I SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED

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Francis Wale Oke



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Chapter One

I SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED



THERE IS A fantastic promise of God that I want you to read and claim. It is in the book of Joel. It appears in seven (7) long verses. Now take your time to read it. There is tremendous blessing in reading the Word.

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the

fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpiller, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: AND MY PEOPLE SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED.

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: AND MY PEOPLE SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED (Joel 2:21-27, Emphasis mine).

I emphasised a phrase in this scripture for your attention. And my people shall never be ashamed.

God does not want His people to be ashamed. In the name of Jesus you will never be put to shame.

To be ashamed is to be embarrassed, disgraced, humiliated, frustrated, and defeated. To be ashamed is to come short of honour and glory. To be ashamed is to come to ridicule and opprobrium; to become an outcast, and stigmatised. When shame is on you, there is no favour, there is no honour and you meet with closed doors everywhere.

Study the scripture quoted above closely. There are several fantastic promises of God in those seven verses. They are things that happen that make God's people to rejoice because shame is far away from them. However,

the exact opposite of what God says here happens when God's people are put to shame. There is fear and insecurity. There is emptiness and barrenness. The enemy devastates: stealing, killing and destroying. There is much lack and poverty. There is sadness.

God does not want His people to be ashamed. In the name of Jesus you will never be put to shame.

But God has spoken so clearly in His word: "And my people shall

never be ashamed" (Joel 2:27). That is a covenant promise for you to claim. That is a word of victory for you to hold against the enemy. "I shall never be put to shame."

Did you take note of the word 'never'? Never. I like that. I shall never be ashamed... in my entire life, in the name of Jesus.

Isaiah got it correctly when he spoke in prophecy:

For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed (Isaiah 50:7).

As you put your trust in the Lord, His help is certain. It

is the person that God helps that succeeds. It is the person that God helps that is favoured above the rest. It is the person that God helps that prospers. When God helps an individual, there is no room for shame. You can then be as

As you put your trust in the Lord, His help is certain. And when God helps a man there is no room for shame.

bold as a lion and set your face like a flint. You can act courageously because your confidence is in the Lord and you know that you shall not be forsaken.

Therefore, beloved, no matter the situation you are facing right now, just make the Lord your focus. He will help you. And you shall not be put to shame.

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called (Isaiah 54:4-5).

Chapter Two

THE ROOT OF SHAME



Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured (Proverbs 13:18).

THE FIRST INCIDENT of shame took place in the Garden of Eden. God gave the first man Adam and his wife a specific instruction: "You can eat freely any of the trees in the garden," God instructed, "but the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil you should not eat. The day you eat of it, you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). That was God's specific instruction with warning. However, Adam and Eve listened to the serpent. Consequently, they broke God's rule. They became ashamed and embarrassed when they discovered that they had become naked. Their cover had gone. They became exposed to ridicule and reproach.

Prior to this, God was their friend. His glory was their covering. They were not covered with clothes and fabrics,

yet they were not naked. God's glorious presence enveloped them from head to toe. Then they sinned and disobeyed God by listening to the devil and immediately the glory disappeared. God's awesome glory and sin just cannot coexist. Naked and embarrassed, they struggled to cover their shame. When God's presence is withdrawn from an individual through sin and disobedience, the enemy can then move in "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10). That was what happened to Samson. It was only after God's presence was withdrawn from him through persistent disobedience and immorality that the enemy could come in to bind him and gorge out his eyes. God's champion became a clown in the court of the enemy. That was classical shame.

It was only after the glory of God left the temple, and departed from the city of Jerusalem that the enemy's armies came and destroyed both the temple and the city (Ezekiel 10:4,18; 11:23). While the glory was still in the house, all adversaries could do nothing, absolutely. But when the glory was gone, shame became inevitable.

It was only after God's Spirit departed from Saul that an evil spirit could come in to torment him. Consequently, himself and his children were killed in battle in one day. "The shield of the mighty is vilely cast away... as though he had not been anointed with oil" (II Samuel 1:21).

Normally, God will do anything to defend and protect His anointed. He does not allow anyone to touch them lightly. Whosoever does, receives heavy judgement from God. The Bible is very clear on this. However, Saul perished

in battle as though he had not been anointed with oil. He died just ordinarily. That was awful shame. It was possible only after God had removed His mercy from him because of persistent disobedience and witchcraft. You shall not be ashamed.

While the presence and the glory of God is upon a man there is absolutely no room for shame. God still saves his anointed (Psalm 20:6). God still defends and protects His beloved ones. The Psalmist puts it

When God's
presence is
withdrawn from
a man through
sin and
disobedience, the
enemy can then
move "to steal,
and to kill, and
to destroy"

beloved ones. The Psalmist puts it clearly when he wrote these lines:

He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;

Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm (Psalm 105:14,15).

Beloved, just make sure you stay in close fellowship with God. Make sure you stay away from sin. Stay under the shadow of the Almighty. With God as your Friend, your Father and your Senior Partner, there is absolutely no room for shame. In the name of Jesus, you shall not be ashamed.

Chapter Three

DEALING WITH THE CAUSES OF SHAME



BY WALKING IN wisdom, we can avoid the pitfall of shame. By walking in humility and the fear of God, we can turn a situation of shame around.

There are twenty things that will surely bring an individual to shame and reproach. If you can take care of these things, you will be free from shame forever.

1. Sin

The number one harbinger of shame is sin. The Bible makes it so clear that righteousness exalts, but sin is a reproach.

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34).

The Bible passage above talks of a nation: but what is true for a nation holds true for an individual, a family or a tribe. Where righteousness is embraced, there is honour, dignity, and exaltation. Where sin is embraced there is reproach, shame and confusion of faces.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. If there be any known sin in your life, repent sincerely, asking the blood of Jesus to cleanse you and then, go and "sin no more" (John 5:14).
- b. Where there is no unconfessed sin in your life make a quality decision to walk with God and to steer clear of sin. Sin will always bring a reproach to any man's life. But "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD" (Psalm 119:1).

2. Idolatry

God hates idolatry with passion. I mean idol worship of any kind. Anything that takes the position of God in your heart other than the true and living God is an idol. God will cause your idol to put you to shame. Anything in which you put your confidence and trust other than the living God is an idol. David put it correctly when he said:

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright (Psalm 20:7-8).

Whether it is an image, a job, some money, an uncle, a godfather, a friend, your position, a property or whatever, if

it becomes your confidence, then defeat and shame will soon knock at your door. But those that trust Him are blessed forever.

> Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Anything that takes the position of God in your heart other than the true and living God is an idol.

For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is (Jeremiah 17:5-7).

Your commitment to avoid shame:

a. If you had been involved in idolatry of any kind, you need to repent, renounce it and destroy all the instruments of idols that are with you. Ask the blood of Jesus to purify you.

- b. Search your heart to discover if there is anything taking the place of God in your life. Anything you trust as your strength other than the Almighty. Break that commitment, in your heart, and trust God alone.
- c. Refuse to associate with anyone, or anything idolatrous, so you do not get contaminated and partake of their judgement.

3. Foolishness

Just as wisdom makes the face of a man to shine, foolishness covers an individual with unlimited shame. The Bible is very clear on this.

The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools (Proverbs 3:35).

When anyone is walking in foolishness, shame shall be his companion and bedfellow. Therefore pray for and walk in wisdom, and steer clear of every form of foolishness to avoid shame in your life. And because you can contact shame by association, refuse to make friendship with a fool.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed (Proverbs 13:20).

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and understanding to fall upon you and fill you to the brim.
- b. In every affair of your life, take your time to think, to pray and to act wisely.
- c. Because the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, make a quality decision to walk in the fear of the Lord.

4. Pride

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom (Prov. 11:2).

God gives grace to the humble and He lifts them up. However, He resists the proud and brings them down. The proud shall inherit shame but with the lowly is honour. If you want to be free from shame, choose to walk in humility. The choice is yours.

Nebuchadnezzer was a classical example. He was mightily blessed by God and given a large, expansive, great and powerful kingdom. Then he allowed pride to enter, and he fell from grace to grass. He was given the heart of a beast and made to eat grass with animals in the forest. Great shame was his portion until he learnt to humble himself before the Lord. There must be no room for pride in your life if you want to live your life free from shame.

No matter how great you are, make sure you maintain a humble heart and shame will be far away.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

a. Repent of every pride and make a commitment to walk humbly with your God.

5. Uncomely Behaviour

Uncomely behaviours are inappropriate behaviours. When a one-time President of the United States of America, went into amorous relationship with a young intern just old enough to be his daughter, that was inappropriate - for his status and office. Global shame was the result.

Uncomely, indecent behaviour causes shame. But the man who walks in integrity has honour. One verse of the scripture says it clearly.

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 (Ecclesiastes 10:1).

We must deal with all the dead flies and the little follies. That is how to avoid shame and walk in honour forever.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes (S.O.S. 2:15).

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. Separate yourself from every indecent relationship, every coarse jesting, and every undue familiarity.
- b. While maintaining a joyful spirit, be sure you are sober and vigilant so the enemy will not take advantage of you.

6. Poverty

There is nothing godly in poverty. The old doctrine that makes poverty synonymous to godliness is from the pit of hell. "The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24:1). When you need money and it is not available, shame is hanging around. When your bills are due and no fund is there, shame is not far away. Poverty is humiliating, downgrading, dehumanising. But prosperity is a tonic. You shall not be put to shame. The Lord shall bless you with abundance.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. Make a commitment to be diligent in your daily business.
- b. Make a commitment to be faithful in tithing and in generous giving to God.
- c. Avoid the debt trap by all means.

d. Be very prompt in obeying the voice of the Lord.

7. Debt

Debt is a stripper of the first class order. It reduces your worth and mortgages your future. It makes you a servant to others; you only labour for others to enjoy. The Bible is very clear that the borrower is a servant to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). Debt has a peculiar way of bringing an individual to shame. You must avoid the debt trap. Whenever you are in need, ask for favour, not for loans. God will honour your faith and supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. You are about to step into a great financial favour right now.

One of our young pastors was going to get married, and he needed quite some money. "Daddy please pray for me," he asked me. "I am going to visit my uncle in Lagos to request for a two hundred thousand naira (N200,000) loan to enable me meet my obligations in getting ready for my wedding," he concluded. His uncle was the managing director of a company in Lagos. "I won't pray that kind of prayer", I replied. "You want to start your home on the foundation of debt? No. Go to your uncle. Explain to him your plight. Then, ask for favour not for loan. I will pray and the Lord will go ahead of you and give you favour in his sight." I concluded.

On getting to Lagos, his uncle that had not seen him for years was so excited that he came in person to inform him of his wedding plans. "Now wait Dele," the man told him, "I will have to do something to help you. I know you will need money now." And the man drew a cheque for two hundred and fifty thousand naira (N250,000) and gave it to him ever before he mentioned anything about money. He was full of joy as he came back to share his testimony.

You too, shall testify of the favour of the Lord.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. Commit yourself to faithful tithing. It will keep you out of debt.
- b. Develop the habit of planning your budget monthly based on what you have. Avoid spending beyond your means.
- Avoid compulsive buying. Beware of covetousness.
 Be satisfied with what you have and give thanks to God.
- d. Whatever your need, ask for favour, not a loan. The favour you need is available somewhere, and God is in control. If you receive it as a favour you are blessed. If you receive it as a loan you may be strangled.

8. Removal of Cover

When an individual's cover is removed, he is exposed to hostilities, attacks, shame and humiliation. As a woman, your husband is your cover. I have seen women undergo such dramatic and traumatic social and emotional changes because their husband is no more. When a woman loses her husband because of death or divorce, the consequences are not always pleasant. I have seen so many shamed, humiliated, embarrassed, oppressed and abused, just because their cover was removed.

As a child, your parents are your cover. The agony and trauma of an early orphan experience cannot be described.

As a believer, your spiritual father is your cover. I have seen churches where the pastor fell into sin with the resulting reproach, disgrace and the untold pains and shame that fell on the members. When a man's cover is no more, he is open to all manner of harassment and suffering. You shall not be put to shame. Make sure you pray for your cover regularly, that the enemy shall not be able to remove him from you.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. Pray daily for those who provide you spiritual or social cover.
- b. Play faithfully the part you are supposed to play in whatever relationship you are into.
- c. If you are in a position of responsibility, please conduct yourself well. Whatever affects you will affect a great multitude. May your life bring joy to

others, not shame.

9. Defeat

Success is sweet. You can see the glow on people's faces when they celebrate an achievement. Defeat is humbling, sometimes humiliating and shameful. Just watch a very important football match, say the final of the World Cup where each team is determined to win. At the end of the game, you will see the joy and celebration of victory and the pains and agony of defeat. You are not supposed to go through life as a loser. You are a winner. You are supposed to be more than a conqueror in the battle of life.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. To be a winner in life, you must put your trust in the Lord. The race is never to the swift or the battle to the strong. Trust God and depend on His mercies.
- b. Fight the battles of life with all your might and with all your heart. Do not be half hearted in life's battles. Your entire life depends on it. Be thorough.
- c. If you have suffered defeat before, rise up and face life with courage having learnt your lesson. Don't give up because of your past experience. Trust God today. The future belongs to you.

10. Frustrations

Frustrations. Delays. Unfulfilled aspirations. Dashed hopes. They all produce so much shame. To set out on a project, and become incapable of finishing it up. To look forward to a beautiful relationship only to fail and be dumped. To lay out a very beautiful plan only for it to die unborn. These things cause much pain and shame.

Your commitment to avoid shame:

- a. Be wise and diligent in all affairs of your life and push through all your plans and projects.
- b. Learn to plan ahead. If you fail to plan then you have planned to fail.
- c. Give yourself to prayer. By so doing, you defeat the negative forces that are working to frustrate your life.
- d. You must learn to live by faith.
- e. Learn the art of patience. When patience is added to faith, it gives no room for frustration.

I have given you these words so that you will live your life to avoid shame. It is better to be careful than to be sorry. Learning from experience can be painful. However, there is nothing worse than not learning from experience. The wise will not repeat the same mistake, even once. Seeing others fall into the pit is just enough for him.

The Lord will help you. He will hold your hands. He will lift you up. You shall not be put to shame. This is what God has promised you in His word. Only believe and you shall see His glory in your life.

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

To be a winner in life, you must put your trust in the Lord. The race is never to the swift or the battle to the strong.

For thy Maker is thine
husband; the LORD of hosts
his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of
Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be
called (Isaiah 54:4-5).

11. Wrong Association

An individual can become a partaker of shame by association. When someone you are openly and closely associated with becomes associated with shame, it rubs off on you. This could be a son, a daughter, a close friend, husband or wife. The Bible makes it clear that he who walks with the wise shall be wise while a companion of fools shall be destroyed (Proverbs 13:20). Again the Bible

warns that "bad company corrupts good character" (I Corinthians 15:33, NLB).

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Bring up your family in the way of the Lord, especially your children. When they grow old, they will not depart from it.
- b. Make sure you associate only with godly people. Avoid the company of the ungodly, the scorners and those who do not fear the Lord.
- c. If you are a young person in the process of making a choice of a marriage partner, choose only from the house of God, from those who share your core values and walk in the ways of the Lord. This will save you from future shame and embarrassment.
- d. If you are already in the company of people whose character you cannot vouch for, quit. The Bible is very clear on this: come out from amongst them (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

12. Slothfulness

Laziness, slothfulness, lack of diligence are open invitation to shame. When someone is playing when he should pray, relaxing when he should labour, or works like a fool without a clear purpose or plan, or fails to prepare for his given assignment, shame is hanging around the corner; it is just a matter of time.

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame (Proverbs 10:5).

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Make sure you are not sleeping in the time of harvest. Work while you should work and lay up for yourself a great tomorrow.
- b. Equip yourself thoroughly for your life assignment. Through proper and continuous education, become a master in your chosen field. The Lord will help you.
- c. Engage in creative thinking and strategic planning for your future, and whatever you have to do.

 Remember the old adage: if you fail to plan, you have planned to fail.
- d. Ensure you bring into conclusion every plan, project, assignment and tasks in your hands. Do not ever abandon a project except you just have to. Bring whatever you do to a celebrated conclusion, and your life shall be full of honours.

13. Disobedience to Divine Instruction

Each time Israel walked in disobedience to God, they were always visited with defeat, poverty and shame. However, when they walked in obedience, they prospered and walked in the blessing of God. Why? It is only through obedience we enjoy the blessing of the Lord. The Bible is very clear that it is only the one who is willing and obedient to the Lord that shall eat the good of the land.

Conversely, disobedience will lead to shame.

Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured (Proverbs 13:18).

You shall not be ashamed in Jesus' mighty name.

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Always take your time to seek the face of the Lord for His direction for your life.
- b. Pay close attention to whatever it is the Lord says to you, and make sure your obedience is prompt, total and complete.

14. Betrayal

Acts of betrayal bring shame. Jesus would not have been arrested if there was not a betrayer within. Judas betrayed

"innocent blood" and that led to his shameful end and eternal doom. That also led to the shameful crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, but God turned it around. It was according to His plan and purpose. However, acts of betrayal will lead to shame. As a person, you should have a faithful spirit and be sure you are not a betrayer.

If you are a leader, (and everyone of us is a leader in his or her own right), be sure you check up your people properly

and be sure there are no betrayers amongst them, especially those that will relate closely with you. This is *It is only through* what David did to protect himself. *obedience we*

And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, if ye be come peaceably unto me to help It is only through
obedience we
enter into the
blessing of the
Lord.

me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it (I Chronicles 12:17).

Your commitment to avoid shame

a. Develop and maintain a faithful and loyal spirit. Do not allow the enemy to make you a betrayer of a friend, an associate, a leader or a family member. Be faithful.

b. Walk in wisdom and ensure you surround yourself with only tested and faithful people. If you allow yourself to suffer betrayal, your life certainly will never be the same again. Take heed in this matter. You will not be ashamed.

15. Slavery and Bondage

A situation of slavery or bondage where you lose your liberty and freedom and you can no longer determine what you do or what happens to you, is a position of shame.

This is usually the position of a convicted offender. He is no longer in control, someone else tells him what to do, and he has to do it, even if it means walking into the death chamber.

This is normally the position of a fallen hero, like Samson, after being betrayed by Delilah. He was no longer in control. Other people were dictating what he had to do.

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Live your life above reproach that even your worst adversary will have nothing to say against you.
- b. Walk with God in holiness and righteousness and He will defend and protect you from shame.
- c. Walk in wisdom in every area of your life and wisdom will make your face to shine.

16. Exposure

When the secrets of an individual are brought to the open, and they are not good, shame follows.

This is different from betrayal. Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot. But when prophet Nathan confronted David about his iniquity, that was not betrayal.

Jesus warns us about living a double life. He said that there is nothing kept secret that shall not be brought to the open (Matthew 10:26).

Some people's sin shall be exposed now, the world will know, and they will be ashamed. Some other people's sin shall be exposed only on the Day of Judgment, and they shall be ashamed eternally (I Timothy 5:24-25).

On the Day of Judgment, all the hidden secrets of people shall come to the open and there shall be no room to escape. The only thing that can help is to repent now, and be cleansed before the judgment day comes (Romans 2:16).

Your commitment to avoid shame

a. Sincerely repent of every hidden sin and iniquity of your life including all those secret things that others do not know. Repent. Quit sinning. Stop living a double life. This is a sure way to avoid future shame, now and in eternity.

b. Commit yourself to living a clean, open life with nothing to hide. This will give you peace and joy, now and in the future.

17. Loneliness

You need to know how to handle loneliness so that it would not become a cause of shame. Loneliness can bring shame if it is not properly handled. Truly, God never intends for

On the Day of Judgment, all the hidden secrets of people shall come to the open and there shall be no room to escape.

an individual to be alone. He said very clearly "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). However, circumstances of life have forced so many people in our days into a situation of loneliness. You can handle loneliness with mastery while waiting for that condition to change.

I have seen gentlemen and ladies that are ashamed to go for a particular gathering or show up somewhere, simply because they are lonely. Many people battle with severe depression as a result of loneliness. Many have turned to drugs. Many resort to compulsive eating and consequently become obese. Loneliness is driving our world crazy, because we are yet to learn how to deal with it effectively.

If you are caught in this web, there is a way out for you. God will settle you and give you the desire of your heart.

Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come (Psalm 102:13).

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Ask the Lord to give you your own suitable life companion.
- b. Repackage and reposition yourself, so you can find the favour of the Lord and men.
- c. Interact meaningfully with the people of God. If you are going to have a friend, you have to show yourself friendly.
- d. Get into productive living. Get involved in services that will make you a blessing to humanity and enhance your sense of value; while you are waiting for something good to happen to you.

18. Failure

Success, they say, has many relatives but nobody wants to associate with failure. Failure brings shame and reproach. You will not be ashamed. You will not fail in life. If you have failed before, God will lift you up. Failure is not final.

Rise up. Trust God, and go for it again. You will never fail again.

Your commitment to avoid shame

- Commit yourself to doing what you enjoy doing, to which you can invest your whole energy.
- b. Learn the principles that govern success in your endeavours and apply them diligently.
- c. If your hand failed in a task before, never be discouraged. Find out, courageously, why you failed. Learn your lessons and give it a go again. God helping you, you will succeed.

19. Disaster

Unexpected disaster can bring shame. Disaster can come in various forms. Some are products of carelessness, negligence and human errors. Most others are demonic in their origin and nature, like the case of Job. However, God has given a commitment in His word to protect His people "from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler," so that "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday" (Psalm 91).

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and believe His word of promise to protect and keep you.
- b. Take whatever necessary precaution you need to avoid disaster e.g. observe the speed limit rule when you drive and make sure you wear your seat-belt.
- c. Be prayerful and fight the good fight of faith, to deal with every force of evil that would want to bring disaster into your life.
- d. Be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He will always speak to you, and lead you away from disaster.

20. Desertion and Desolation

The Bible says that it is in the multitude of people that the king is honoured (Proverbs 14:28). When key people begin to desert a leader, and this happens continuously, then shame is knocking at the door.

When wife and children begin to desert a man, then shame is hanging around the corner. When husband and children choose to run away from you, then trouble is at hand.

The Bible speaks of the righteous that "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth

shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

His leaf also shall not wither. Did you read that? When the leaves of a tree wither, then people see through the tree. That is shame. When the leaves of a tree are luscious and intact, the tree is covered. You will not be ashamed.

Your commitment to avoid shame

- a. Ensure you surround yourself with good people. You are only as strong as the people around you.
- b. Ensure you take good care of your relationships. Oil the relationships properly and keep them wellserviced. Give your people the kind of treatment that will make them committed to you continuously.
- c. Live a life of righteousness and holiness, walking daily with the Lord. He will cover you with the right kind of people.

Chapter Four

Experience A Turn-Around



ISTARTED THIS book by quoting from the book of Joel. The promises there are fantastic. They conclude with an emphatic declaration by God: *And my people shall never be ashamed!* (Joel 2:26, 27). What a beautiful promise!

However, if you study that promise in context, you will discover that the specific people given this promise had gone through the most degrading shame ever possible. They had been devoured. They had been captured and laid waste. They were dispossessed and stripped of all their dignity. The house of God had become desolate. They had experienced poverty in its ugliest form. Everything had dried up and there was so much desolation. Just study Joel chapter one and see it yourself.

However, God visited them by His word, called them to repentance and offered them hope. These people had been stripped by their sin, God now moved in to restore what the enemy had stolen. When they responded to God's call, He gave them a complete turn around and poured His abundant blessings upon them again. What a gracious God He is! When the prophet called the people to repentance, he spoke from God this way.

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? (Joel 2:12-14).

And that was exactly what God did. As the people turned to Him wholeheartedly, He was gracious unto them. He showed them His mercies and kindness. He removed His anger and poured out His blessings upon them. There was a complete turn around. That exactly is what God wants to do to you.

Have you ever experienced shame and humiliation as

we have described in this book? Are you going through a period of desolation, loneliness and lack? Have you been stripped and uncovered by negative winds of life, that blew away your cover? Just turn to the Lord with all your heart.

Seek Him with all your soul. Let every known sin in your life be repented of and forsaken. Ask for the Spirit of God to come upon you in wisdom, understanding and excellence. As you seek God, He will turn your pains to gains, He will turn your shame to glory. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He has promised to reveal Himself to you if you will seek Him with all your heart. Moreover, He has given some specific promises in His word about your situation.

For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them (Isaiah 61:7).

It means, for every experience of shame you have ever had, there is double restoration. That was what happened to Job. Now it is your turn, just believe.

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of

Israel, [even] the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack.

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; AND I WILL GET THEM PRAISE AND FAME IN EVERY LAND WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN PUT TO SHAME.

At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: FOR I WILL MAKE YOU A NAME AND A PRAISE AMONGALL PEOPLE OF THE EARTH, WHEN I TURN BACK YOUR CAPTIVITY BEFORE YOUR EYES, saith the Lord (Zephaniah 3:14-20, Emphasis mine).

The Lord has taken away your judgement, you shall not

see evil anymore. Amen. The Lord God is with you as a mighty warrior. He will rejoice to bless, prosper and fulfil His word in your life. The Lord will judge all that afflict you and remove all your burdens.

He will give you praise and fame in every place where you have been put to shame! He will give you a name and a praise among all the people of the earth. That is His promise to you.

As you seek God, He will turn your pains to gains, He will turn your shame to glory.

I really feel like dancing for you.

God is removing your reproach today. No more shame forever. Your complete turn-around has come.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins (Isaiah 40:1-2).

Chapter Five

Double for Your Trouble



ANY YEARS AGO, I visited a family in Lagos that was going through a painful season of their lives, to encourage and pray for them. The woman miscarried a pregnancy and it was very painful in all ramifications.

As I was praying, the Holy Spirit impressed it so strongly on me to declare to them that God would give them double for their trouble, according to the scriptures. I did by faith. They were so encouraged, they held on to that word of prophecy. The baby they lost was a boy. About fifteen months after the incident, God gave them a set of twin boys. They rejoiced greatly and glorified God.

God will give you double for your trouble in Jesus' mighty name.

For your shame ye shall have double; and for

confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them (Isaiah 61:7).

The story of Job in the Bible is known all over the world. He had real troubles in life. Satan came and destroyed everything that Job had – his business, his children, his health. His wife turned against him and his friends became his accusers. Nobody really understood what was going on, that God Almighty permitted Job's trouble so that Satan might know that there are people that will still worship the Lord truly in spite of all the troubles they go through in life.

Certain salient things should be learnt from Job.

In all of his trouble, Job never sinned against God or spoke reproachfully against the Almighty.

Throughout his ordeals, he maintained an attitude of true worship and reverence for the Most High God.

He maintained very strong positive confessions that are being used to bring consolation to countless millions from generation to generation.

He waited patiently for God, knowing that the afflictions would come to an end and that God would vindicate him.

As he prayed for his friends that misunderstood his situation and wrongly accused him of sin, God turned His captivity and gave him double for all his trouble.

And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses (Job 42:10-12).

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit speaks of Job and how he proved that our God is gracious, bringing a complete turn-around for all who are going through the rough side of life, if they trust in Him.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy (James 5:11)

No matter what trouble you are going through currently, look up unto God like Job did. Do not complain or

murmur against God in your trouble. He is not the cause of your troubles. The enemy is behind it all, and God will deliver you and give you double. Only believe.

- ♦ Maintain a positive confession of faith. "What should I be saying, with all that I am going through?" you may say. Find suitable scriptures that deal with your situation and turn them into your own word of faith. "I shall not die but live...." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous...." "My God shall supply all my needs...." "By His stripes, I am healed." "There shall nothing cast their young or be barren...." "The Lord shall cause my enemies to flee...." "No weapon that is formed against me shall prosper...."
- Be steadfast in your commitment to God, in your devotion and worship, right in the midst of all your trouble. This is not the time to run away from God, run to Him.

No matter what trouble you are going through currently, look up unto God like

This is not the time to stay away from the house of God, your deliverance shall come out of Zion. This is not the time to stop paying your tithes, rather give a sacrificial seed that will provoke your complete turn-around. Right in the midst of your adversity, you must not faint or give up. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small"

(Proverbs 24:10). Be like David, encourage and strengthen yourself in the Lord your God.

♦ Wait patiently for the Lord to turn things around. To wait does not mean you accept delay, or denial. No. It simply means your eyes are upon Him, waiting eagerly for Him to come through for you and give you victory according to His word. It means your ears are open to receive His word of deliverance. Wait and He will bring you out of the miry clay and give you a new song.

The story of Job that we talked about is a clear demonstration of what God does to His people that go through troubles.

And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses (Job 42:10-12).

What is it you are going through? You will not be ashamed. God will come through for you and give you victory.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (I Peter 5:10).

There is even a higher dimension to your complete restoration if only you will believe it. This is clearly stated in the book of Proverbs.

Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;

But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house (Proverbs 6:30-31).

The enemy that has come to trouble you is the devil. He is the thief that has crept in to steal the blessing that God has bestowed upon your life. Now we have caught the thief. It is time for him to restore sevenfold. You can make your demands today before God Almighty, the Judge of the universe. He will avenge you of your adversary, and make the enemy pay, sevenfold. You shall not be ashamed. You shall laugh at last, in Jesus' mighty name.

Chapter Six

Cover Me



"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am your servant Ruth," she said. Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer" (Ruth 3:9, NIV).

THIS WAS THE story of the love drama between Ruth, the Moabitess and Boaz, the wealthy Ephrathite. Ruth had lost her husband Mahlon. Her cover was gone. Shamed and exposed she desperately needed a cover. However, she was a faithful and steadfast woman who would not play silly games around. She followed the instructions of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi was her prophet this time. It was by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt and it was by a prophet she was preserved.

Her prophet guided her to a kinsman-redeemer and she went and fell at his feet. It was in the dead of the night. Boaz was that man God had chosen to provide a fitting cover for Ruth, a faithful woman that had been so traumatised in life.

As she fell down at his feet, the man cried out, "Who are you?" Ruth declared her identity and made known her intention. She needed a permanent cover. The story led to a marriage of love between Ruth and Boaz; producing Obed, Jesse, David, and consequently, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, in their generations. She was everlastingly covered. She was never ashamed again for ever. We talk about her now, and we shall still do when we get to heaven.

Jesus is your Boaz at this hour. He has been sent by God to be your redemption. It is by His blood your sins can be washed away and your shame removed forever. It is by Him only you can be justified from all things of which nothing else in the world can set you free.

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39).

There is a particular statement about Jesus that is expressed in the scriptures over and over again. That this particular message is repeated severally in the Bible underscores the special importance God attaches to it. Here is it. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Romans 9:33).

Did you read that? "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." Paul again quoted it in Romans 10:11. Peter put it slightly different.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded (I Peter 2:6).

Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be confounded. I like that. It all has its root in prophecy. Hundreds of years before Christ our Lord was born, this has been prophesied about Him and those who believe Him by Isaiah.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste (Isaiah 28:16).

Whosoever believes in Him shall not make haste. To make haste here is to be in a hurry to disappear, and go into hiding because of shame and embarrassement. This was what happened to Uzziah the king. He started well and he sought God with all his heart. As long as he wholeheartedly sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. That always is the case. With prosperity, he began to build. His fame went

all over the place because God helped him marvelously. He became really strong. Then came pride, followed by disaster that brought shame. It is a long passage but read it

patiently, and learn the wisdom of God.

"Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn

incense upon the altar of incense.

And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

And withstood Uzziah the king and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land (II Chronicles 26:16-21).

His heart was lifted up in pride. He intruded into the priest's office and tried to burn incense on the altar of God. The priests resisted him and God struck him with leprosy for his pride and impudence. With leprosy on his forehead, he was no longer at ease. He had to make haste to leave the sanctuary because of shame. He that believeth on Him shall not make haste.

I want to urge you to put your trust in Christ Jesus. He is your nearest Kinsman. He wants to cover you today - with His blood, His mercy, and His grace.

Like Ruth came to Boaz and her shame was removed and she was properly and lawfully covered, just come to Jesus and He will cover you forever, no matter your situation.

This is your day of grace.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

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grace.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he

with me (Revelation 3:20).

Chapter Seven

HONOURED FOR EVER



OD WANTS YOU to be honoured forever. Honoured in life, honoured in death. Honoured on earth, honoured in heaven. Honoured in time, honoured in eternity. This can be your lot. It has been provided for in God's plan for you, in Christ. You ought to go for that.

On earth, some people have riches but no honour. But both riches and honour come from God.

After this life, some are going into everlasting glory and some into everlasting contempt and shame. It all depends on the choice you make now on earth.

Read what Daniel has to say on this.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:2-3).

From here we find that some will resurrect into everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and contempt.

Everlasting life here does not speak of endless survival. No. No matter which side you fall, you will live forever. The emphasis here is not on length but quality. Everlasting life speaks of the life of God. It speaks of glory, honour, splendour, eternal bliss and blessedness that God bestows on those who believe in Him. Yes, they live forever, in eternal bliss and joy in the presence of God and His holy angels, in a state of immortality. To have eternal life is to enjoy God's quality of life for endless day, where there is no night at all. This is the portion of those who have truly repented of their sins and has made Jesus Christ their Saviour and Lord.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 13:43).

For the other folks, who awake to everlasting shame and contempt, they also live forever but in the lake of fire that can never be extinguished. There, their worms do not die and their fire is not quenched. They are in hunger and pangs, suffering and shame for endless night, in the land of

utter darkness, and pains and suffering for all eternity. This is the lot of those who live and die in sin and do not allow the blood of Jesus to wash away their sins. It is no threat. It is the reality of what is, and what shall be.

The Bible makes it so clear that God will render to every man according to his deeds.

To have eternal life is to enjoy God's quality of life for endless day, where there is no night at all.

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also to the Gentile;

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile (Romans 2:7-10).

We see here that to those who obey the gospel of Jesus and

continue in well-doing with patience, God gives immortality, glory, honour, and eternal life. But to those who obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness, he gives indignation, wrath, tribulations and anguish. This is the lot of those that do evil. There is no respect of any persons. You will reap what you sow.

If therefore you want to shine forever, the following are imperative.

- 1. Be wise. Choose Jesus as your Saviour and Lord. Let Him forgive your sins. Let Him transform your life. Wise men from the east followed His star when He was born (Matthew 2:1-12). Today, wise men and women, wise boys and girls still choose Him to guide them to a blissful eternity. Be wise. Choose Jesus.
- 2. Live a righteous life. Be pure, upright and holy. There is no uncleanness that shall enter heaven. It is not sufficient to claim to be born again, you must be holy. You must continue in the word of God. You must continue in well doing. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Hebrew 12:14).
- 3. Win souls. Daniel makes it clear that those who lead many unto righteousness shall shine like stars forever and ever (Daniel 12:3). That is speaking about soulwinning. The more souls you win, the more stars shall be in your crown when we get to heaven. Therefore win souls.

4. **Don't quit**. It is in patient continuance in well-doing, that we shall enter into our eternal glory. Pressure will come on you from all sides to compromise, to backslide and to cast away your confidence in the Lord. But do not quit. Your faith may be tried but hold on to God's word.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10:35-39).

At last you will see Jesus face to face and shine with Him in glory forever.

By the grace of God, I will see you there.

Write me today!

Jesus Is Lord!

How To BE BORN AGAIN

1. Admit that you are a sinner.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

2. Repent of your sins and ask God to forgive you now.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19).

3. Confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and invite him into your heart.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12).

4. Pray this prayer in faith with all your heart

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I recognise and admit that I am a sinner. I repent of all my sins. I ask you to forgive and cleanse me in Jesus' name. I turn away from a life of sin today. I commit my whole life and heart to Jesus Christ. I believe in my heart and I confess with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord. From this day forward, I belong to Jesus. Thank you Lord, I know I am saved.

5. Join a Bible-believing Church, and ask to be baptised in water.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41).

6. Ask for and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

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).

7. Pray, read and obey the Word of God daily.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed (John 8:31).

PRAY AND BE SAVED

Heavenly Father, I thank you that Jesus Christ died for me. I am grateful He shed His precious blood to cleanse my sins. Right now I come to you in faith. Forgive all my sins. Give me eternal life. Write my name in your book of life. I give my whole life to Jesus Christ now. I receive Him by faith into my heart, as my Lord and Saviour. From today, Jesus Christ is my Lord.

Thank you, Father. I know I am born again.

Glory be to God.

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