

You Can Be Sure You Are Doing It Right

Introduction

I honestly wish I had opportunity to read a book like this while taking off in the ministry. This generation has so much given to them, hence God will require much from them. There are many wonderful books on Christian ministry and administration of spiritual gifts. And I mean books by authors with great track records in the Christian ministry. My reason for writing this is not to join my voice to that of these great names'. My intention is to reach those who could be in the state I was; little education, no mentor to help interpret jaw breaking words, no money to buy concordance, study bible, or Greek-Jewish-Latin-English dictionary.

This is my reason for writing. For I discovered that in the midst of all those books, people still ask the same questions these great authors tried to answer. I considered that there may be need for a simpler explanation from the view point of someone who faced the challenges and by the grace of God overcame them. I believe this is where I come in.

The message in this book is compiled in an answer to questions format. I wrote with utmost care hoping that all should understand me. Let me confess that this style has not gone down well for all. A senior minister in Port Harcourt scolded me for writing as if I were addressing children. I beg to offend such audience once more. I have since written books for this class of readers but this one is for those needing to be led by hand on their journey heavenward, and I know they will appreciate it.

Chapter one

Who made you a minister? 2 cor. 3:5-6

That was the question an Anglican priest asked me. It was during the burial of my elder brother. He had done something wrong and I tried to call him to order. But whether I was wrong or right I faced that question several times as I struggled as an independent minister. Some sat me down to prove to me why going into the minister without being sure that God called me is dangerous. Many who would have been faithful servants of God were discouraged from the Lord's service because they felt God had not called them. A man who is currently roaming the streets of Port Harcourt as a drunk lost his ministry through this intimidation of the devil. He was pasturing a congregation of about hundred members, when he suddenly surprised his members one Sunday morning. He called them together to let them know that he was not sure God had called him into the ministry. Even though the members tried to prevail on him, he was adamant. Today he walks around as a drunk. Let me ask a question; if God had not called him into the ministry, does it mean God created him to be a drunk?

In my first few years as a minister, a man who claimed to be a great servant of God sat me down to explain to me how people go into the ministry. He said some enter by ASSUMPTION, some by IMAGINATION, some by IMITATION, etc. there were many things he mentioned that day but all the grammars ended with -tion or -ism. How I admired him. I was later to discover that my "expositor" was living with another man's wife and was using occult power. He tried to harm me spiritually one night but woke up a mad man. What do I mean? Satan was speaking through him, to confuse me and make me abandon my calling. I know some people who fell for the devil and walked out on their ministry.

I wish to say that it is necessary to be sure that what you are doing is God's will. But you don't need the devil, or public opinion to prove that. The bible can help you. That is what we are about to do. Not every servant of God in the bible had a dramatic calling like Moses and Paul. Not all births of servants of God were announced like that of Samson and John the Baptist. Peter's birth was not announced by angels but his shadow expelled demons. Apollos did not see a blinding light from heaven, but he majored among the greats in his time. See the league he belonged; Peter, Paul and Apollos (1 cor. 3:21). Nehemiah never spoke with angels, but his ministry was not less important to that of Ezekiel.

God rejects nobody

*And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord
to serve him,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to worship him,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant —*

*these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations." Isa 56:6-7 NIV*

This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position." So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? 1 Tim 3:1-5 NLT

The above scriptures should convince you that God rejects nobody. The God of the bible will not meet a man striving with all his energy to please him and throw him out just because he was not specifically called to the ministry. Three things are obvious from these scriptures.

1. Total strangers can give themselves to God's service and he will welcome their service and reward them just like every other person. Foreigners or strangers to the commonwealth of Israel can still serve Jesus. In the contest of the above scripture, God was talking to gentiles, the people Jews call unclean; if the so-called unclean person will only separate himself from his unclean ways, God will accept his service. If that is the case with the unclean, how much more privileged are you, who have been made the righteousness of God through the blood of God's only Son? (2 cor. 5:17, 21). When men say you are not qualified tell them that God has qualified you.

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Col 2:18-19 NIV

2. There is nothing wrong with you just desiring to do the work of the ministry. That means that you don't necessarily need to wait for God to call you. The New Living Translation used two words to express this; **aspire** and **desire**. That means that you can take the initiative in giving yourself to God's service as a minister. So next time the devil begins to ask you through your mind or the voice of another man, "Are you sure God called you for this ministry?" remind him that you don't need to be called especially before you can

serve God. In fact he may taunt you that it was not God who called you but your pastor just appointed you. You need to read this-

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:5-9 NIV

The above scripture states that your senior pastor, just like Titus can prayerfully appoint you as a minister. Thank God for those who had a dramatic invitation to the ministry, but that does not mean that yours is any less important to God.

3. Ministry requires proper preparation and adjustment of perspective if you must succeed in it. If your ministry is not doing well, it is not because God did not call you. The man of God T.L Osborn said that he never heard any dream, vision or voice from heaven. He only read it said in the bible, “Go in to the world and preach...” and he went in obedience. Few ministers in the past five centuries can boast of the many signs that followed his ministry. I will leave the outlined qualifications in the above stated scriptures for your careful assessment. If you find that some of those points are not true in your life, then perhaps that could be the reason your ministry is not making head way.

To round up this chapter, I wish to state that everybody face challenges in life and endeavor; believers and unbelievers alike. But it is devil’s habit to point to your ministry as the reason you are not moving on in life. Take time to look at people around you, are they not facing challenges. In another way devil will accuse God in your heart for neglecting you. Before you agree with him, take time and consider your life. Is it true that God has abandoned you in the past?

Chapter two

Land Marks to an Effective Ministry 1 Tim. 4:15-16

There are many times as a minister of the gospel that questions begin to becloud one's mind as to whether he is on the right lane. This is much the case when there are some challenges in the ministry. If one has a large congregation it is difficult to feel this way, but a man who is more interested to please God than to have public honor will always desire to test his spiritual standing before God. In the gospel of Matthew 7:21-23 a man who had what one should call a flourishing ministry was condemned as evildoer.

I didn't know that I was to face another major storm in my ministry, but a night before this started, I was praying with my wife and the Lord began to instruct me on what I should use as a yard stick to assess what I may consider as evidences that I was on the right grounds with God. What I sensed the Spirit of God saying was that whatever I should see around me or the ministry, if these matters are in their right places then I need not worry. Conversely if this were not the way they ought to be then all is not well. To create emphasis, the Lord means that a minister can really be sure of his position in the spirit before God.

Prayer life

The prayer life of a believer is the first thing he should watch out for. Devil is always out to quench your prayer life. Your prayer life is your source of spiritual power. The level you can go with the Lord depends on the level of your prayer. Jesus Christ told us that in his name we shall cast out demons and be able to heal the sick by merely laying of hands. He demonstrated these things while physically on earth. A lot of us have tried without success to have these signs in our ministry. Have you asked why?

The answer is in the lifestyle of the one who gave the instruction. He said somewhere that it is sufficient for a student to be like his master. This means that in trying to do what Jesus Christ did, we should not forget that it is expected of us to live the way Jesus Christ did. How did he live? He lived a life of prayer. Here is the bible report;

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Mark 1:35-36

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. Luke 6:12 NIV

Prayer was the main force that produced the result we saw in his ministry. If we live otherwise, it will be presumptuous to expect the same result.

Now, this is where prayer becomes a sign post; if for some reasons God is not happy with your ministry or Christian character, the Holy Spirit ceases to enforce your prayer life. You no longer

have the liberty in prayer. As a Christian you should not disregard any sign around your prayer life. It is one way the Lord uses to cause you to begin to ask questions. Now if your prayer life is flowing as it ought, perhaps you have not received what you are asking from God, there is no cause for alarm.

There are occasions when prayers you said for other people bring immediate result but your own prayers linger. Don't be discouraged, God is still with you. Remember when Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, his prayer did not receive a positive response from God. In fact God said nothing to him, but sent an angel to strengthen him. In such cases God is saying I know what you are going through. It is necessary that you pass through that road because of where you are going to.

Word life

What is your relationship with the word of God which is the bible? If the bible closes against you it means that the Lord is complaining about something about your spiritual life. What I mean by the bible being closed is that you find it difficult to read your bible and get inspiration from it. For a gospel minister you notice that you have to rely on things you copied from other people's books. The bed rock of any effective ministry is the word base. How much of the word of God flows in and through the minister's life. Jesus Christ our role model overcame the devil with the store of the word of God in his soul. Even when the devil tried to confuse him, it was with God's word that he was able to floor him.

This is another area God will come to when he decides to let you know that the fellowship between you and him is wounded. The Lord has a way of using the bible to encourage us even when we are going through a difficult time. I am a man that has seen my ministry scatter many times. On one occasion I was wondering in what way it was my fault that the congregation scattered, the Lord led me to John Chapter 6 and I saw how the congregation that gathered before Jesus Christ melted away when he confronted them with gospel truth. Another way this works is that in spite of whatever challenges before you, you continue to receive insightful understanding of the position of God concerning your life and ministry.

On the contrary, if you find it difficult to get fresh meaning from the bible, you do not feel like looking into the bible, and if or when you do they are mere letters, then something is wrong. For a genuine child of God, it is a pointer that God wants you to put things in their rightful places.

Is the word fresh with you, then God is on your side.

Revelation life

Daniel was in Babylon as an exile, God's judgment was upon his people and they were being forced in many ways to bow to idols, yet he was still receiving revelations from God. Apostle Paul was a great servant of God with many churches under his care, yet he was in the prison. When you read the letters of Paul to Ephesians and Philippians you will hardly believe that they came from the pen of a man in prison. If you ask me I believe that Paul achieved more from the prison than he did while walking from city to city. I don't mean to imply that we serve God better while in trouble. I mean that present crisis or comfort do not define ones standing before God. That somebody has a large congregation or plenty of this world's goods do not automatically mean that God is pleased with him more than he is pleased with the one that does not have. As a warning I mean to stress that there are factors we should constantly look out for in our Christian walk and ministry. These are what I call the sign posts to effective ministry. These are the things which should guide our opinions as to what we call success in ministry.

There are times when ones adverse circumstances are because of what God is doing with that life. We see this in the life of Joseph the son of Jacob. God had given him revelation of a great ministry. He thought that the ministry was to take off in his home land, but God meant something else. God begins to set things in place for Joseph to move to the place of his ministry and destiny. That was quite strange to Joseph; he pleaded with the king's cupbearer to help him get back to his home land, where he believed is the place for the take off of his ministry. For as long as Joseph stayed in Egypt before his enthronement, he believed he was in the wrong place. But one outstanding thing about his stay in Potipha's house and the prison was that God was with him. He had an open heaven. He lived in constant fellowship with God hence received revelations on every occasion. He was so sure of his revelation life that he took up other people's challenges knowing that God's grace in his life will enable him to solve them.

What you see now is not the issue, are you hearing the voice of God still? Do you receive revelations from the Holy Spirit? If not, it does not matter what you are seeing around you, you are not safe in ministry if your heavens are closed. Saul, the first king of Israel, lamented;

"I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do." 1 Sam 28:15 NIV

It is a pity that Saul had to get to this point before he made this confession. Many years before he got to this point, bible records;

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." 1 Sam 16:1 NIV

Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. 1 Sam 16:14 NIV

What an irony? God was not with a man in the palace but with a man in the prison. I wish that you keep within your sight the reason for this writing. Don't look out for God's approval on outward things but on the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. One of the things which the Holy Spirit will use to assure you of his presence is revelation. Paul was in deadly tempest in the sea yet he declared,

Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Acts 27:23-26 NIV

Child of God, are you walking in divine revelation? No matter what you are seeing physically, is the voice of God clear to you? If yes, then you are safe.

Preaching life

How do you flow when you open your mouth to share the word of God? If the Holy Spirit is enforcing your ministry there is something you notice when you open your mouth. Apostle Paul describes it this way,

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Eph 6:19-20 NIV

We see here that a Spirit filled preacher receives word to share. He may be versed in bible knowledge but he needs of necessity receive the word he shares from the pulpit. In fact it is very dangerous to sit under a minister who ministers from his heart or head, a preacher who has copied teachings, no matter who he copied it from. Bread in the sanctuary must be fresh. A message that blessed people yesterday may not make sense for the same people today. You may repeat a message but be sure God is leading you to do that. The bible says that LETTER kills. What is LETTER? That which proceeds from bible study or research which God have not quickened through the grace of his Spirit. That one is poisonous. Truth is that as ministers at times for some reasons, we no longer receive fresh word from God but our head is full of stuff we have gathered over the years. At such point our heart condemns us after a pulpit message. Something tugs our conscience condemning us for poisoning the body of Christ. Instead of the usual joy of having served our master, we feel dejected. More often than not, we become sick. Take note that is the Holy Spirit's way of telling you that all is not well.

As a preacher there is this joy you feel when given opportunity to preach; if this joy is absent or stifled, it may mean that there is no flow. On the contrary if there is the flow and you receive word to share, then go ahead. No matter what is happening around you, you are on the right lane.

If the joy is there, then you will have boldness as you share the word of God. The boldness is because of what I call the certainty of our faith. The Holy Spirit stirs this assurance of hope in God that cannot be quenched by external forces. I have seen a wealthy man living in fear of nothing. I once went to see a big minister in Port Harcourt who told his security man to make sure the bearer of any letter opens and reads his letter. He was afraid of voodoo or satanic charms. If you come to this point, then examine your spiritual position. All is not well. I mentioned this to show that it is not about material wealth but the registration of the Holy Spirit's voice in your inner being.

Charismatic manifestation

Look out for miraculous manifestation in your ministry. It is not enough that you know and teach the truth of the gospel. There is the evidence that God is part of what you call truth, and this evidence is when things that are beyond the ordinary happen in and around your ministry.

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me John 10:25

Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

John 10:37-39 NIV

The things that mark an apostle — signs, wonders and miracles — were done among you with great perseverance.

2 Cor 12:12NIV

From the scriptures above we see Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul placing before their opponents the evidence of miracles, signs and wonders to prove that God is with them. Beloved you need this too. Joseph may be in prison, Daniel may be in a foreign land as an exile, Paul may be driven from city to city by opponents, but God's presence is not negotiable. One basic sign that God is with you is miracles, signs and wonders. You may not be delivered from the present challenges but you need the assurance that God is aware of where you are, and that assurance is when unusual things happen around your ministry.

I have heard brethren say that they do not care about miracles but are concerned only about teaching the truth of God's word. Nothing is truer about God than his ability to upset the order of nature. Others argue that the greatest miracle is when a sinner confesses Christ as Lord and savior. That does not mean that lesser miracles are unnecessary. Jesus and Paul said that the

presence of lesser miracles (if we have to call them so), were evidences that they were from God. It was these miracles that moved the people of Samaria to believe Philip as he preached to them.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:5-8 NIV

We are not talking about people believing us but we being certain that God's presence is with us. I have heard pastors with big churches say that miracles happened in their meetings when they were starting the ministry to draw people; now people have come, it is now time to teach them. It is not stated anywhere in the bible that teachers do not perform miracles or that when church grows miracles stop. You may need to go back to Acts of the Apostles.

The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people..... Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. Acts 5:12-16NIV

I wish that you take note that it wasn't only Peter that performed the miracles, though his was outstanding. The reason miracles cease in some ministries is because the ministry is on one man's shoulders. In my mother church we the young men performed more miracles than our leaders but that did not make us want to take their place. This I mention in passing; I hope we keep in view that we are meditating on factors we must not negotiate in our ministries no matter what we are passing through. For me miracles encourage me. I cannot bear ministry without miracles. I mean unusual manifestations of the power of God. Let me say that I have observed that most people who do not see miracles in their ministry are not necessarily living in sin but they have not set their hearts to seek it and ask from God.

Most time in my trying period God will do something like use me to heal a mad person, drive out a demon in a dramatic way, or He will heal a sick person. When I see this kind of thing I am encouraged. On my way from the international prayer and revival conference held in Abeokuta, Nigeria, I heard that my mother was in coma. I did not even have enough money in my pocket, but the great manifestations of God's power I saw in Abeokuta kept me confident that God knows what he is doing. Before I got to her she had gone to be with the Lord.

Let me state finally that the miracles are likely to be in line with the nature of your ministry and gift. No matter how he does it, we need miracles, signs and wonders in our ministries. We will come to this point again when we discuss how to operate under the anointing.

Chapter three

How to take off with God's mandate 1 Tim. 4:14

One of my protégés called one day to state the disturbance in his soul about how he can be sure he is walking within the precepts of God's will for his life. He narrated the revelations he had received and other messages he had received from other servants of God pointing to what they believed was God's will for his life. Let me state that many are stagnated in the Christian walk not because they don't want to obey God but because they don't want to fail God. Devil knows how desperate any genuine child of God is to do God's will, so he sets up many questions in their hearts. Most of these questions tend to cast doubt on the motive of the Christian; "Is it not because you want people to notice you that you are doing this?" "Is it not because you want to become like Bishop so and so? You vowed never to plant a church or become a local church pastor so that no man will pay you for doing God's work, so what do you want to do now?"

At this point the believer stops doing that which he should be doing. At times one should move from a particular ministry position, he knows he should and every physical signs supports that it is time to move, but Satan sets questions based on righteousness: "Wait for further confirmation from other believers. Wait and be very, very sure." Yet he may say that there are not enough resources yet. Wait until you retire and get your retirement benefit so that you plough the money into the ministry. "God is never in haste. Sinners were there before you were born and they will be there the day you die". The honest believer normally stops at this point. It is with these issues in mind that I present these tit-bits. My intention is to guide the honest seeker to the right way.

I wish that you note that God can never punish you for preaching when he has not asked you to preach, for praying and fasting for missionaries and pastors when he has not asked you to do so or for visiting the sick in the hospital, sharing tracts in public places when he has not asked you to do so. God is not a task master but a father (Luke 11: 11-13; Ps103:13). He will not punish you for trying to please him and then fail along the line. There are things that are stated as God's will on general terms; for example, soul winning. We will also try to review them before we conclude on this topic.

I believe that if you follow the steps I state below you will not be far from God's will.

1. Write down what you believe God is laying in your heart to do.

***Then the Lord replied:
"Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald may run with it.
Hab 2:2 NIV***

Putting it down on paper will allow you consider the possible implementation. If it stays too long in your head without you developing it in any way it may lead to confusion or you forget it. In fact once you succeed in putting it on paper you have taken a step forward. The scripture above says that either you or anybody else who would want to run with it will have a good understanding of what he is up against.

2. Note the available resources. You may not have all the money and materials but for sure you have some things. Put those things down. We will consider what may be termed available resources later. Because at this point is where many people make a big mistake. One may not have cash to print tracts or buy a plot of land; he sure can invest his day in fasting and prayers. We will come back to this.
3. Note the unavailable resources. For sure there are things that can aid your work which you don't have now. The reason you write them down is so that when they come into your hand you will remember why the Lord has sent them to you. The absence of this is one reason people divert money meant for God's work to spend them on frivolities. Again if you are asking for these things from somebody you know what you are talking about.
4. Start with the available resources. Don't wait until you get what you don't have for now. Start work with what you have in your hand. Just go as far as you can go now. Do what you can do now. No matter how small. God will judge you according to what he has made available but not on what is not available.
5. Share the vision with people. There is the middle place in sharing your vision with people. Joseph shared his vision with his brothers; it became a cause to kill him. Even though they meant this for evil, but that part they played was what Joseph needed then. If they didn't do that, Joseph would have wasted more time out of the place or location where his ministry will be fulfilled. Nehemiah was more careful, he took time to pray about it, reviewed it many times in his mind while waiting for the right time and right people to share it with. I believe Nehemiah's example should be our model. You just must tell somebody about your vision. Jonathan the son of Saul shared his vision with his armor bearer and that enabled the young man to see where his boss needs help. Naaman needed healing and it was a family issue, hence a slave girl in the family could offer her contribution that brought the solution. This should teach us never to despise people as we share our vision, but note also that those with whom you shared your vision could become Satan's tool to hinder you. So be prepared for either way.
6. Network with others whose vision do not clash with your vision. Honestly, operating as an island is not always the best. Before Paul became the great apostle to the gentiles he was with the believers in Antioch; from this point God sent him out with Barnabas and then it came to a point he was released to stand on his own. In this regard there is an area I see among young ministers that is sad. They come to a meeting or ministry which they

believe is another man's ministry, and they don't give their heart to it. They come only to see what they can borrow to make up their own. They are busy on themselves. This is flesh in action. If you are not faithful with another man's work who will give you your own? The work is not the man's work; it is the God who called you that sent him. Your negligent attitude is noted by the God who sent you. Remember also that it is what you sow in the other person's ministry that you will reap when you start your own. Network with other ministries whole heartedly, when it is time for you to leave God has a way of leading you out. In any place that God permits you for some time to be, there are things he hopes that you will learn from there. If you are half hearted about it you will never be able to learn. You stay there with a negative spirit of criticism; there may be some things that the head minister is doing which you cannot understand then, when you start your own ministry you will face the same challenge but because of your wrong spirit you would not have learnt how the other minister came out of it. Some ministries you will work with may not give you money but connections you get there will be used by God to aid your own work.

Chapter four

What you note as resources Luke 16:10

Like I said before, many people do not understand what may be termed resources. Most people consider money as all that they need to make it in ministry hence go all the way to get it. They get surprised like all else who followed that pattern that money does not bring effective ministry. Let me stress that it is rare to find a ministry motivated by the availability of money thrive in the power of the anointing. If you ask me, I will say that that is why God had to send Jesus Christ from a poor background. Most of the earliest disciples also came from a no-body background. That does not mean to say that money is not important in ministry, but to stress that money is the least requirement in ministry. The devil's game is to make the beginner see it as the foremost tool for effective ministry and treat it as such. And the bible states,

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Tim 6:10 NIV

In my years as a preacher moving from place to place and meeting all kinds of ministers from different countries and backgrounds I came to the above conclusion. I discovered that what one is not able to do with little money; he may never be able to do with much money. I make emphasis again that the one who wishes to take off in ministry should set priorities right. Ask yourself the question, "What do I really need for the task God has given to me?"

Let us take for instance that God has called you to be an international evangelist. I added the word international because that is what everybody wants to be these days; international pastor, international bishop, international preacher and so on. Let's say that God has spoken to you clearly about this; what should you do? We said earlier that you take a piece of paper among other things write down what you have presently as available resources to get there. Let us assume that you are jobless and with no means of income. So, what do you note now as the available resources? I hear somebody say, "That is exactly what I am saying, what resources can I now note as available resources?"

TIME

One obvious resource you have at this point is time. The one who squanders time is not less guilty than the one who squanders money. If you have not found yourself in a situation where you cannot sit quiet for a minute because of the nature of your job, you will not appreciate time as a major resource for the take off of your mandate. As an unemployed or self employed person you have time on your side. So what can one do with time? Many people squander time day-dreaming and wishing for what cannot be. As a young man time was what I had at my disposal. I didn't have money, my business was sinking and no one to borrow from, and hence I spent my time in prayers. I was a bachelor and lived alone. I was able to have thirty days fast in my house.

I only went out in the evenings to the house of a lady whose heart God had moved to feed me. But guess what? Most people who have this kind of privilege will stay back to watch TV after and then discuss politics. This I never did. After my meal I prayed with the family and returned to my meditation. That was the bed rock of the great ministry people see today. From there I paid visits to some families that had need of prayers. My pastor was too busy to visit them, but I had all the time in the world. As I visited and ministered to them God honored me by healing and delivering them from their troubles. The result was that God also opened their hearts to me. They became my fall back in times of financial need. In those days people will rather call my attention than wait for busy mighty men of God. I did it as humble as I could and God was with me confirming his word through my availability. Those that want midnight prayers, I organized one for them alongside other jobless young men like me but attached no commercial value to it. Then and even up to this time, I do not attach price tag on prayers and God's gift.

Time is a resource; learn to make a good use of it. You can go sharing tracts, preach on "morning-calls", preach in buses and other public places. It was during a tract sharing outing that I met the man who recommended my book, Pastor Lukas' Church, to Scripture Union Press and Books (SUPB Ltd), the company that gave me the widest publicity.

There will be days in the ministry you cannot afford time to read your bible as you ought to. In this time of "idleness" you can discipline yourself to read your bible back-to-back several times. You can rest very well by day so that you can spend enough time in mid night prayers. If you want to keep vigil of four consecutive hours for three months, you can. This is one of the things that enables you develop spiritual muscles that carry you into your international ministry. No ministry of the level you dream is built on walking from house to house wasting time on frivolities. What most people do is to go farming, watching football matches or reading newspapers. If you have time on your side, thank God for it and then use it. The church or ministry you belong will appreciate if you invested it in her services. Most people, even ministers believe that money is more important than manpower. That is not true. Most great ministries place people on good salaries so that they can spend time in prayers interceding for them. When you see people like Benny Hinn, Uma Ukpai, W. F. Kumuyi, etc, minister with great unction, just know that most times there are prayer warriors under the platform from which they preach. It's an age-old practice. The bible calls them the golden pipes that supply fresh olive oil into the golden lamp stand (Zech. 4:11-14, Rev.11:3-4). Most people who served in this capacity end up pioneering great ministries. This is one of the things young ministers of today do not know hence cannot experience great anointing in their ministries. They now resort to worldly marketing strategies and use of magic to have what God has freely given to them. You can offer counseling services to persons in need; you can hold a small prayer cell with one or two partners. Don't wait to be invited by anybody, initiate a fellowship, if there are no place you can join. Even if nobody else comes, still hold your meetings. Be faithful with punctuality; be committed.

How about reading? Anybody that knows Dr. B C Mbata of Totalcare Ministries Owerri, knows him more for his large library and passion for books. In those early days I was able to read through more than seventy percent of his Christian books. How about writing? You can write tracts and books. My recent publication, *The Widow's Wish*, was written in 1994. I only updated it before publishing.

I suggest that you pause and consider how much time you have now and what you can do with them. Think of hospitals you can visit, books you can write, missionaries you can back up in prayers, other ministries you can help with your strength. There is nothing wrong with you offering your services to them free of charge. In this age of GSM you can pick calls from prayer line for prayer ministries like ours. Truly your time is a great asset, use it.

Chapter five

Other Available Resources Luke 19:23

The peak of my ministry was 2006 to 2010, then at 40 Bathurst Street, Port Harcourt. They remain my glory days even though I have achieved more than what I had then. Circumstances beyond my control led to my losing the property, we moved over to school premises, but the government came up with a policy that banned churches from using government properties. We hired Guest Houses but the landlord also said he did not want to have my office in 40 Bathurst. People I had held as very close friends began to abandon me. There was so much confusion everywhere that I did not know which problem to face. I was forced to relocate my residence to Rukpoku, a distance of more than six kilometers. Distance apart, the traffic between Bathurst street and Rukpoku is such that one spends three hours on the traffic. The devil was not watching from the spectators stand. My computers developed mysterious problems such that they all broke down. When I tried to recover documents from the Hard disk I discovered they were all lost. Only a fellow writer will understand what it feels like to lose intellectual properties. There is no way to get them back. I wept for days and soon sank into self-pity, and that was where devil wanted me. I thought of how to start again. Scripture Union Nigeria had adopted and published my book, Pastor Lukas' Church, but royalties were not coming. Even if they came what can one achieve with it.

It was in that situation that the Lord taught me the principles I am sharing with you now. The Lord led me to do what I have stated in this book and discovered that I was not as hopeless as I had believed.

I will now state things that I discovered as available resources and how I applied them. I need not tell you what result I had, but my present international status was achieved then.

I had a praying wife as my partner and confidant – Only those who have problems in their marriages will understand what I mean here. I know some men of God whose wives are the major discouragement in their ministries. When such come to the point I found myself their problems are multiplied. But I was lucky that not was the case with me. We mentioned prayer earlier, having a prayer partner is not common these days. Prayer is not a common hobby among Christians of our generation. But my wife remains a major back bone in my ministry. If you have a wife like mine, then thank God for it and start holding prayers with her. It can be very comforting.

Even though I lost my office at Bathurst Street, I belonged to another Christian fellowship whose offices are available to me. It was some distance from my office and also far from my residence, but it is a choice location in Port Harcourt and available for my use. Another challenge was that this ministry does not use sign board or any form of publicity. I had to choose to operate in the same way. It will not be reasonable for me to mount sign-board where my host does not use

same. I used the office without the sign-board. I was able to use some of the computers and other office equipment. As should be expected some who were there before me did things one may consider as persecution, but as should be the case, I soon devised the attitude that cushioned them. Here let me make some emphasis; it has been generally observed that people who have lost direction in life are always in the habit of acting as judges over those who are moving ahead. This is not the problem; the problem is that the man on mission more often than not stops to respond to their criticisms. I made that mistake before, but at this point I am stating I was much wiser. I gave myself to my business especially when the President of the fellowship did not share their views. That office was available resources and I used it.

I miraculously recovered the documents I had lost from my computer. Somebody said that God assists where you persist. One day I had a leading to go to some of the CPU I threw outside which had been lying under the rains for at least two years. I brought out the hard disk and gave it to a computer engineer. Honestly speaking this is not scientifically possible; I found all the missing documents in them safe and intact. I give God the praise. I can now look at my documents and continue from where I stopped.

When I saw that my publisher was not faithful with royalties from my book, instead of going to court with them I started publishing my own edition of the book and as I am writing this I have put into circulation up to fifty thousand copies of Pastor Lukas' Church and other titles. Again God assisted me and gave me a market. My publisher did not give me royalties but their contribution gave me a very wide coverage, and very soon people began to call me from many parts of Nigeria and beyond. Among the callers were pastors and Christian leaders. They testified to the blessing they got by reading my titles. Some wished to invite me to minister in their churches, but some could not foot the bill for the kind of meetings I wished to host. So I wrote them asking them to help in coordinating conferences for me while I sponsored financially. Many were glad to do so. I did not go for TV and Radio publicity; I used church auditoria instead of hired halls. I asked my coordinators to involve umbrella Christian bodies like Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Pentecostal Fellowship in Nigeria (PFN). I did not have money like the big names but I sure had some things and those things I used. That was the birth of International Prayer and Revival Conferences (IPRC) that has spanned Nigeria East, West, North and South, and most African countries. Somebody may say, "You sure had money to do all this". I tell you the truth I never had. I went about asking for assistance from people with whom I shared the vision. Some thought I was crazy, some thought that nobody will listen to me; others doubted the sincerity of my network partners. By God's grace I was able to continue. There were those who joined me because they thought I had plenty of money to spend, when they saw they were mistaking, they abandoned me. But God never abandoned me. He lavished his anointing power on me. Later we will come to how you can walk in the highest level of anointing even if you are not Benny Hinn or Renhard Bonnke.

Did I face discouraging challenges? Yes! And many of them, but because I knew what I was doing, I knew where I was going and what God had laid in my heart, I pressed on. Let me state that anything short of this attitude means you will never make it in your ministry.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:12-14 NIV

The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

John 8:29-30 NIV

I have stated all these in a very simple honest way to show that most of what you call great ministries today started as you are about to start. What was available to me may not necessarily be what is available to you presently. So look around you and ask yourself, "what are the things available to me now?" then start thanking God for those things and then begin to put them to use. Let me share this with you. I once was walking past a church in an interior part of Port Harcourt. The church could comfortably seat hundred worshippers and the building has been finished. It was in densely populated neighborhood. I walked in to find a pastor who cannot be more than thirty five years. As I interacted with him I learnt that his wife of four years was teaching in a private school somewhere. He spent most of his time farming. The young man told me how difficult ministry was around his neighborhood. I told him if he could not make impact in such a neighborhood when his marriage has not brought forth fruit of the womb, I doubted if he can make any difference when children start coming. The wife was a trained teacher; instead of pioneering a school in the church auditorium she was going to work for peanuts somewhere else. He does not have tracts ministry and instead of reaching out to the neighbors with the gospel he busied himself trying to earn a living.

This is the case with most people God has endowed with great opportunities. I encourage you to look around and start manifesting.

Chapter six

How to Work Under the Anointing Act 1:8

More than a few times in my ministry I have had young men ask me, “Sir, how do you do that?” this question comes when they see me expel demons, heal the sick and mostly when I operate in the gift of word of knowledge. They discover that when I cast out demons I am so confident that they will obey me and leave. They can see that I don’t negotiate or beg them, and that I don’t intend to spend the whole day trying to expel one demon.

Jesus said that we can do the things he did while physically on earth. It is my intention to bring you to some simple principles that will enable you do more than I have done.

Understand that it is the will of God that you walk under the anointing – you should not be begging God for the anointing. It is his honest desire that you have it. If you don’t experience it, it is not because he has not given it to you. As long as God is concerned he has made it available.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV

God wishes that through the promises of scripture that you will be able to function under the anointing – participate in the divine nature. That is, do the things God does.

If you create the right environment, you have the anointing. We have said this before; if it is not manifesting check the environment around you. Seed don’t struggle to germinate neither do children spend sleepless nights thinking how they can grow or bird spend all their life learning how to fly. There are principles that exist naturally in these things that enable them succeed. In the same way there are some spiritual principles in you to enable you walk under the anointing.

Note most importantly that how you see things is how they will manifest to you. A wrong perception of the anointing could be a hindering factor to your walking under the anointing.

Anointing is available to every believer. You may not be able to do all that I am able to do, but that is not because you cannot. It is simply the level you are operating now. If you believe that anointing power is not for today, there is very slim chance that you can walk under the anointing.

If you believe that you are too unclean or uneducated to walk under the anointing, your belief will build the barrier in your spiritual growth. God is so eager that you operate under the anointing that he opens the door so that the weakest believer can still do the very things that Jesus did and even greater. There are two ways you can walk under the anointing.

1. Faith in the Name of Jesus – take note of these scriptures,

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not

hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Mark 16:17-18 NIV

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." Luke 10:17 NIV

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil 2:9-11 NIV

When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?.....

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. Acts 3:12, 16 NIV

I underlined those points to enable you understand my points better. There is anointing power in the name of Jesus. You can operate under the anointing in the name of Jesus if you can put implicit trust in his name. In this case you may not be carrying some special grace in your life. This anointing is available to every believer in Christ Jesus. You can operate under this anointing. Peter said there was no righteousness on his side but just simple faith in Jesus' name.

Next time you meet a difficult case, just forget about your short comings and address them in the name of JESUS.

I see it necessary to sound a note of warning here. The scriptures warn that this level of operation can have eternal damaging effect on the operator.

*Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'
Matt 7:22-24 NIV*

On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your

name.' 23 But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.' Matt 7:22-24 NLT

No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1 Cor 9:27 NIV

Most people operating under this anointing tend to take things for granted. They conclude that the manifestation of God's power in their ministry is a sign of divine approval, so they fail to walk in personal consecration. In fact many of them live in overt sin. The NLT put it clearly, You... break God's law. Apostle Paul said that it is possible to be used by God and dumped at last. I pray that this will not happen to any reader of this book.

2. Gift of the Spirit – the second way to work under the anointing is through the gift of the Holy Spirit; that is, there is a special endowment of some gifts to enable one perform extraordinarily in God's service. Let us try to see this through the eye of scripture. There are two men in the bible remembered for their ability to interpret dreams and administration, Joseph and Daniel. If Joseph faces a challenge on a particular dream or interpretation, he does not go to pray or fast. He looks at some points and principles in the dream and used them to interpret the dream. In all occasions he was called up he interpreted the dreams correctly and his administrative guide lines proved right. That is a man with a gift. It is endemic. That was not the case with Daniel; he must need pray, search the spirit realm and must of necessity be in a particular spiritual state to function. That is what it means to operate under a borrowed authority as we discussed above.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 1 Cor 12:7-11 NIV

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Rom 12:6-8 NIV

This is not a book on spiritual gifts so we have to leave that for another time.

Those who have gifts know it and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit they will know how to operate under it.

Chapter Seven 1 Tim. 4:7

Things That Can Hinder the Manifestation of Anointing Power

Wrong belief –

We mentioned this earlier; I once met a young evangelist who believed that all he was out to do was to win souls. He said that he was not interested in miracles because miracles are demonic. He was taught by those who disciple him that the era of miracles are gone. Another missionary believed that we do not need to bother to cast out demons today because demons are nothing at all. Yet, somebody else believed that miracles are too high a thing to ask from the Lord because it is for the office of apostles and bishops to manifest such. For all these people, it is almost impossible to walk in the anointing because their faith says No to it.

Self-centeredness –

Satan tried this on Christ in the wilderness temptation; turn stone into bread that you may eat. Do it for yourself. This is when we want to manifest the grace of God for our own interest. Many times in my ministry I considered charging people money for prayers and ministry. I thank God who restrained me. The powers with which I do these things don't belong to me, how then can I charge money for it. If I do, the owner of the power will abandon me, then I have to resort to charms and mystic materials.

Another way this works is when you want people to worship you because of the grace of God in your life. You then begin to carry big titles about, and then intimidate people with your track record as a great miracle worker. Since God is not willing to share his glory with any other person (Isa. 42:8), he abandons you.

There is still another way this works: when someone feels that he has to merit the grace of God. You feel inadequate because you have not prayed or fasted like some great men of God. You will never qualify for it; just believe in the willingness of God to touch people through you. God is eager to use you, so just let him.

Defilement of sin-

Most believers do not know what sin does in their life. They concentrate on the eternal consequence of life of sin, and ignore its immediate effect. When any genuine child of God lives in sin, it affects his confidence and boldness. The bible says that the righteous is as bold as the lion (Prov. 28:1). That lion-boldness is what prompts this kingdom confidence in you. If for any reason this confidence is lacking, it is difficult to function in full capacity. That is why devil keeps trying to make you fall into sin. With this understanding, you can now see why you should not give up on your pursuit of a godly

life. But note also that in as much as you are not willing to give up on your pursuit, devil is not going to stop tempting you. Your success depends on your ability to continue in a sinless living, and his success in pulling down your ministry depends on his ability to sow sin into your life. Your success means the destruction of his work and deliverance for God's children in bondage to Satan and his cohorts. So stop seeing sin only in the area it hurts God, but also the area it hurts you and your ministry. If you love your ministry, then resist sin with all your might.

Cross Carpeting –

The ministry is like a race, and the major rule in the race is that you must keep to your track.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 1 cor. 9:24 NIV

If you remember I mentioned that every believer can function under the anointing and have miracles, sign and wonders happening there. The tendency is that immediately one notices these, he concludes he should go and open a church, or at least be honored with the “exalted office” of a pastor. If this does not happen, our brother becomes offended and starts looking for where this can be accorded. The result is that a ministry that started with great evidence of divine approval begins to fade off. Remain faithful in the area God has called and placed you. Do it with all your might. When the time comes for your exaltation, God knows what to do. Do not seek your own honor. Whatever God has called you to do is important to him. Be faithful.

Lack of personal discipline –

Even though we mentioned earlier that you can walk under a borrowed authority, there is the need that you discipline yourself as one in a serious business. Prepare yourself like somebody who values his office. Athletes, doctors, engineers etc do a lot to be qualified and fit for their task. Let not the Lord's servant think less is required of him.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 1 Cor 9:25-26 NIV

Once in a while I go jogging, but I know I am not competing with anybody and have nothing to lose if I don't do much. At times I stop jogging and walk instead. All this is because I have no prize to win. But some people make their living out of running and other athletics. For such people it is much more serious business. I was once into boxing too. When you are not fighting with anybody you know there is no danger if you lose concentration. But it will be suicidal if you do that in a title fight in the ring.

How do you see God's calling on your life? The bible says that if you value your ministry, you will go through strict training. Strict training in prayer and fasting, in bible

study, in attending conferences and going to prayer retreat camps. You will lay aside everything, friends and jobs inclusive, which can hinder you from fulfilling your ministry. I wish to encourage you to value your calling and ministry. Put in everything you can to fulfill your ministry. In eternity you will not be asked how many cars or houses or children you had here. Or how big was your cathedral. The question will be, "Did you fulfill your ministry? Did you do exactly what the Lord brought you forth in this world to do?" This is what you should concentrate your effort to. Sorrow will fill the hearts of those who had majored in anything beside the reason God created them. How they will lament, oh, how they will mourn as they discover that they have wasted their time on earth gathering things that do not matter before our God, Savior and King.

Disobedience –

This is one subject any believer anywhere can discuss even near to perfection. We always refer our audience to King Saul, and emphasize on how God told him to do something which he failed to do exactly. We remember that epic declaration from the prophet Samuel, ***Obedience is better than sacrifice and rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft.*** We quote this for others and use same to rebuke erring children. But the same person is not walking in obedience in his walk as a Christian. I once met some papers on the prayer closet of one of my friends; it contained some things he had jotted down from a revelation God gave to him. When I challenged him about it, because the instruction was long overdue and he had not taken any step to obey them, he rebuked me for prying into his secret place of prayer. Today that servant of God who carried the anointing is in a state I don't wish any child of God.

When you delay or ignore any instruction from God, it is disobedience. The only reason you can delay obedience for one second is when there is no absolute clarity. Here again we get crafty; when we want to do what we like we don't wait for clarity, but when it is something that disagrees with our selfish desires we use the ground of CLARITY as excuse. Anointing means to act in the place of God in some matters and God cannot permit a rebel to act for him, not to talk of exercise his power. You cannot carry the anointing in a state of disobedience.

About the Author—

The author is the founding president of Prayer Network for Universal Revival (PNUR), a Christian ministry praying and working for revival in today's church. God has used him in bringing salvation, Deliverance and revival to many across the globe. He has authored among others, *PASTOR LUKAS' CHURCH- Story of the pastor who visited Hellfire, Confronting Witchcraft in the Neighborhood, The Right Ways to Fast and Pray, How to be Delivered and Remain Delivered, The Nazirite; God's Response to Decay and Complacency, Who Told You that You are Naked?*

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