungry man is likely to be an angry man, I presume he was also angry as well.

## VESSELS: ARE YOU FIT FOR THE MASTERS USE

Even if he wasn't angry, the least provocation could get him angry because he was exceedingly hungry.

In the wilderness alone, the devil went to him to tempt Him. He did it at no other time than when Master Jesus was hungry and presumably angry. He launched this attack at the right season.

What he said to him was, *"if thou be the son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

Can you imagine these words being said to you on no other day than when you have completed a forty day fast and are hungry? You and I can hardly stand that.

Not only was Satan tempting Jesus, he was also provoking and challenging Him. Indirectly, what he was saying to Jesus was, "I don't think you are the son of God or the CHRIST to come. If you were, you wouldn't have allowed yourself to die of hunger in this lonely place. You can't keep calling yourself the bread of life and claim to be born in Bethlehem - meaning the house of bread - and die of hunger yourself. Prove me wrong by turning these stones into bread."

That was a challenge and a provocation and we all like Elijah would have been quick to demonstrate power. But maturely, Jesus refuted that confrontation and the two subsequent ones as well. The message he painted to Satan was: "I don't care what you say about me. Call me whatever name you so wish. You can even go ahead and deny me as the CHRIST. I won't do anything to these stones" and truly He overcame that confrontation.

At another time too, Jesus together with his disciples were journeying to Jerusalem. Along the journey, they

turned to one of the villages of the Samaritans for hospitality but then he was refused that hospitality when they realize his original destination was Jerusalem – a people they had nothing to do with. Notice that John chapter 4:9 reveals the hatred between the Samaritans and the Jews. “. . . What dealings have the Jews with the Samaritans?” (John 4:9)

When they were not received, all the disciples save Jesus were angry and offended. They were provoked and ready for action. Jesus wasn't offended the least and I presume they all were surprised at that.

Possibly, this is what they - the disciples - might have been thinking: “Can't this man do something with his powers to save us from this reproach?”

They were very angry at the Samaritans and yet still surprised at the actions of Jesus, seeing he wasn't offended.

It was then that James and John - the sons of Zebedee - took it upon themselves to ask Jesus saying, “*Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*” Left to James and John alone, they would have called down fire just as Elijah did to consume the Samaritans. But Jesus rebuked them because what they were proposing was a wrong demonstration of Power. He said to them: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”

*“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and **entered into a village of***

***the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw [this], they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.***  
(Luke 9:51-55)

In Jesus' entire ministry, he was constantly challenged and provoked which could have pushed Him to demonstrate power wrongly. But he never did that. There were even instances he was physically attacked with stones and other weapons. He could have chosen to call down some natural occurrences on them with His Supernatural power but instead, he hid himself as though he was afraid and escaped out of their hands. You might call him a loser or a fearo but to the best of my understanding, that is maturity and the greatest defeat you can ever have over the Devil.

His actions communicated these words, "I came as a healer and not a killer and as a Savior, not a destroyer." He fully enforced this sense of discipline and overcame all his attackers. If He was to call down fire at the least provocation or challenge, he would have wiped of all men including the soldiers that arrested Him, missing His prime assignment to go to the cross.

Even on the night of His passion, his prophetic anointing was challenged and mocked. He was being pushed to demonstrate power. ". . . Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote [him] with the palms



of their hands, **Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?**"(Mathew 26:67). He could have chosen to do just that but then he thought it not necessary to use the power he wielded to defend his reputation. Isn't this beautiful? It is practical humility.

Also on the cross, he was being provoked to do the unusual. The purpose of the Devil was to prevent Him from dying. He seriously provoked and challenged Him through the men around saying: Look at this man, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. **If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.**" (Matthew 27:42)

You see, that was a provocation, and it takes a very disciplined man like JESUS to refute it.

***10 of the primitive provocations Jesus refuted were,***

- *"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* (Matthew 4:3)
- *"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down:"* (Mathew 4:6)
- *"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."* (Matthew 4:9)
- *". . . Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?"* (Matthew 26:67-68)
- *". . . Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest [it] in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."* (Matthew 27:40)

- *“ . . . If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.”* (Matthew 27:42)
- *“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him . . .”* (Matthew 27:43)
- *“ . . . If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.”* (Luke 23:37)
- *“ . . . If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.”* (Luke 23:39)
- *“ . . . Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.”* (Matthew 27:49)

### ***Pressure & Provocation***

We are living in a generation where believers especially preachers are too hasty to demonstrate power and virtue at the least provocation, challenge and pressure.

Men and women of God in Christendom today are too particular about their reputation, credentials, and charisma. They are willing to do anything humanly possible to prove themselves and to preserve their name. They are unable to put up with pressure, provocation and challenge. At the slightest challenge, and provocation, they are tempted to demonstrate power and to prove themselves.

Just like Elijah who called down fire from heaven to prove himself a man of God, believers today are not only calling down fire, but other acts of God upon themselves. They

just want to show that they are indeed called by God and carry power.

The Lord told me sometime ago saying, “. . . if you really want to see my people in action and in full demonstration of their Supernatural giftings, look at them when they are either provoked, challenged or under pressure.” That’s a divine fact.

The fall of many great men and women of God is as a result of these three basic weapons: challenge, provocation and pressure. At the slightest chance he gets, the devil deploys this weapon against the people of God. Because he knows by them, the anointing is easily corrupted, visions are blurred and great heritages are destroyed.

Moses for example couldn’t enter the promise land because of pressure. He came under intense pressure of the Israelite to work miracles and he was subsequently provoked by them to do the contrary messing up his ministry.

Samson also lost his divine strength because of a similar thing. He was under pressure to show the proof of his love to one woman - called Delilah- and also to give up his life secret. Delilah succeeded in messing up Samson’s anointing with two simple weapons: Pressure and challenge.

What Delilah first did was to put Samson under intense pressure and by that she succeeded in vexing Samson’s soul unto death as recorded in Judges 16:16.

*“. . . When **she pressed him daily** with her words, and urged him . . . **his soul was vexed unto death**“*

After getting the foundation laid with pressure, she started laying down the bricks of challenge. What she said was: “. . . ***How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart [is] not with me?***” challenging him to show the proof of his love. Notice that, that statement was a challenge.

Gradually laying down these bricks of challenge, she succeeded in lifting up the building to the height of Provocation and thereby brought Samson - the man of God - to the ground.

Like Samson, many preachers are on the ground today because of pressure. Some are under pressure to see into the spirit realm even without the gift of discernment in operation. Others are also under pressure to work signs and wonders to their congregation with or without the gift of faith, the working of miracles or the gift of healing in operation. This has created a lot of mess in the Body of Christ.

Because of this, we are no longer depending on the Spirit to divide (the gifts) to us severally as he wills. Rather, we are dividing to the Spirit as we will. Preachers today hardly follow the leadings of the spirit. We rather expect the Spirit to follow our leading. What a mess!

Pressure is a temptation and we have to be careful how we deal with it. But know that it doesn't take the anointing to deal with pressure. It takes discipline to refute it. In the domain of pressure, it is the most disciplined that survives. It is those that are ready to make a fool of themselves that survive the deadly effervescence of the pressure reaction.

*three influences the oil has on the vessel*

Pressure is likely to befall any ministerial vessel especially those that stands behind the pulpit to minister. And like I said, the most disciplined survives.

## **Chapter 3**

### **CHARACTER: THE PREREQUISITE FOR MINISTRY**

Many Christians today, have different perception with regards to the substance of the anointing.

Some say it is all they need to prove to the world that they are spiritual.

Others also use the anointing as a yardstick to decipher how efficient someone will be in the ministry. They say the most anointed are the best. Based on this, they assign task to only associates or folks they consider to be very anointed and full of charisma. For them, when you are anointed, then it means you are ripe for ministry.

Some individuals are also of the mind that, the anointing is all they need to launch themselves officially into the ministry. The moment they sense an urge to prophesy is the exact time they feel like starting churches of their own. Even if they already belong to a church, they will find means to rebel or break away just to be on their own. Because after all they can also give a word of knowledge or minister to people to fall under the power. I'm not making fun here. I'm stating the fact.

Many youngsters in the Body of Christ today are too obsessed about gifts and anointing. The least manifestations of Spiritual gifts in their life place them on top of the world. They shout and jump and say, "At long last I am also ripe for ministry. I can now be on my own." They then begin gathering crowds to themselves, starting churches on their own and also assigning titles to themselves. They are all good and I write not to condemn any. I'm only demonstrating my point.

*character: the prerequisite for ministry*

The anointing is a very precious commodity and I love it. Thank God for His anointing. It sharpens us and empowers us to work in His vineyard. I love it very much. But the question here is, "Is ministry all about the anointing?" The answer is an emphatic No.

Taking up the work of the ministry is not all about the anointing. There is more to it than that. Before the anointing comes, is Wisdom and Character. No matter how anointed you may be, I will personally say you are not ready yet, if you lack any of these two, that is wisdom and character (character include the ability to teach the word). I don't care what you say about this. It is the truth. Character is a necessary condition and the anointing is a sufficient condition. Character is the hypothesis while the anointing is the consequent.

With wisdom, character and the ability to teach the Word, you declare yourself eligible and fit for any use in the house of God. This is because God is after men and women of character and not of power.

You might not be operating in certain gifts and anointing, but being faithful alone to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit or the anointing within, will cause you to bear much fruits. You are likely to bear much fruit than them who can prophesy both heaven and earth together but lack character.

When we meet these three criteria - wisdom, a godly character and the ability to teach the word -, by bible standard, we declare ourselves as vessels for honor fit and sanctified for the Masters use.

If anyone desires to be in the ministry, the first he should endeavor to work on is his character. Because character

is what you can give yourself but the anointing is what God can give you. Paul in writing to Pastor Timothy said, **“If a man therefore purge himself from these**, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work.” (2 timothy 2:21)

Notice what Paul said. He said, “If a man is able to purge himself . . .” NOT “if God is able to help a man purge himself . . .” So you see, Character is what you can give yourself. And it is what God demands before putting an individual into the ministry or placing the anointing on him.

Paul again said something to Timothy. He said, “. . . Christ Jesus . . . hath enabled me, for that **he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry**” (1 Timothy 1:12). In other words, Paul was saying that, it is my faithfulness that made God put me into the ministry and to work for Him. He made mention of no anointing since he couldn't give that to himself save God.

In 1 timothy chapter 3, we find the criteria for leadership as was written by Paul to Timothy. I love how The Message Bible goes at it all. Paul started by saying that, if anyone wants to provide leadership in the church, then it is a good thing. He goes on to say, BUT there are preconditions and he listed them all.

In stating the requirements under which one could become a bishop, a deacon, or a church leader, one single reference was not even made to the anointing. All the conditions were pointing to character, wisdom and ability to teach. Consider the Scripture below.



*character: the prerequisite for ministry*

***“If anyone wants to provide leadership in the church, good! But there are preconditions: A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to his wife, cool and collected, accessible, and hospitable. He must know what he's talking about - apt to teach-, not be overfond of wine, not pushy but gentle, not thin-skinned, not money-hungry. He must handle his own affairs well, attentive to his own children and having their respect. For if someone is unable to handle his own affairs, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a new believer, lest the position go to his head and the Devil trip him up. Outsiders must think well of him, or else the Devil will figure out a way to lure him into his trap. The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it.”***

### **2Timothy 3:1-8(MSG)**

When we carefully analyze the scripture above, we see that there is a prevalence of the modal verb ‘**must**’ in describing these preconditions. It simply talks of compulsion or how necessary those conditions are. So you see, character is a necessary condition and the anointing is a sufficient condition. This means that when it comes to working in the house of God it is necessary that one builds himself or herself in character but it suffices to be anointed. No matter how anointed a person may be, if he lacks any of the conditions above, he

qualifies not to be given any ministerial assignment. Any pastor or church leader who does so does it at his own peril.

**The voice qualifies you for the blessing not the hand**

Many pastors and church leaders like Isaac keep on making one terrible mistake anytime the need arises for them to appoint or choose ministerial partners or pastors. They close their eyes to the vessel and only consider the oil. They are sensitive to charisma and dead to character . . . They are particular about the oil but care less about the vessel.

They just like Isaac always fall prey to the deception of Jacob.

Oftentimes, we like the Patriarch Isaac prefers to only have a feel of people's hand and to have a smell of their garment before we can approve them or send them out with a blessing. We always ignore the voice.

Isaac could fathom out the voice which came up first for the blessing. He was also able to identify uniquely the hand, but then, he was swayed by the power of his senses - feeling and smelling - to look over the voice (the betraying factor).

He had a feeling it wasn't Esau. That's why he could say, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Genesis 27:22). But then he overlooked the voice - the character- and by enjoying the sweet touching and smelling (the anointing), he gave a blessing to a wrong vessel.

*character: the prerequisite for ministry*

It is so with many of us especially church leaders in the Body of Christ today. We've consciously taken our ears of the voice - character- and are seriously enjoying the smell and touch sensation - the anointing – and are thereby sending wrong people out.

Today in Christendom, folks are endorsed and appointed only by virtue of their anointing. Little or no consideration is given to their character. But that is a wrong way of choosing leaders and it is very unbiblical.

Many Christian leaders today like I said early on always fall prey to this Isaac syndrome. They are only interested in feeling the hands and smelling the garment and care less about the voice. Through this, many have embittered their spirit.

Some have even suffered broken heart as a result. They send their associates to pastor churches elsewhere only to see the church being given a new name and its assets thereof hijacked. The head of course didn't know the character of such. If he knew, he would have undone such infidels even before they striked. And how could he have known? Very simple. It is just a matter of paying careful attention to the voice.

Character is the key. We have to endeavor to know it before establishing upon trust.

## Chapter 4

### PERFORMING LITMUS TEST ON VESSELS

*“And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being [found] blameless.”*

(1 Timothy 3:10)

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

**T**here is a great necessity laid on us to know the people around us. In the house for example, parents should endeavor to know their ward and the ward also their parents. In marriage also, the husband should accurately know his wife and the wife also his husband. The same way also in ministry, it necessitates that the Senior Pastor knows his subordinates and associates and they also their pastor.

This is very necessary to establish trust among ourselves and to prevent certain things coming to us as surprises. When we know the vessels around us, we will know when to defend them and when to suspect them. It will breed little or no ground for offences.

Even God tries out his vessels to know them despite the fact that He is Omniscient. He tried and tested all the vessels He used to effect redemption, victory, success and the like. That is why He could say something like, “There is none like my servant Job on the earth”, “David is a man after my own heart” and so on. He proved them and knew them that’s why He could give such testimonies about them and even defend them before the devil.

*performing litmus test on vessels*

Jesus also knew his disciples very well. He knew Judas Iscariot even before he manifested himself as the son of perdition. That is why he could also say, “Have I not chosen twelve and one of you being a devil.”

He knew his disciples and his disciples also knew him. The Gospel of John bears record to that, “He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him” (John 6:64).

We also have to endeavor to know the core vessels around us. And we can do that perfectly by testing them. If we fail to test or prove them to know who they really are, then we should be careful going out with them.

David before his battle with Goliath refused the helmet of brass that was placed on his head and the coat of mail he was being armed with. He told Saul directly: “. . . *I cannot go with these; **for I have not proved [them]***” (1 Samuel 17:39). He preferred moving with the little sling he knew and trusted than with those military jackets he had never tried or proved. He knew his sling very well. He had been with it through out his life as a shepherd boy. But for those giant military apparel, he laid them off quickly and his reason was because he had never tested or proved them. So you see, no matter how fiery the battle may look, it is better to move with those little slings you know than with the coat of mail you know not.

After Paul in his epistle to Timothy have finished outlining the qualities a Bishop or a church leader must have or possess, he further went on to say to Timothy saying: “**let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.**” In other words, he was saying that they are to be tested first and then given the office if they pass the test.

## VESSELS: ARE YOU FIT FOR THE MASTERS USE

Passing litmus test on vessels is very important especially when it comes to searching out ministerial vessels. It is important for every Church or ministerial leader to know the core vessels around him. It is by doing this that you will be able to save yourself from certain disappointments, pains and surprises.

You will be deceiving yourself to think that the most anointed, gifted, charming or beautiful are the most faithful and trustworthy. It is not always true because they are the very category of people that have sparked revolutions of rebellion throughout the years and ages. I'm not saying they are all rebel. Please don't get me wrong. I'm only saying that, in most cases of rebellion, they are normally behind the scene.

They operate like the scroll John was made to swallow. They are always sweet in the mouth but bitter in the stomach (Revelation 10:10). With their sweetness, they convince you to swallow or take them in, but once they get down into the stomach they become bitter. So you see, in the mouth were they could have easily being spewed out, they taste very sweet. But once in the stomach were they can't easily be brought out, they become very bitter. That's how many folks are. So if you are deceived by their sweetness to take them into your stomach, you will only succeed in making yourself bitter.

You are not to marry just because of beauty neither are you to endorse people based on the anointing or charisma. You should be able to prove them and search out their character as well.

Since we are not in haste to take anything into our system in the natural, we shouldn't also be in haste in

*performing litmus test on vessels*

appointing lifetime partners. Just like Paul said, “let these first be tested or proved.”

Testing or proving vessels to know them can be done to get a conscious or an unconscious feed back. When a vessel is tested or proved, the feed back or response is either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Paul for example was tested and proved by the authorities of his day. But in his case, it was done for a conscious or voluntary response: he knew he was being tested. That is why he could say, “mine answer to them that do examine me is this” (1 Corinthians 9:3). The Amplified Version puts it as: “This is my [real ground of] defense (my vindication of myself) to those who would put me on trial and cross-examine me.” Paul was tried and cross examined consciously and the response he gave was also very conscious.

After proving or defending himself, the final appeal he made was, “But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates” (2 Corinthians 13:6). The New Living Translation says “As you test yourselves, ***I hope you will recognize that we have not failed the test of apostolic authority.***”

An example of passing tests for an involuntary response is when God tried Abraham. God tested Abraham deliberately and his expectation was to receive an involuntary feed back or response. In other words, God tested Abraham, without him - Abraham - knowing he was being tested.

This is how God went about it: He told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac his son unto him. To God, it was just a simple test he was performing on His vessel. But to

Abraham, he taught and felt it was a true sacrifice God was demanding of him. God passed the test consciously, but the response Abraham gave was very unconscious. Through that, He was able to know who Abraham was. Isn't it amazing to know that God even proves and tests his vessels?

God being Omniscient knew Abraham but until he has proved him, he couldn't say, "Now . . . I know . . . you." It was after he has proved Abraham that he said, "**For now I know that thou fearest me (God)**" (Genesis 22:12). He tested the sincerity of the fear Abraham had for Him and found it true.

*"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, [here] I [am]. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only [son]*

*Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of . . . And they came to the place . . . And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here [am] I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: **for now I know that thou fearest God**, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son] from me." (Genesis 22:1-12)*



### *performing litmus test on vessels*

God tested all his vessels and by that he was able to know what was in their heart: whether they were for him or against him. By that, he was not surprised the least at anything they did wrong to him.

After testing and proving his people, Israel for example, he knew they would forsake him one day and therefore wasn't surprised when it happened. God tested and proved all His vessels including Moses, David, Gideon, Rahab, Naomi, Elijah and all the rest.

Some even pleaded with God to prove them. The Psalmist for example prayed saying, *"Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart"* – (Psalm 26:2).

There is a saying that God can use anything. It is very true and scriptural. But I prefer saying it this way: "God can use anything but he doesn't use anything." He always tested and proved His vessel. He still does it. The Bible commends us to do the same.

In this particular chapter, I shall seek to look at how to prove a vessel. It's all about creativity but I will help you out with some few steps.

We can effectively prove or seek to study a vessel by;

- a) Interrogation or questioning
- b) Observing reactions.
- c) Observing their reactions with other vessels.
- d) Inquiring about them.
- e) Being patient with Time.

### **Interrogation or questioning.**

***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it”.*** (Jeremiah 17:9)

“And thou shalt remember all the way which ***the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness***, to humble thee, [and] ***to prove thee, to know what [was] in thine heart***, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deuteronomy 8:2).

The human heart as described in the book of Jeremiah is deceitful and very wicked. No one apart from God can see into it. Without the omnipotent eyes of God, we can never see into it. But thank God there is a way its counsels can be revealed. Out of its abundance, the mouth speaks them all.

Words betray the counsels of the heart. It reveals to us what is in the heart of men. By it, we can know a part of the heart.

But the problem here is that, the natural man will never speak to reveal the hidden counsels of his heart. He only does so involuntarily or as a result of provocation.

Seeking to know or prove vessels by this particular method therefore needs a lot of wisdom and creativity. We can do that more accurately through careful interrogations. It should be done in such a way that the person responding to it must do so out of self unconsciousness. It requires a lot of wisdom and circumspection.

If the right punches are made on the heart, it will begin bleeding with words. It's a matter of wisdom.

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Jesus on some occasion proved his disciples by this method. He examined and interrogated them. He did it carefully and hence succeeded in receiving an involuntary feed back.

There was a need one day in Jesus' ministry: a very urgent one. Multitude had come from a very long distance to hear him teach and time was far spent. As a very compassionate shepherd, he couldn't afford dismissing them on an empty stomach: he felt an urge to feed them. He wanted to know what his disciples thought of that. He wanted to know the hidden counsels of their heart. He knew what to do but then he wanted to know what his disciples also had in mind.

He did that perfectly by asking them a simple question. The question he asked was, "**whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?**" By this question, he was able to reveal the impossibilities and unbelief in their heart. The answer Philip gave for example was, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" (John 6:7). Philip didn't know Jesus was testing them; if he knew, he wouldn't have answered that way. He would have been more positive. His response to Jesus' question was involuntary revealing the whole counsels of his heart. He answered the question naturally.

Philip would have tried to be a little spiritual and full of faith if the question asked by Jesus was to be, "Do you believe I can feed these multitudes?" Of course, he would have been more positive in response if that was the question. But then, Jesus landed the right punch at the right time and by it betrayed their heart. So you see, it requires a lot of wisdom trying out vessels this way.

God used the same method in reading the mind of His prophet, Ezekiel. After taking him around the valley full of dry bones, the creative question he asked Ezekiel was, *“Son of man, can these bones live?”* God of course (being omniscient) knew the answer to that question, but he employed this wonderful technique to read the mind of Ezekiel. He wanted to know what was in his heart. He wanted to know his view on the matter. But Ezekiel unlike Philip and Andrew passed the test by throwing the question back to God. His response was, *“O Lord, God, thou knowest”* (Ezekiel 37:3) referring to God as the All-Knowing One who knows the fate of his handiwork.

The queen of Sheba employed this same method in searching out the Wisdom of Solomon. But in her case, the questions were asked for a voluntary response. First Kings Chapter 10:1 bears witness to that *“... she came to prove him with hard questions”*

Both in ministry and in relationships, vessels can be searched out this way. It helps you to know the philosophy and ideology of people and whether they are to be trusted or not.

In ministry for example, if you are in doubt as to whether a fellow’s heart is with you or not, you can wisely employ this method. If done with wisdom, it will reveal those who are potential rebels.

A senior minister for example can tease an associate - who professes to be with him for good - with a question like this: *“I have started making some savings in my account for you. I’m hoping to have enough by the time you go to start your own ministry so I can support you with it. I hope you are making some savings and preparations too?”* This is a nice question to ask. It is just

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a matter of being creative. Just be creative preacher! It might betray the heart

Men and women who are also in relationships can equally test or prove themselves by this method to know themselves. A creative question will betray the hidden issues of the heart. Just be creative and make the right punch at the right time.

**Observing reactions.**

Apart from words revealing the contents of the heart, actions and reactions can also do so perfectly.

Actions they say, speaks louder than words. How a person reacts or acts is very important. To some extent, it reveals the contents of the heart. When words fail in betraying a person, his actions or reactions will.

The natural man may try to shut up the content of his heart by sealing up his lips. He can decide not to speak for as long as he wills or even talk to anyone. But no matter how such a man may try to keep the contents of his heart from others, his actions will give him up in the long run. Such betray themselves even faster than folks who are talkatives do. They appear to be conservative but they betray themselves out very easily and faster too. It's just a matter of you observing their actions, and reactions.

They can stop their lips from speaking but the fact that they can't stop their body from motioning, they will eventually give up their heart. By observing their actions, and reactions to event, you can know what they have within their heart. It takes a very good observer to study

vessel this way. It also takes wisdom as well so as not to judge a person wrongly.

Vessels who are naturally not speaking like me, can be searched out this way. But please like I said, you need wisdom in doing that so you don't judge us wrongly.

A person's facial expression, and the signs he put up have a lot to say about him or her. Don't just ignore them. They are messages by themselves even including silence.

Absalom for example had a lot to say to Amnon his half brother for raping Tamar his sister. He harbored animosity in his heart against Amnon his brother but then he never confronted or assaulted him. The best way he painted a picture of that hatred was just to keep quiet. By just keeping quiet and not speaking to Amnon, he was indirectly sending some message across to him. But unfortunately, Amnon was not a very good observer and therefore wasn't able to figure that out. If he had being a very good observer or a master of signs, he would have saved himself from his untimely death.

*"And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar" (2 Samuel 13:22).*

#### **Observing reactions with other vessels.**

*"Now these [are] the nations which the LORD left, to **prove Israel by them**, [even] as many [of Israel] as had not known all the wars of Canaan . . . **And they were to prove Israel by them**, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses"*

God in destroying the heathen nations and kingdoms that afflicted his people, deliberately left some out. His prime purpose was to prove Israel by them and also to know whether they would follow him or not.

He wanted to know whether they would be faithful in following him or rebellious in going after the gods of those heathens. He wasn't tempting them. He was only proving them to know what was in their heart. Like James said, God doesn't tempt anyone. He was only trying out his lovely vessels to know whether they would obey his commandment or disobey.

He did that by leaving in their midst, some of these pagan kingdoms and nations. By that way, he was able to prove them.

If He had destroyed those kingdoms entirely and had left Israel alone in the earth, it wouldn't have been very convincing if they had proven themselves faithful or obedient. He needed other men around them to prove them (Israel) by them. He only wanted to see how they would correspond with them. He wanted to know whether they would be influenced by them to go after their gods or would be disciplined enough to stay with him for good. He knew they will definitely have an impact on them.

Other external vessels have a role to play in studying vessels. They make it easier for you to know the one you are seeking to study.

Just think of how impossible it will be to identify a gossip if he is to exist alone in the world with no one to gossip to. That would have been impossible.

We didn't for example know who Adam was when he existed alone in the garden. It was only by his association with Eve that we got to know who he was. His reaction with Eve showed us a different side of him as an easily influenced man.

So in seeking to know vessels, there is a need to observe how they correspond, or react with other vessels. It gives a clear clue of who they are. If they slander other folks to you, they will slander you as well to them. Watch how they treat others and you will be able to prophesy how they will treat you too.

Like Jesus said to his disciples, “. . . If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (John 15:20)

#### **Inquiring about them.**

Another unique way of knowing vessels is by inquiring about them. This particular method is not for testing or proving vessels. It is rather employed to know vessel.

This method of knowing or studying vessels was patronized mostly by the Apostolic Authorities. They employed it to search out vessels that were being considered for leadership position in the church.

Such vessels were inquired of from others folks including outsiders. They inquired of them concerning their



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domestic and private life. After doing that, they compared it to their own version of who the person was and then came out with a report.

When Demetrius for example was being inquired of by the apostles, the final report the Apostle John gave was ***“Demetrius hath good report of all [men], and of the truth itself: yea, and we [also] bear record; and ye know that our record is true”*** (3 John 1:12). The Good News Translation of the Bible says: ***“Everyone speaks well of Demetrius; truth itself speaks well of him. And we add our testimony, and you know that what we say is true.”***

Notice that after people had testified well of Demetrius, the Apostolic Authorities didn't just run with that. They also added their testimony to it before finally coming up with a report. That was how it was being done. They didn't just move with what the people said neither did they also move with their own testimony. They looked at the two, compared them and then came up with a report. They loved to inquire and to carry out some investigations.

This is the reason why the Apostle Paul was advising the people of Philippi to make their moderations known unto all men (Philippians 4:5). Because he knew a time will come where some of them would be inquired of by men wanting to access their service. It was a method the Apostolic Authorities employed in searching out vessels.

This is exactly what was done to Titus. So Paul cautioned the Corinthian Church of what to say when Titus and some other brethren were inquired of from them. Paul told them saying, ***“Whether [any do enquire] of Titus, [he is] my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren [be enquired of, they are] the messengers***

***of the churches, [and] the glory of Christ” - (2 Corinthians 8:23)***

This is how the New Living Translation of the Bible presents it **“If anyone asks about Titus, say that he is my partner who works with me to help you. And the brothers with him have been sent by the churches, and they bring honor to Christ” (NLT).**

Inquiring or investigating about someone is just like spying into his secret life. It will open up things you don't know about the person. But it is capable of breeding offenses when it is done outside wisdom. If you are also not very careful, you might end up judging someone with his past, which ought not to be so.

However, if it is done cautiously and strategically, it will bless you with some vital information.

The Israelites employed this method in searching out the promised land. By it, they got to know that the land was not only flowing with milk and honey as they knew, but it also swallowed up its inhabitants.

***“And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this [is] the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people [be] strong that dwell in the land, and the cities [are] walled, [and] very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there . . . And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it,***

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***[is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature.”  
(Numbers 13:27, 28, 32 )***

You see, even before the Israelite went ahead to possess their promised land, they searched it out first.  
Are you searching out yours?

### **The test of time**

Time is very necessary when it comes to studying or knowing a vessel. As time passes by, we get more knowledge and understanding of who people are. Time unveils and betrays character. So in studying vessels, it necessitates that we become patient with time.

Time by itself is a test to vessels. It will tell whether a person is honest, faithful, proud, obedient or to be trusted. As we live with people for a very long time, we get to know them the more.

That is why Jesus was surprised when Philip asked him to show them the father. Because left to him alone, the time they had been together was enough for the disciples to have known Him by then.

***“Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and itsufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH YOU, AND YET HAST THOU NOT KNOWN ME, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Shew us the Father?”  
(John 14:8-9)***

He said to Philip, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip?" Jesus was very surprised at the question Philip asked. Because they've been together for a very long time approximately three and half years and that should have been enough for Philip and the other disciples to have known him by then.

Time is the most unique and accurate way of testing or knowing vessels. Jesus knew that. That's why he told the disciples saying, "*Have I been **so long time** with you, and yet thou hast not known me . . .*"

When time speaks of a person, it speaks of him or her audibly. When it also presents the image of a person, it does it in a larger portrait. So for us to miss the result or the account time gives of a person, then it means there is something wrong somewhere. That is why Jesus was quite upset with Philip when he asked him to show them the father. Jesus was like, "Philip, if time has not make me known unto you, what else will."

Time is a chronic gossiper. When there is also no one to gossip a person to you, time will.

I know my mother and my sister very well. I mean very well and they also know me accurately well. I know what they like and what they don't like. I know what gets them provoke. I know the kind of conversation they like to entertain and so on. How did I know this? Very Simple. Time. I have been with them for a very long time, in fact throughout all my life. Time has painted them to me and me also to them.

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You see, so to know a vessel, it necessitates that we allow the time factor to have its way. By that we can save ourselves from certain troubles and woes.

Isaac wanted to bless his first son Esau. But then he made a mistake in giving his blessing to Jacob. How did that happen? He despised the importance of time. When Jacob came in first to claim the blessing, there was a whole lot of doubt that was going on there in his (Isaac) mind. Because he knew Esau had just departed from His presence. This can't be Esau. That was what he thought in his mind.

So the question he asked was, "Who art thou my son?" When the person responded by saying I am Esau thy first born even though that was Jacob, he doubted. Because Esau just went out from his presence to get him some meat and it was very unlikely he will return that quickly. So the question he asked again was, ". . . How [is it] that thou hast found [it] so quickly, my son?" (Genesis 27:20). This question again shows that he doubted. Another statement he made which showed that he was doubting who the person really was, was when he said, ". . . *Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, **whether thou [be] my very son Esau or not.***"

This appeal he made clearly showed that he was uncertain as to who the person really was. But after performing his own litmus test via his senses, He ended up giving a blessing to a wrong vessel. He performed the litmus test himself without considering time. Had he been patient with time, he would have known who Esau was and who Jacob was.

Because immediately Jacob left, Esau came. And since himself was unsure as to who the first person that came

was, the best test he could have used to sample between the two was time. Time would have performed the test for him.

If the Israelites for example had also been patient with time, they wouldn't have hastened themselves in making a covenant with the Gibeonites, a nation they had to destroy. Because with time, they would have known that, these people were actually living in their midst other than pretending to have come from a very far journey.

Time gives an accurate result of people. As time passes by, we get more understanding of people and things around us.

***“With the ancient [is] wisdom; and in length of days understanding.”*** (Job 12:12)

## **Chapter 5**

### **BUILDING A STRONG CHARACTER.**

There is the need for every child of God to build up a strong character especially in this time and age where there is a lot of mess in Christendom. Many of the chaos today in the Body of Christ are as a result of the negligence of character and the Fruits of the Spirit in the lives of Christian.

Christians today have more manifestations to showcase to the world but very little fruits to boast of. Our pursuit of power above character has being the cause of most of these tensions. Our love for power far exceeds our power of love.

But Jesus is after a bride that will manifest His life and not just His power. Remember what He said to His disciples in John chapter 13:35. He said: "By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Notice that He didn't say, by your gifts and anointing. He only said by we loving ourselves will the world identify us as his disciples. He was making reference to character and not to the gift.

Before we can fully fulfill our ministry . . . Before we can sustain our God given ministries . . . Before we can touch the heart of the world . . . Before we can move God to testify on our behalf, we need to first build up ourselves in character. It is very good and scriptural to chase after the anointing and we thank God for that. But in chasing after the anointing, we shouldn't forget to first exercise ourselves unto godliness. Because without a godly character, there is no way God will trust us with a serious

anointing. He is in great expectation of consecration from His vessel.

The following scriptures admonish us on the necessity of character as believers. This is what the scripture says to us;

*“ . . . exercise thyself [rather] unto godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7).*

*“ . . . be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).*

*“ . . . have a good report of them which are without . . .” (1 Timothy 3:7).*

*“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord [is] at hand” (Philippians 4:5)*

*“ . . . have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8)*

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16)*

*“ . . . shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13)*

*“ . . . have compassion, making a difference” (Jude 1:22)*

*“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that . . . they may by [your] good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12)*



*“Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love . . .” (2 Corinthians 8:24)*

God is more interested in how we manifest His Fruits than the Gifts he deposits in us. The anointing we operate in doesn't move Him because He gave it to us. The great testimonies he gave concerning His vessels of old had to do with their disposition and character and not the oil they carried on their head.

Nothing moved God concerning Job than his character. That is why he could say to Satan: “. . . Hast thou considered my servant Job, that [there is] none like him in the earth . . .” (Job 1:8). God couldn't boast of Job on any other thing than his character.

It was the same with David. God refers to him as the man after His own heart. He said that not because of the oil he sent Samuel to pour over his head but because of the way he possessed his vessel. He proved himself fit and sanctified for Divine Use.

Also, notice that in addressing all the seven churches in Asia, God began by saying, “. . . I know your works (ergon).” From the church of Ephesus through to Laodicea, God started addressing them by saying; I know your works (deeds). No reference was made to the gifts or manifestations that operated in the church. Everything had to do with the doctrine they held, the character they portrayed and how they reacted with other vessels. So you see, God is more interested in how we possess our vessels than in how we manifest His oil.

The story of Jesus is no exception. God lifted him up to sit with Him in that height of glory not because of the

mighty works and miracles he did but because of his character. He was a man of humility. He moved the heart of the father as He striped himself of all reputations and go to the cross in humility. God was moved by that simple act of humility and obedience He saw in His Son and by it was compelled to confer on Him an authority that transcends all authority. Character is what moves God.

Any anointing or gift that operates in our life here on earth is only temporal. It is only limited to our stay here on earth. One day, they will all be no more. The Bible even attests to that.

*“. . . whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away” (1 Corinthians 13:8).*

I love one thing Paul said before saying this. He said, “charity never faileth . . .” which in other words means, “love never dies or fails”. This signifies that the fruits of the Spirit have more preeminence than the Gifts or manifestations of the Spirit.

No matter the magnitude of anointing we carry here on earth, when we die, we either leave it behind on this earth or go into the grave with it. We don't carry it along to eternity. We leave everything behind. But the fruits we are able to bear via the help of the Holy Spirit still remain with us even unto eternity. It never dies.

Jesus for example left all His power behind to His church. As he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men (Ephesians 4:8). He gave them to us “. . . to occupy till he come.” He left everything behind to his church. Had he

taken them into heaven, they would have been useless because in heaven there is no need of healing, redemption or salvation and hence no need of a Healer or a Saviour.

Even in heaven, he is not known as Jesus but as The Word. The name 'Jesus' means The Saviour and it is obvious he can't bear this name in Heaven since there is no need of salvation there. In heaven He is known as the **Word of God**.

*"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes [were] as a flame of fire, and on his head [were] many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God.**"*  
(Revelation 19:11-13)

However, the Loving Jesus we know here on earth is the same Loving Jesus in heaven. The Faithful and True Jesus is the same Faithful and True. His personality has never changed. He is still humble, Loving, Faithful, Patient and Virtuous.

This confirms what Paul said to the church at Corinth particularly when he said: "**CHARITY NEVER FAILETH: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away**" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Necessity is therefore laid on us to build up ourselves to manifest the Christ type of life. God won't impart character unto us. We have to develop it ourselves.

To build up yourself in character, then learn to;

### **Exercise yourself**

***“But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself [rather] unto godliness.”*** (1 Timothy 4:7)

In building a strong character whether in preparation for ministry or for marriage, the very first step you have to take is to exercise or train yourself. You have to first discipline or train yourself towards godliness. It is something you have to do personally. No one can do that for you. It is a one-man 'Wahala'. This is what makes character building somehow difficult.

The purpose of training, that is general training, is either to get you acquainted with something or to make you more specialized in something. We were all not born with all the talents in the world in us. Some of us were naturally born preachers or singers whilst others were also born footballers. Every one has his or her naturally endowed gift or gifts. Moving in these gifts demand training.

When a naturally gifted footballer for example trains on a park, his purpose is to build up on himself or to enhance his skills. However, when this natural footballer decides to sing which is very unnatural to him, what he needs again is training. But this time, the initial training is not to specifically build him up but rather to get him acquainted with his new subject. So you see the purpose of training

is either to get you acquainted or to enhance you on what you already have.

With respect to character as well, training serves the same purpose. You can exercise or train yourself in love either to start loving or to love the more. It is all about exercising and disciplining yourself.

I get fascinated when I hear folks say, “I wish I were like you - referring to character.” Of course you can be like any one you want to be. It is just a matter of desiring and training yourself to be like the person you want to be like.

We human beings are naturally not loving, humble or patient. The only way we can start having these virtues operating in our life is by exercising and training ourselves unto them. It will cause us our time, reputation and energy. It won't be easy. It will be a hard nut to crack but I can assure you of its sweet kernel.

You can train yourself to be humble, patient, decent or anything you want to be. There is no need staring into the eyes of a friend and wishing to be like him. You have to begin by exercising yourself and it takes discipline. As you keep training yourself, you shouldn't also forget to test yourself along to see if you are on course. The Bible even admonishes us to do so. It admonishes us to test and evaluate ourselves to see whether we are holding unto the faith.

***“Examine and test and evaluate your own selves to see whether you are holding to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it. Test and prove yourselves [not Christ]. Do you not yourselves realize and know [thoroughly***

## VESSELS: ARE YOU FIT FOR THE MASTERS USE

*by an ever-increasing experience] that Jesus Christ is in you--unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trial and rejected?"*      **Corinthians 13:5 (AMP)**

It is very necessary to test yourself as you train yourself. As you exercise yourself to be humble, you need to be checking on yourself to see if you are really on course. If the purpose of your training for example is to have a very mild temper, you will have to test yourself along to see the progress you are making. You can do this by presenting yourself to provoking situations just to see your reactions to them. That is the only way you can access your progress.

If you want to be godly, you have to first exercise yourself unto godliness. Thank God for prayer but you have to first exercise yourself unto godliness. You will have to take the pain to exercise yourself.

You can exercise, discipline or train yourself not to respond to insults or accusation. You can also exercise yourself not to be offended by what people say or do. The same way also, you can exercise yourself to practice all the good virtues of life. Discipline will make you attain to where you want to attain to.

Sometimes you will have to create the opportunity for yourself before you can exercise yourself. You will sometimes have to create the opportunity for your own self to show some love or some humility if you are naturally not that type. If the opportunity presents not itself, you will have to do that yourself. This is what I meant by saying, it will take you time.

Exercising ourselves unto godliness is not a one day agenda. It is also not a week, a month or a year agenda. It is something we have to do continually.

### **Build yourself**

*“But ye, beloved, **building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,**” (Jude 1:20)*

We can completely and successfully exercise ourselves unto godliness by building ourselves along. There is no way we can attain unto the fullness of what we exercise ourselves in unless we build ourselves along. Building up on ourselves along side exercising ourselves will make the equation balanced.

In exercising ourselves, we discipline our bodies or emotions in the natural but in building ourselves, we discipline our bodies and emotions by the help of the Holy Spirit. Also in exercising ourselves, we build up on our character but in building up ourselves, we build up on our Spirit Man.

Like stated in the scripture above, we can build up on ourselves by praying in the HOLY GHOST or by speaking in other tongues. By speaking in tongues, we exercise our Spirit man and cause it to rise higher and higher.

I know you may be thinking this way: “How does tongues speaking connects with building a strong character?” The answer is that, it has a lot to do with character building.

As we spend time everyday praying in tongues, the spirit man becomes very sensitive and conscious to the

presence of God and that of His Holy Spirit. The more conscious and sensitive we become to God and the indwelling presence of His Holy Ghost, the more it affects our manner of life and conducts thereby making us vessels unto honor fit for the master's use.

There are some levels of godliness we can never exercise ourselves unto without the help of the gift of speaking in tongues. Spending time to fellowship with God everyday in tongues speaking will cause us to rise high and high to fulfill all righteousness. It will bring awesome manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit into our lives. As you put the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within to work by praying in tongues, it will accomplish for you all the fruits of the Spirit.

***“But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].” Galatians 5:22-23 (AMP)***

I will advise you start seeking the face of God to speak in other tongues if you don't exercise that gift because it will build you up to live up to expectation. Just by spending roughly 20 to 30 minutes daily praying in other tongues, you build up on yourself spiritually. You will also build up on your character.



### **Purge yourself**

*“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. **If a man therefore purge himself from these**, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work”*

(2 Timothy 2:20-21)

In taking the decision to build up a strong character, there is also a great need to purge, clean and to consecrate yourself. You will have to disengage yourself from any appearances of evil in case you are engaged in one. This is a must because without it you can't fulfill all righteousness. You should be able to purge yourself from things that are not profitable. No one will help you do this. You have to do that yourself.

Taking this step has a lot to do with discipline and self denial because it involves doing away with some friends and other things that are capable of hindering you from taking the right step. By purging yourself, you create less room for the evil one from coming in to sow tares among your wheat and to rob you of your harvest.

Exercising and building up yourself will be useless, if you refuse to go the extra mile of purging yourself.

If you are seeking for example to live a humble life, there is the need to purge yourself from certain friends whose presence makes you feel proud and boastful. If you are also in dying need to show love to people around you, you will also have to do away with certain friends whose presence arouse hatred in you by speaking evil of every one. You will have to purge yourself from them.

You will also have to do away with certain sights, music and anything that negatively affects you. Some songs are not worth listening to. They don't add anything to you. They rather take from you. From such turn away. Try and make yourself busy by thinking and meditating on wholesome things. Always spend time speaking to yourself is Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs. Not just any song with the name 'gospel' but those capable of adding something to your life.

***“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.”***  
**(Philippians 4:8)**

***“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”***  
**(Ephesians 5:19)**

**Look unto Jesus.**

*“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2 )*

The scripture above happens to be one of my favorite in the Bible especially its first three phrases. At one point in time, it was the main subject of my prayer. I spent hours praying to God daily to give me that needed discipline and grace to fix and keep my eyes on Jesus and on Him alone. For as long as my eyes were kept upon Him, I became the happiest and the most disciplined person on earth. The more I look at Him, the more I become like Him. The more I focus my eyes on Him, the more I live His way. If there is anything I desire on this planet, it is just to sit and behold the face of My Lord just like Mary did.

It humbles and refreshes me. It soothes my sorrow and heals my wounds.

I only succeed in making myself bitter and offended anytime I begin looking at my own self or at someone else. But immediately my eyes get hold of Jesus, I begin to live like heaven on earth. It builds me up in character.

There is nothing so awesome and refreshing than looking unto this infinitely perfect being and keeping your very mind on Him. Fixing your imagination on Him will take away any hatred, offense, pride and any evil thing that hides in your heart. It will mend and revive your broken heart.

As you keep looking at Him, you receive more empowerment to live like Him. Looking at either man or

yourself will only make you more bitter, offended or discouraged. There is no way you can experience the God kind of peace in your life with your eyes away from Christ.

Jesus wants us to live like Him here on this earth. Notice what he said in Matthew chapter 11:29. He said “. . . learn of me . . .” Jesus wants us to learn every single thing about Him and one way we can do that is by looking unto Him and by looking more diligently.

The writer of Hebrews advises us to look unto Jesus diligently.

***“Looking diligently ( unto Jesus) lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled”***  
**Hebrews 12:15 (explanation in bracket)**

Looking diligently unto Jesus is one way we build up ourselves in character. The more we look at Him, the more we become like Him. Desiring to build up a strong character without practicing this scripture (Hebrews 12:2) is nothing more than putting money into a torn pocket.

*building a strong character*

Other titles by the author

***The crying blood of the aborted child***

***The Great Heritage ( a biblical account of children)***

***The true worshippers***

***Relating to the poor (...ye have the poor with you  
always)***

***The mysteries of sex***

***The Blood Jesus Shed***

# vessels

There are many books and teachings on the anointing today with very little being said on character. This extensive classic by Bro. Jeff is an exhaustive study on the topic of character and the anointing.

In this book, Bro. Jeff, uses real life experiences to explain his topic making its content very practical and easy to read. He also explains in it, the process of performing litmus test on vessels and how to study character in a wonderful biblical perspective.

You will become fit and sanctified for the master's use as you take time to go through the pages of this book and to practice its revealing insights. It is a must read for every child of God.

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## **About the Author**

Jeffery Opoku is an anointed preacher and a writer. His deep insight into God's word has earned him many platforms within the evangelical circle to minister to hungry souls and avid seekers of God.

He is the founder and president of the Jeffery Opoku Ministries, a non-denominational intercessory body aimed at bringing revival and unity to the Body of Christ and also stirring the Spirit of love among Gospel Believers of this latter day church.

He is an evangelist and a revivalist by calling. He is also a prolific writer and has many classics to his credit.