

MEDITATION FOR TODAY

[MFT]

A daily devotional Biblestudy guide for the year



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FOREWORD

We do not own ourselves, nor create the new day. We ought to take early time in a solitary place to ponder God's word, pour our hearts and commit our aspirations to Him, get and prepare to follow His instructions and directions. Jesus, our example, did so (Mk. 1:35), and excelled.

We need not keep for ourselves alone the benefits of our 'quiet-time' or 'alone-with-God'. We ought to share them thereby spurring one another on toward love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24). October 20, 2015, a believer started doing this through sms sharing with recipients selected as led. Following confessed positive impacts on their lifestyle and spiritual growth, some of them requested a collection of them to be published for a wider reach and for keeps. The result is *Meditation for Today* (MFT), a handy resource for daily devotional Bible meditation for those yearning to get closer to their Creator.

The sms brevity is maintained, while revision of most of the messages has ensured fresh insights. A meditational approach to using it is prescribed for internalisation of scriptural precepts and their effective application. Actioning the Word is profitable, as head-knowledge of the Scripture provided by hearing, reading, studying and memorizing, profits little and cannot guarantee steady spiritual growth.

Most devotional reading guides offer commentary on a topic and selected text for the day. Topic tends to limit focus of expectation and understanding of the reader to only what the topic suggests. Avoiding this snag, *MFT* takes the user on an untitled meditation, offering more and varied insights.

Cited scriptures need to be studied along in a meditative manner, possibly from the Bible version indicated. A section is provided for personal notes on good examples to copy, bad examples to avoid, warnings to heed, and important lessons to apply. Abbreviation used for any book or version of the Bible is not confusing. AMP means Amplified version.

All weaknesses are the author's. All glory belongs to God – the source of godly wisdom (James 1:5), the enabler and energiser of all godly efforts (Phil. 2:13). If you benefit from the resource, kindly share with others. There is love in sharing. However, kindly note: *MFT* is not for sale. I receive without paying, I give to you without asking you to pay, and you ought to share with others without asking them to pay (Mtt. 10:8).

JANUARY 1

It is almost a fashion for most people to make new year resolutions to guide lifestyle. The following new year resolutions are worthy of consideration:

1. That I may know Him ... (Phil. 3:10-11). Where ignorance thrives, offences against God and man are rife. Knowing your Creator and Saviour is of prime value, and the place to start.
2. Consistent righteous living, no matter what (2 Tim. 1:11-15, 4:7). Always looking up to what God says - not discouraging sights, storms of life and comments from faithless consorts.
3. Christ-centred, Holy Ghost-directed living (Rom. 8:14) in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you must shine as light (Phil. 2:15; Mt. 5:14).
4. Integrity – always thinking, talking and doing what is true, honourable and right (Phil. 4:8).
5. Constant self-examination and confession, to maintain right standing with God (1 Cor. 11:31; 1 Jn. 1:8-10).
6. Staying connected to God through diligent Biblestudy and prayer, fellowship and godly company, witnessing and discipleship (Acts 2:42).

Personal Note:
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JANUARY 2

In the new year, the future is as bright as God's 7,484 promises. God is faithful (Heb. 10:23), thoughtful and willing (Jer. 1:12, 29:11; Nu. 23:19), omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscience to perform His promises. Your role is to know and believe God's promises and apply them in appropriate circumstances. Do not believe and fear discouraging sights, feelings, storms of life and comments from faithless consorts. Have hope to enable you aspire, trust, desire, anticipate and persevere. Build your hope into faith (Heb.11:1) to please God (Heb. 11:6) and for righteous living (Heb. 10:38). Let your faith produce love. Whatever is happening to or around you, keep hope alive. If you have dropped hope, go back and pick it up. If you have lost hope, retrace it. If you have killed hope, resurrect and revive it. Without hope, there is little else to live for. Hopeless situations do not exist; hopeless persons do. A hopeless person does not realise when God's favour comes. Having hope till the end avails faith and love which excels (1 Cor. 13:8). To come to success, you must pass through persistent hope to provoke triumph over trials and midwife testimonies.

Personal Note:
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JANUARY 3

The Israelites entering the Promised Land would eat and be satisfied from bumper harvest in the land flowing with milk and honey. And, God had to forewarn them against the dulling effects of success and the need to manage success wisely. When they ‘arrived’, they must be careful not to forget the Lord who brought them into the fertile land and gave them power to make wealth (Deut. 8:6-18). You do not know the true character of a man until he gets wealth and/or power (authority). Four classes of people make the earth tremble and the earth cannot endure them: a slave who becomes a king, a fool who gets food, an unloved woman who gets a husband, and a maid who succeeds her mistress (Pr. 30:21-23). In success, watch your ego and fear God!

Personal Note:
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JANUARY 4

Our best havings are wantings (C.S. Lewis). There is always a void, a feeling of emptiness, inadequacy, which only God, the Creator, can fill in our lives (Ps. 107:9; Jn. 4:13-14). Jesus came and seeks to find this void in your life to fill it (see Rev. 3:20). Will you let Him into your life? Watch ego, pride, wealth, power, pleasure, deceiver and other things that make you feel you have no need of Jesus or that you are better than those who seek Him.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 5

The blessing of the Lord, it makes truly rich and He adds no sorrows with it, neither does toiling increase it (Pr. 10:22, AMP). Watch the ‘self-made man’ mentality. The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all (Eccl. 9:11, NIV). Apart from Jesus, you can achieve nothing (Jn. 15:5), your toiling and wisdom notwithstanding. The dead or the sick cannot make self, nor can any make self without first having life from God. Take not and share not God’s glory.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 7

God formed us from no existence and absolute nothing; ordained us to somebody from nobody; raised us to something from nothing (Jer. 1:4-7), for His glory (Rev. 4:11) – not for our pleasure, wickedness, oppression of the poor and less privileged and other self-centred acts of man’s inhumanity to man. Always think, speak and act according to God’s purpose for making you what you are – to glorify Him.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 8

God of distinction, absolute, excellence is your Creator. He is not a God of confusion, compromise or mediocrity. In fact, He is a God of extremity: heaven or hell, good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, holy or unholy, believer (born-again) or unbeliever (not born-again). No matter what you choose to believe, He disapproves the middle-course and the 'it doesn't matter' mentality. Whenever you decide to move to the righteous side with God, you ought to come out of the rest (2 Cor. 6:16-17; Eph. 5:10-12).

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 9

He who is greedy for unjust gain makes trouble for his household, but he who hates bribes will live (Pr. 15:27, RSV). How much trouble do you accumulate for your household by grabbing unjust gains? How much do you hate bribe? You came into the world with nothing, naked, and will depart from it with nothing (Job 1:21). You will return to your Creator without the things you so much toil for and suppress others to acquire, to be judged by God's absolute benchmarks. Kindly exercise caution, scruples in life.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 10

The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous (Pr. 15:29, RSV). If you are righteous, worry not; just tell God your concerns, and He will faithfully address them (Jn. 16:23-24). If you are not righteous, you have the opportunity now to become righteous. Seek God while He may be found (Isa. 55:6), because if you seek Him, you will find Him (1 Chr. 28:9). Seek Jesus Christ, in whom alone is salvation (Acts 4:12).

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 12

The muderer and the wicked will always flee, even when no one pursues them (Pr. 28:1,17). There is no peace for the wicked (Isa. 48:22), no matter their pretences. The wicked include those who are angry with, and insult, their brother (Mt. 5:21-22) and those whose gods are their belly and pocket, who pursue stomach and belly infrastructure with recklessness and without regards to hurting others or robbing them of personal possessions or commonwealth. Rule over your temper and tongue; anger resides in the bossom of fools (Eccl. 7:8). Be anxious for nothing, but make your requests to God (Phil. 4:6). Control your greedy urge, for godliness with contentment (inward sense of sufficiency) is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6).

Personal Note:
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JANUARY 13

Jesus has casual and die-hard followers. Some follow Him for physical food, which perishes; others for food which endures eternally (Jn. 6:26-27). Some call Him Lord, but fail to obey Him (Lk. 6:46). Some do not continue in His word, to pass the test of being His disciples and being set free by the truth they know (Jn. 8:31-32), nor sanctified by His word (Jn. 17:17). Weigh yourself on the scale now and determine to improve even from today.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 14

God rewards loyalty and faithfulness with favour and good repute before God and man (Pr. 3:3-4). Are you loyal and faithful to God or to your ego, sensuality and greedy urge? That to which you yield yourself is your master (God or Mammon, Spirit or carnality) – and you cannot serve the two at the same time (Mt. 6:24), either you please the one and displease the other. Choose wisely.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 15

He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys (Pr. 18:9, RSV). Embrace your work with integrity, as unto the Lord (Col. 3:17). Be diligent! But, not in wrong endeavours that seek to gratify the flesh, pursuit of selfish ambition, obtaining by hook or crook, harvesting where you did not cultivate, or inhabiting where you did not build (see Isa. 65:22), not in delighting in trickery, betrayal and scheming, or short-changing others.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 16

Two things Agur asks of the Lord: *Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches...* (Pr. 30:7-9, RSV). These days of fast-lane and spiritual highwaymen, what do you ask of the Lord? Most men ask for ability to outsmart others and for wealth and power – their ultimate undoing. They have all that time-tested and wisdom-bred prayer of Agur detests: falsehood, lying, poverty and riches. They bleed inadvertently, cause the society to bleed, and await eternal damnation.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 17

The ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in summer; the badgers are a people not mighty, yet they make their houses on the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet they march in ranks; the lizard you can take in your hands, yet it is in kings' palaces (Pr. 30:25-28, RSV). Wisdom enables you overcome your weaknesses, to succeed and belong. Seek it. It is the principal thing (Pr. 4:7).

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 18

Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interests of others (Phil. 2:4, NKJV). Selfishness and a sense of superiority divide people, but humility unites believers to be one in spirit and of one mind (Phil. 2:2, NKJV). We can diffuse quarrels by giving up our right (Mt. 5:38-41). Humility calls for valuing others above self (Phil. 2:3). Doing the opposite is pride and arrogance, which God hates (Pr. 6:16-17). Practising humility helps us become more like Jesus, who for our sake, humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death (Phil. 2:7-8, NKJV). Like Jesus, we can sacrifice our interests for those of others.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 20

*Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who
has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who
has established all the ends of the earth?
Surely, man's too stupid and hasn't the
understanding of the Holy One (Pr. 30:2-4,
RSV). We need to seek to know Him (Phil.
3:10-11). God deserves more than our casual
knowledge of, and relationship with, Him.
Commit to an intimate relationship with your
Creator through Christ the Mediator (1 Tim.
2:5; Heb. 9:15, 12:24).*

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 21

Apostle Paul was not ashamed of the gospel – the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith. It has the righteousness of God revealed through faith for faith. *He who through faith is righteous shall live* (Rom. 1:16-17, RSV). Evangelism is the heartbeat of God, who gave the great commission (Mk. 16:15). Let us become the more committed than ever.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 22

Hearing, reading, studying, meditating, memorizing and doing the word of God go together to make us righteous (Rom. 2:13). Do not allow internalisation of God's word to be choked out from your daily programme, nor trivialize doing what it says. Be eager to hear 'Thus says the Lord' and to put it to work. There-in lies true life.

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 23

Even if every man becomes unfaithful, God remains faithful (Rom. 3:3-4). Unlike God, we often base our actions and reactions on people's conduct – being nice to them if they are good to us, but withdrawn from or unkind to them if they misbehave to us. We need to remain true and steadfast in well doing, i.e. caring for others (Gal. 5:2), as children of God. We must not be misguided by misconduct of others, nor seek to pay them in their own coin. Dare not come down to the level of your offender, nor seek to get even (Rom. 12:19). He is sick and a patient. Pray for him!

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 24

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink (Pr. 25:21, Rom. 12:20-21). Wishing our enemy or offender ill, no matter what, is wrong. Jesus teaches us to be merciful, as our Father (Lk. 6:32-36); to forgive, that we will be forgiven (Mt. 6:12); and to show mercy and forgiveness, as we want others to show them to us (Mt. 7:12). He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (Rev. 3:6).

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 27

So be prepared, for you don't know what day your Lord is coming (Mt. 24:42, LB). To qualify to dwell on God's holy hill, you need to live a blameless life, be truly sincere, avoid slander and gossip, harm nobody, speak out against sin, commend faithful brethren, keep your promise at all cost, and avoid usury and false witnessing (Ps. 15:1-5). Only Jesus can help us meet up (Rom. 3:22-24, 6:23, 7:22-25). However, of the ten conditions, six have to do with the tongue. Beware! (James 3:2-10).

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 28

Do you have a challenge that defies explanation; a question that has no answer? *God's delay is the mystery of educating human spirits to the finest temper of which they're capable* (F.B. Meyer). Waiting (long-suffering, perseverance) develops virtues: submission, humility, patience, joyful endurance, persistence in well-doing, etc. (Rom. 5:3-4). Its rewards are the crown of life, blessing and God's compassion and mercy (James 1:12, 5:11). Persevere!

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 29

God may seem to delay your heart desire. But, He helps you to love and trust Him enough to accept the delay with joy and to develop godly virtues. Job waited, convinced that God knows the way he took and that he would come forth as gold after the test (Job 23:10; James 5:11). God inclined to David and heard his cry, after he had waited patiently (Ps. 40:1). Regarding that perplexity and tear, oppression and distress, suffering and pain, wrong and injustice, wait for God! They all work together for your good (Rom. 8:28).

Personal Note:

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JANUARY 30

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life (Pr. 13:12, NIV). Broken expectation begets frustration and soon matures to disappointment and bitterness. Yet, life has a way of breaking expectations. And, we can learn from apostle Paul. In jail and beset by fellow believers in Rome (Phil. 1:15-16), he remained upbeat. Taking it for a new mission opportunity, he reached Caesar's house by witnessing to the guards. Despite Jesus' forewarning, Peter still denied Jesus. But, Jesus was not disappointed with Peter. Rather, He prayed for him (Mt. 26:31-35, 69-75) and commissioned him (Jn. 21:15-19). That disappointment is an opportunity.

Personal Note:
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JANUARY 31

Don't be misled – you can't mock the justice of God. You'll always harvest what you plant (Gal. 6:7, NLT). As old and gigantic as a tree may be, it was once a mere tiny seed, like our word is. The seed (word) we sow soon germinates, grows and matures to gigantic and strong harvest. You may need to change your seed from criticism, judgement and anger to encouragement, hope, blessing and love.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 1

Every man is idle or busy or a busybody. The idle should not eat, but find work to do (2 Thess. 3:11-12). The busybody serve the Devil, haunting and accusing brethren (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10). The busy ought to work as serving the Lord (Col. 3:17). The busybody are nuisance. Avoid being idle or a busybody. Embrace working as unto the Lord.

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 2

A poor man dies unnoticed. But, a man of wealth and power dies neither to anyone's regret nor leaving a sense of loss. To solidify his power, king Jehoram killed his brothers and other leaders, led Judah into idol worship, and died, to no one's regret (2 Chr. 21:4-20). He is remembered for brutality and self-centredness. But, anywhere Servant-King Jesus went, He was doing good and healing all (Acts 10:38) and gave his life away as ransom for all. His legacy of love lives on. What you do with your relative wealth and power and life shapes your legacy and dictates your eternity.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 3

Champions offer pleasure to spectators when they play. But, they can disappoint. The rich can also disappoint with expected help, leading to sorrows and pains. Looking unto gods for deliverance, healing and salvation brings untold hardship and loss. But, there is no disappointment with Jesus – the greatest Champion that never loses in any battle, our Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1), our Wisdom from God, Redeemer, righteousness, holiness and salvation (1 Cor. 1:30). Looking unto Him (Heb. 12:1-2) increases your faith and leads to physical and spiritual uplifting. Try it today!

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 4

Every ship heads for the harbour or doom. It lands in harbour, if guided; or doom, if unguided. Similarly, every man heads for heaven or hell. He will surely land in heaven, if he passes through Jesus the right gate (Jn. 10:7); or hell, if otherwise. After leaving His disciples in a world of confusion and fear, Jesus sent them the Spirit of truth to guide them (to the harbour or heaven) (Jn. 16:13). You need to be guided back to your Maker. What you do with the Spirit of truth is up to you. You are either a christian led by Him (Rom. 8:14) or an unbeliever led by your mind, philosophy, wealth, false prophet, etc. There is no middle-course!

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 5

In an ancient metropolis, mansions once built by the rich have become ghettos; sons fail to refurbish or remodel, let alone rebuild, them. Mansions of today are built by sons of the poor; sons of the rich are relaxed by stupefying inheritance they did not toil for. Bequeathal shapes sons' lives. Solomon was greatest in wealth and wisdom (1 Kg. 3:12-13), but what became of his sons in wealth and wisdom? One of them, Rehoboan, inherited the kingship but rejected godly counsel, leading to division of the kingdom and spiritual decline of God's people (see 1 Kg. 12:1-19), thereby fulfilling Solomon's time-tested fear (see Eccl. 2:19).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 6

... evil desires – craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance – these are not from God. They are from the evil world itself. And this world is fading away, and this evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever (1 Jn. 2:16-17, LB). The dying world and its appeals are worth abandoning for doing God’s will and gaining the attendant eternal life.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 7

Faith is the heart that believes God’s word, the hand that receives God’s gift, and the foot that walks with God. How faithful are your heart, hand and foot? You can improve today. Everybody has faith – some in God, others in self, learning, wealth, power, connections, etc. Watch it! It is only by faith in God that you can be righteous and live (Rom. 1:17).

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 8

Events of daily life focus our attention of pressing needs, recurring failures, and circumstances that seem out of control and bug us, so much so that we forget what we already have from God our forgiver, healer, redeemer, provider, satisfier, and renewer (Ps. 103:4-5). Do not be too preoccupied to respond appropriately to God's benefits.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 9

Pursuits of desires tend to crowd out retreat and rest from our schedules. God commands us to rest on the Sabbath day (Ex. 20:8-11). Workers have one or 2 work-free days per week and 3 to 4 weeks annual leave. Christians retreat from routines for spiritual renewal. Engaging these rest and renewal opportunities is important for physical and spiritual health and growth.

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 10

God speaks to us through His written word – the Bible. He addresses our heart through His spoken word, a still small voice or gentle whisper (1 Kg. 19:12-13), a friend, a song, a message, etc. Also, God speaks through the things that have been made (Rom. 1:20). When He speaks, our spirit confirms it to our inner man. But, we are often in a hurry to listen to God. Avoid this pitfall today, and you will have peace and will not stumble (Ps. 119:165).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 11

Failures, faults and sins of ours may be hidden from others, but we know them and they tend to haunt us, even when we have confessed them and God has forgiven us. This accusation is Devil's work (Rev. 12:10; Jude 9). Not only is God greater than our hearts that condemn us (1 Jn. 3:19-20), He is faithful and just to forgive our confessed sins (1 Jn. 1:9). Count on His steadfast love (Lam. 3:22).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 12

Unlike the world of today, the pre-fall Garden of Eden had no untoward generation of people, death, hardship, pain, sorrow, hunger, unemployment, illness, kidnapping, armed-robbery, terrorism, land dispute, war, curse, electoral and examination malpractice (Gen. 3:16-19). Life in Eden is a glimpse of life in heaven for eternity (Rev. 22:3). Thank God, life on the man-tarnished earth is short and an opportunity to decide to spend eternity in heaven or hell. Use it wisely.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 13

The world can be a place of sadness, with endless supply of heartache and disappointment from our choices and things beyond our control. Our Lord, Jesus, knew it would be so, and promised peace, joy and ultimate victory to His followers (Jn. 16:33). Again, for those who will make it to heaven, God will wipe every tear from their eyes (Rev. 21:4). Others, after suffering on earth, will inherit the fiery lake of burning sulphur – the second death (Rev. 21:8). This is avoidable, but the choice is yours.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 14

However enviable your comfort zone or pitiable your challenging situation, you need help. No one has so 'arrived' or so 'parked well' that he needs no help. The rich fool thought he needed only bountiful harvest, expanded barns and no help. God took his life, and he lost both and more (Lk. 12:16-20). The word, help, occurs 165 times in the Bible. God uses people of low and high esteem to send help: word, material, spiritual, etc. Hide your pride, desire and ask for help. Make yourself available to be used of God to help others.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 16

Everyone professes love and claims and pretends to love. Love has acid tests. If you truly love someone, you will overlook his/her faults, keep no record of his/her wrongs (1 Cor. 13:5), and keep no record of his/her offences (Eph. 4:32). Imagine that God – a consuming fire – kept a record of your wrongs and forgives you not. You would be in a serious trouble and mess here and hereafter. But, God wipes your sins from sight and mind as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12). Do so for others.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 17

Child of God, what are your fears? God has plans of good, a future and accomplished end for you (Jer. 29:11). Despite your doubts and struggles, He is mightier than your situation, and His reassuring love envelopes you with forgiveness, healing and victory (Isa. 41:10-13). 'Fear not' occurs 365 time in the Bible – one for you everyday of the year.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 18

Love is better than the gifts of tongues, prophecy, discernment of all mysteries, knowledge, alms-giving and self-sacrifices. It is even greater than faith and hope (1 Cor. 13:1-3,13). King Solomon loved God, and received surpassing wisdom, wealth and honour or fame (1 Kg. 3:3, 12-13). How much do you love God and man?

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 19

Two things are greatest: love (1 Cor. 13:13) and servant (Mk. 9:34-35). To be greatest, you must outlove all (Rom. 12:9-21) and be servant of all (Mk. 10:43). Sadly, people unwisely seek greatness by exploiting (unloving) other people and express greatness by oppressing (disserving) them. How great are you?

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 20

Inadequate love and acceptance of spouse leads to sick marriages which beget unhealthy families that make up the disorganised society. Every christian ought to love his/her spouse and others as he/she loves self (see Mt. 22:39; 1 Jn. 4:7-8). Who are you to under-love and/or under-accept your spouse that all-knowing God fearfully and wonderfully made and gave to you as a marvellous work/gift? (Ps. 139:14; Pr. 18:22).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 21

If you love and accept your spouse, you will forgive his/her offenses and easily apologise for yours, show gratitude and compliment his/her sacrifices, be considerate of him/her, communicate responsibly with him/her, offer/yield to genuine (not purposive) physical affection, submit to him/her, and adapt to marriage environment. These are God's commands for marriage, which you must obey, regardless of your spouse's imperfections. If you truly love God, obey these commands (Jn. 14:15).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 22

Is your spouse your love, friend and companion? And vice versa? Are yours doves' eyes – humble, modest eyes that portray simplicity and godly sincerity – or, eyes that confront, rebel? (see Song 1:8-17). Does your voice suggest loyalty, peace, submission – or, irritability? It's not late to make amend.

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 23

Child of the Most High God, the Lord examines your heart and knows everything about you. He charts your path and orders your steps. He knows what you will next think, speak or do. He precedes and follows you and places His hand of blessing on your head. This is just too glorious, too wonderful to believe (Ps 139:1-6, LB).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 24

Child of God, you are not hidden from the sight of God, nor free from His grip, no matter where you are and how hard you struggle. How precious it is to realise that God thinks about you constantly, and leads you along the path of everlasting life. (See Ps. 139:7-12, 17, 24, LB).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 25

People are slaves to God, co-masters with Him or gods unto themselves. God plans for, and takes care of, His slaves (Deu. 5:29; Jer. 29:11). Co-masters may go to church when they like, contest the word of the sovereign Lord to accept the part that suits them for the situation, struggle to help selves because ‘Heaven helps those who help themselves’ (man’s saying), and ‘enjoy comfort’ in misery (Job 14:1-2), plus eternal damnation. Those that are gods unto themselves are guided by self and do not factor God into their living. Let us weigh ourselves, and adjust before it is too late.

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 26

People rejoice at the end of a day, week, month and year, not because they are happy with the past period, but because it has come and gone and they are looking forward to a better one. They even send new year, new month messages, jumping with hope at the new period and claiming God's blessings in it, as if the one before it was devoid of God's blessings. At the end of the new period, they still rush to bid it bye. They hardly appreciate past period and the blessings there-in. Nobody confesses, "This year has been good", but people keep saying, "Things are hard this year, let's watch next year." Could this indicate ungratefulness to God, who is ever faithful to His promises (Rom. 3:3-4) and blesses us all the time with life and other things pertaining there-to, without segregating the time? The level of suffering in the land is no excuse.

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 27

In response to the suffering in the land and in apparent forgetfulness of God's faithfulness, people try changing residence and city (Gen. 12:10; Ruth 1:1), separation, divorce, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, etc. Child of God, you have the Burden Bearer (Mt. 11:28-30). Look up! (Phil. 4:6). Count God's blessings (Ps. 103:2). Exercise faith (Ps. 77:13-15).

Personal Note:

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FEBRUARY 28

The Devil schemes to prevent us from seeing Jesus, who alone can save us. He engages pride to blind us from seeing Jesus as the Wonderful Counsellor, and anxiety to keep us from knowing Him as the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). Devil applies hunger for status and stuff to prevent us from seeing Him as the true source of satisfaction – the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:48). Zacchaeus - a wealthy man – had to overcome the crowd, his dignity and fear for safety to climb a tree to get a better view of Jesus (Lk. 19:1-10). It paid off with salvation for the entire household (Lk. 19:9). What need we set aside to truly seek God, who rewards people that earnestly seek Him? (Heb. 11:6).

Personal Note:
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FEBRUARY 29

There is a time for everything (Ecc. 3:1).
Doing what you ought to do now secures what
you ought to be or have next. Excuses are non-
performing (Eccl. 11:4). Do not waste
opportunities. Your needs are hidden in them.
Jump at them! Grab them!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 1

By Creator’s design, the heart is linked to career and destiny. To succeed in deciding a career for someone, you must first understand and probably change his heart. Avoidable tensions and eventual failures attend parents’ ambition to influence career choice for their children, rather than identify the child’s talent and support him/her to become what his/her Creator wants him/her to be. Ego and emphasis on materials are responsible for this error. Fulfillment of life depends on neither. Ego is inimical to spiritual well-being (Rom. 7:22-23). Lazarus fulfilled his life in abject poverty, unlike rich men (Lk. 16:19-31; 12:16-20; Mt. 19:3).

Personal Note:

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MARCH 2

He, who made it a mouse, gave it a fearful heart, to preserve it (see Jer. 1:5). It must fear the rat, to survive. If you train it to become a rat, it will fear the cat. If you train it to become a cat, it will fear the dog. If you train it to become a dog, it will fear the lion. If you train it to become a lion, it will fear the tiger. If you train it to become a tiger, it will fear the hunter. You cannot change your spouse, nor decide career for your child. Consult their Maker.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 3

Childhood is foolishness (Pr. 22:15), youth is exuberance (Joel 2:28), and old-age is regret. This applies to all: the rich and poor, the leader and follower, educated and ignorant, etc. The antidote is fear of God and obedience to His command – the conclusion of the matter (Eccl. 12:13-14). If the fear of God reigns in a child’s life, he will avoid foolishness. If it reigns in a youth’s life, he will avoid exuberance. If it reigns in an adult’s life, he will avoid regrettable actions and lifestyle. Let’s wise up!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 4

Bible defines a fool as one who says in his heart, *There is no God* (Ps. 14:1; 53:1). It could be Rich Fool (Lk. 12:16-21) or President Fool, Hon. Fool, HRH Fool, Chief Fool, Professor Fool, Dr. Fool, General Fool, Alhaji Fool, Pope Fool, Bishop Fool, Pastor Fool, Revd. Fool, Sir Fool, Lady Fool, Elder Fool, Deacon Fool, Deaconess Fool, Singer Fool, Ambassador Fool, Senator Fool, etc. The rank or title before ‘Fool’ is a mere label to be discarded with the physical body prior to judgement. Fools tend to enjoy God’s gifts, but disregard the Giver, or take Him for granted. Let’s wise up!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 5

Man is only a step away from death (1 Sam. 20:3). He ought to prepare to meet his Maker (Amos 4:12). God uses unpleasant developments to warn people against impending doom, but they are often spiritually complacent, adamant. Ugly economy, insecurity, inept leadership, spiritual confusion, and other developments may be these signs. Be ready.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 6

If you do not obey someone, you do not love him/her (Jn. 14:15). Disobedience is worse than witchcraft. Partial obedience is no obedience at all (1 Sam. 15:15-24). Without love, your spiritual activities amount to resounding gong and profit nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Love is deep respect that manifests in obedience. If you are struggling to obey, prayerfully revisit the love foundation and check if you are truly a Christian that should love, obey and fear God.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 7

To obey is better than sacrifice (even self-sacrifice) (1 Sam. 15:22). Although everyone claims to love, dearth of genuine love, abounding selfish and fake love are the bane of relationships, marriages, families and nations. Ego – like the evil of idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23) – keeps us from loving genuinely. Please, watch it!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 8

After God drowned Pharaoh's horses, chariots and warriors, who were pursuing the fleeing Israelites, Miriam mobilized the women to praise God (Ex. 15:19). Champions are hailed; losers are booed. Praise God for all the seen and unseen victories over His enemy in your life (1 Jn. 3:8). Of the 15 Judges of Israel, Deborah was the only female and one of the best (see Judges 4-5). Ruth was a foreigner and an embodiment of selfless service, and was rewarded with becoming an ancestor of Jesus (see Ruth 2:10-11; Mt. 1:5). The Zarephat widow was an example of sacrificial obedience to God's command (see 1 Kg. 17:9-16). The Shunemite woman was an example of hospitality (see 2 Kg. 4:8-10). Esther saved the Jewish nation from looming genocidal extermination (Esther 6-10:3). The virtuous woman is celebrated for lacking nothing of value (Pr. 31:11). Tabitha was full of good works and acts of charity (Acts 9:36). As a mother, what will be your legacy? The United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace is an occasion to think of who your model is and your good or ugly influence on your children, disciples, mentees and wards.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 9

Humans more easily see what is wrong than what is right. Guests do not notice the mess or dirt the host had cleaned before their arrival, but the one he has not addressed. Offence is more easily remembered than kindness, impoliteness than courtesy, rudeness than civility, cruelty than generosity, natural disaster than resources. The foster child focuses on denials rather than sacrificial supplies, and is hardly grateful to the benefactor. Treating God the same way, we focus on what He has not done, rather than what He has done for us, what we have not rather than what we have, situations He has not fixed rather than perplexities He has resolved. Let's wise up!

Personal Note:
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MARCH 10

Fulfilled life starts from understanding God’s purpose for life on earth and the determination to accomplish it through dependence on Him. It is not a function of popularity, comfort, wealth, poverty, education, etc., but of the presence of God, which releases the spirit of excellence for insight to master situations of life at a unique level above the crowd. (Read 2 Tim. 4:5-8.) Have a fulfilled life!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 11

A fool perishes (2 Sam. 3:33; Ps. 49:10), will come to ruin (Pr. 10:8), is to be given no honour (Pr. 26:1), left alone (Pr. 14:7), answered according to his folly (Pr. 26:5). He claims to be wise and exchanges the glory of God for images of men and animals (Rom. 1:22-23). May we not be or become fools.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 12

Sick king Ahazia of Samaria lived in sin. After falling through the lattice of his upper room, he had no confidence to approach God for healing, but consulted Baal-Zebub. Sinners hide from God (Gen. 3:8-10), and soon become hardened. After Elijah confirmed the king would die from the fall, the hardened king failed to cry to God for mercy in repentance, but chose to fight God by fighting the prophet (2 Kg. 1:1-18). He died, not of the illness, but failure to come to reason with God for forgiveness of his sin and to obtain healing (Isa. 1:18). On the other hand, when Isaiah told king Hezekiah that his illness was terminal, the king did not attack the prophet, but turned to God in prayer (Isa. 38:1-5). What is your response to God's word? *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart* (Heb. 3:7-8). Avoid the tendency to hold something against God's messengers.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 13

One of the two criminals hanging beside Jesus on the cross confessed his sin and received instant pardon, while the other withheld confession unto perdition (Lk. 23:39-43). Confession makes the difference (Rom. 10:8-10). Come to Him now. Confess your sins, and ask for pardon on account of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Receive Jesus. Abandon your old ways. Begin to confess Him.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 14

There are two types of life: one without Christ and one in Christ. Like that of Saul (of Tarsus), life without Christ appears wise, working for God, seeking God/truth (religious), philosophical, sensible, logical, etc. Like that of Paul (the apostle), life in Christ appears foolish, senseless (full of faith), dogmatic, purposeful, etc. The choice is yours.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 15

Prayers and fasting are increasing, just as prophecies. But, the Heavens appear silent, as cries of woes and oppressions also increase, rather than testimonies of triumph. Biblical scenario repeats itself (see Micah 3:1-12). With the people (leaders and followers, priests and prophets) given to corruption, the Heavens paid no attention to their cries, but resolved to deal with them. Let us look inward for solution to the woes of the land.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 16

The number of priests and prophets that parade the system does not matter (see Micah 3:1-12) - not even the number of churches and amount of claim to religious piety - but, how many priests and prophets are true to their calling, turn the people to the right path, and refuse to take advantage of the people's misery to further exploit them. Be careful!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 17

Pride goes before destruction and haughtiness before a fall (Pr. 16:18, NLT). Pride is a haughty attitude shown in the belief and action of being better than others. A proud or haughty person believes and acts that whatever comes from him is the best, does not accept any other opinion and has no room for superior arguments. He believes that any perspective that is contrary to his is definitely wrong and must be resisted, rejected and dumped for his. His praises must be sung and his ego massaged, or there will be no peace. He passes an examination by giving back to the examiner what he had received, not by learning from and believing that the teacher is wiser or more knowledgeable than he is. Pride is the opposite of humility and meekness. Pride of faith makes a Christian think that a believer who does not belong to his church cannot be genuine. Pride has no boundary of status or race, but destroys the rich and the poor, the black and the white. Pride is a deadly sickness that only repentance and change of heart can cure, and thereafter, procure the grace, mercies and favour of God. If you are the proud type, you are sick unto destruction. Work on yourself.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 18

Pride shuts a person's senses to good reason and faith, blinds him to his weaknesses and limitations, and makes him think he is more important and greater than others. He sees no reason to amend his sinful and indulgent lifestyle, but expects others to look up to, envy and respect him. Pride and arrogance predispose one to disregarding and rebelling against God (see Jer. 13:15-27). A shameful fall awaits the proud. Jerusalem fell because pride would not let Israel repent of bloodshedding, oppression, power corruption, abuse of slaves and the weak (Lam. 3:1-8). Prayer for self and the nation is imperative. Beware!

Personal Note:
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MARCH 19

Elijah had finished his divine assignment on earth, ready to return to his Maker. He had recruited Elisha – a formerly successful farmer – to succeed him. Beside training Elisha, he put him to test at his departure, to see if he was prepared for the task ahead, by discouraging him from going with him on his terminal trip. But, Elisha was focused on the goal to receive the final blessing of Elijah, and would not be dissuaded (2 Kg. 2:1-6). Defeat all distractions from your heavenly goal.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 20

Jesus grew in favour with God and man (Lk. 2:52). So do Christians enjoy God's blessings and favour on earth. But, the goal must be heaven, where untold blessings await them (Jn. 14:3; 1 Cor. 2:9). In spite of disappointments, discouragements and distractions encountered on the pilgrims' journey, they must focus on getting to heaven by consistently living righteously, obeying God and serving Him dedicatedly.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 21

God chose Solomon – imbued with God’s wisdom, riches and peace – to build His temple. It was the most magnificent edifice ever built and decorated with the finest quality of gold (2 Chr. 3:1-7). Today, God does not live in the temple built by man (Acts 7:48), but in a Christian (1 Cor. 6:19-20) and the Church (not building) (Eph. 2:22). Child of God, as befitting God’s temple, your life must be free of sin (2 Cor. 6:16-18), holy, righteous and presentable to Him at all times as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

Personal Note:

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MARCH 22

When you make yor mark in life, you will always attract erasers (John Mason). Envy made Cain murder his only biological brother, Abel, and became a fugitive (Gen. 4:8, 10-12); blood brothers of Joseph to throw him into a pit to die and later sold him into slavery (Gen, 37:17-38); Miriam to criticize her brother and leader, Moses, and became leprous (Nu. 12:1-10); Korah, Dothan and Abiram to rebel against Moses and to die by fissures together with their families (Nu. 16:23-34); sent Haman to the gallows (Esther 3-7); made Jewish leaders to reject their Saviour (Mt. 27:21-25) and Jews to spitefully accuse and murder Stephen (Acts 7:9-16), etc. Avoid pretence! Drive away your suicidal envy. Pray for godly love and fear to saturate your heart.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 23

Christ does not 'gate-crash'; you must invite Him. It was in response to an invitation that He miraculously replenished the wine in a marriage feast in Cana (Jn. 2:2-10), healed the centurion's servant (Mt. 8:5-6), restored Bartimaeus' sight (Mk. 10:47), brought salvation to Zacchaeus' house (Lk. 19:3), raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:3, 38-44), etc. He is waiting for your invitation!

Personal Note:

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MARCH 24

His banner over us (Solomon, you and me) is love (Song 2:4). How do you measure up loving others (spouse, children, parents, brethren, neighbours and enemies)? *Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as Christian brothers and sisters, and be eager to show respect for one another* (Rom. 12:9-10, GNB). Let us be filled with, and share, Christ's kind of love, instead of abounding in selfish love.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 25

Genuine love is a cardinal virtue of a Christian life. Even our wicked enemies require our compassion and love – not our scorn, vilification and retaliation. Being kind to enemies may change them, but evil reactions cannot defeat evil deeds (see Rom. 12:19-21). Having received Christ, who is Love (1 Jn. 4:8), do not exhibit hate, no matter the enemy actions.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 26

A most important rule of business success is to exceed customer expectations. Crowds followed Jesus because He constantly taught them the principles of success in life (their expectation) and, in addition, gave them food (Jn. 6:22-26). Resolve to exceed the expectations of your spouse, customers, disciples or church members, boss, subordinates, teachers, etc. Make no excuses.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 27

Everyone is a sinner (Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:23). Sin blinds, deafens, degrades, deadens and damns the captive. No sin – however secret – will go unpunished (Rom. 2:12, TLB) by eternal damnation (Rom. 6:23). But, there is one remedy - repentance and new life in Christ Jesus. Embrace it! Religiosity and philosophizing cannot help.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 28

Child of God, you have died many times. First, in trespasses (Rom. 8:10; Eph. 2:1) and second, with Christ (Col. 3:3). Indeed, you die everyday (1 Cor. 15:31). God raised believers up (from death and grave) with Christ and sits them with Christ in heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6). Rather than fear the next death, grow in knowledge of God, bear fruit in every good work, and be strengthened with all power (Col. 1:10-12).

Personal Note:

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MARCH 29

An ingrate disregards past or present benevolence, bites the finger that fed or feeds him, and sows weeds on the land he cultivated or cultivates crops for his livelihood. Forget not God's benefits (Ps. 103:2). Bless Him always for being at work for/in you always. Return with gratitude and the Lord's doing in your life will become perfected and made permanent (Lk. 17:12-19). When you are grateful, you will have faith and get more. Also, forget not benefactor's kindness, nor trifle it. When you see only what has not been done for you, you will be resentful and left alone for your ingratitude. Benefactors will try other recipients. After all, they do not owe you. But, a little smile, 'thank you, sir/ma' and appreciation will fetch you more from benefactors. Do not hide appreciation in your heart. Be wise to show it. Only the monkey wears a constantly uncheerful face – when it is pleased and when it is displeased.

Personal Note:
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MARCH 30

... *I will put off sad face and wear a smile* (Job 9:27, NKJV). A frown cannot solve problems, but wrinkles the face and signals to others “It’s not well”, “Beware of me and my problems”. It is not a sign of spirituality nor old age. On the other hand, a smile removes burdens from hearts, enriches the soul with happiness, makes you look young, infects the people around with cheerfulness, and relaxes on-lookers by signaling peace, friendship and agreement/submission. Since smile is therapeutic, do not allow it to dry up in you.

Personal Note:

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MARCH 31

Until you are thankful, your tank cannot get full. Until you appreciate, you will depreciate (see Mt. 25:21, 29). Be not just thankful, but overflow with thankfulness (Col. 2:6-7). This means being consciously and unconsciously thankful; celebrating others' kindness; wrapping up the day's activities by sending a word of appreciation to those who made your day fulfilling, including those close to you – do not take their kind gestures for granted; looking for new ways to show overflowing gratitude; sowing seeds of gratitude and blessing; and more.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 1

The Chaldeans (of Babylonians, Ezra 5:12) were notorious for cruelty, violence, worship of their false gods and military prowess (Hab. 1:7-11). These were Abram's ancestors of Ur in Chaldean (Gen. 11:26,28), from whom God asked Abram (later renamed Abraham) to depart (Gen. 11:31, 12:1-3), to form an holy nation of God's people. What is God asking you to depart from (Eph. 5:7-12)? Kindly harken. Get out of wrong environment, group, habit, character and lifestyle.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 2

Men and kings rise and fall, live, die and are buried and forgotten - except Jesus Christ. He was crowned with thorns, crucified with criminals, dead, buried – but rose from the dead and grave in victory - lived again among men, and now lives forever. He says, *I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will live* (Jn. 11: 25-26). I know whom I believe in and follow. What about you?

Personal Note:

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APRIL 3

Jesus Christ is the true light that shines in the dark world (Jn. 1:5; 3:19; 8:12). He invites us to reflect Him (the light) to the dark world, that our good works may be seen to the glory of our Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16). Good works mean showing love in the face of hatred, patience in response to trouble, and peace in moments of conflict. Believers ought to live as children of light (Eph. 5:8).

Personal Note:

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APRIL 4

Worldly philosophy emphasizes position, authority, prestige, affluence and influence as symbols of God's blessings. But, enduring blessedness lies not in material possession but in self-surrender (Lk. 6:29; 9:58; Mt. 19:17-22). Obedience to God's word is the cornerstone of an abiding and true relationship with Him. God's kingdom is for those who mourn for sin and thirst for righteousness (see Mt. 5:1-16), not those who lust after and glory in material possessions to feed their carnality and massage their ego.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 5

Joy is not happiness. The latter is ephemeral; the former is spiritual (fruit of the Holy Spirit – Gal. 5:22). Joy is willingness to make peace, to be merciful, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse, to give when others withhold, to give up one’s right in order to serve others. It is a state of rest and peace that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7).

Personal Note:
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APRIL 6

Ambitious spirit has led man into aggressive rat-race in pursuit of power, position, influence and wealth, resulting in abounding disagreements, conflicts and wars of madness dimensions. Only Jesus can enable us check it (Acts 4:12). You did not come into the world with what you are lusting after and crazing to acquire, nor will you leave the world with it (Job 1:21). Your needs will be supplied by God, if you trust Him (Ps. 34:7). Anything in excess of your needs will decay and breed worms (Exo. 16:19-20). Sufficient unto the day is the day's troubles (Mtt. 6:34). Run to God!

Personal Note:
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APRIL 7

What is your choice and hope for safety – technological artifacts, such as airplane, ship, car, weapon; or carefulness in driving or piloting, human wisdom in relating with people, wealth, insurance policy, connection, learning, etc.? They all can fail woefully. Only God is unfailing refuge (Ps. 9:9). He cannot be defeated or toppled by the storms of life or any power. Be wise and run to Him!

Personal Note:
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APRIL 8

You influence, and are influenced by, people you associate with (1 Cor. 15:33). The disciples so took after Jesus that they were called Christians in Antioch long after Jesus had left them (Lk. 11:26). It took Judas' kiss to identify Jesus from the followers (Lk. 22:47). Even Cleopas could not recognize Him from the rest of the disciples (Lk. 24:13-26). Be careful about the company you keep. It is better to keep none than the wrong. And, do not think you affect them, but they do not affect you. As the axe cuts the wood, so the wood chops the axe. Have nothing to do with the agents of darkness. Come out of their midst and expose them (Eph. 5:8-11)

Personal Note:
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APRIL 9

A believer ought to stay out of debt (Rom. 13:8). It is wicked to fail to pay your debt (Ps. 37:21). However, one debt a believer owes – and must keep paying – is love, which constraints him to do good to others and restrains him from thinking or planning or executing evil against another person. The world is terribly darkened by hate, selfishness and evil. But, a believer’s genuine love can brighten his corner. Heed!

Personal Note:

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APRIL 10

Unless we love genuinely, we transgress the Law (Rom. 13:8) and attract the attendant tragic punishment, such as the ravaging destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonian forces (Lam. 3:22-41). The tragic socio-economic malaise rocking Nigerian families and nation may well be a consequence of transgressing the law of love. The wealth of the nation is said to be in the hands of 5% of the population who have mindlessly plundered the nation's inheritance, while 70% of the population live in abject poverty. Do something now in your little corner to salvage the situation.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 11

The keys of God to your inheritance lie in your faithful stewardship with another's inheritance. Moses got his calling to lead Israel when he was faithfully keeping Jethro's flock (Ex. 3:1). David got his calling to kill Goliath and to lead Israel when he was faithfully keeping his father's flock (1 Sam. 17:34-36). Jacob faithfully kept Laban's flock for six extra years, and got his (Gen. 31:41). In your position as a spouse, parent, neighbour, driver, boss, servant, apprentice, worker, tenant, etc., faithfulness is required of you, if you must climb higher (1 Cor. 4:2; Mtt. 25:19-30). God is watching you.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 12

The tongue (or lip) of the righteous exhibits life, love, wisdom, wealth, self-discipline or restraint, sincerity, and silver (things of value). That of the wicked (or fool) exhibits violence, dissension, hatred, lies and sins in multitude of words, slander, vileness, and incures punishment and ruin. The lip of both the righteous and the wicked is linked to the heart. (See Pr. 10:11-21; Mt. 12:34). The heart of man is so depraved (Jer. 17:9) that education, wealth or poverty cannot fix it. Its regeneration comes only by spiritual rebirth – an encounter with its Maker. Judge your lip. You may need to penitently take your heart to God for urgent and imperative regeneration (Isa. 57:15).

Personal Note:
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APRIL 13

Half-hearted service is a waste. Partial obedience is disobedience. Compromise weakens the will, pollutes the good, and renders one unsuitable. This was the case of Jehoram (2 Kg. 3:1-10). It is only a whole-hearted devotion that ensures God's presence, preservation and power.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 14

Every set-back has an upside. Trials have spiritual benefits and can provide opportunity to deepen our relationship with God. Consider them pure joy, friendly (James 1:2-3). What trials and set-backs are you experiencing? They merely try your faith. Your blessing is hidden in them. If you do not pass through them, you will not get your need. If there was no crowd to feed with nothing available, there would be no faith in God for heavenly supply (Jn. 6:5-6). If there was no storm, there would be no faith in Christ for security (Mtt. 8:23-27). If tax collectors did not come, there would be no faith in Jesus to provide the tax (Mtt. 17:24-27). A Christian may seem dying, yet he lives on; beaten, yet not killed; sorrowful, yet rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; lacking, yet rich (2 Cor. 6:9-10), suffering, yet more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37). Trials provoke triumphs, which midwife testimonies. If you are God's child, you are in safe hands. Rejoice always! (Phil. 4:4).

Personal Note:
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APRIL 15

Why did God allow Abel to be killed by his brother, Cain; Joseph to be sold into slavery by his brothers; righteous Job to be inflicted, in addition to the loss of all his family members; Stephen to be martyred by religious bigots; sinless Jesus to be crucified by sinful earthmen; God's children to be persecuted; and innocent poor to be oppressed; all the apostles to be murdered, except John? Surely, for His good purpose. You are in that trial by God's appointment, in His keeping, under His watchful oversight, under His training, and for His predetermined time (see Job 1:12; 23:10). In it, behave as God's child, and He will make it a blessing and teach you the needed lessons. He is sovereign, all-knowing, omnipotent, and means well always for you (see Gen. 45:5; Job 23:10). His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts (Isa. 55:8). In all, He is faithful, never fails, nor late.

Personal Note:
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APRIL 16

David saw a beautiful woman and subsequently committed adultery and murder, with terrible repercussions (2 Sam. 11). Out of experience, he later prayed God to turn away his eyes from looking at worthless things (Ps. 119:37). Also, Job made a covenant with his eyes not to look lustfully upon a maid (Job 31:1). Worthless things you must look away from may include strange woman, obscene pictures and movies and objects, bribe, leaked examination papers, any enticing factor of sin. Beware of lust of the eye!

Personal Note:

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APRIL 18

What God does in man (e.g. spiritual rebirth, changing a heart of stone to a heart of flesh, crucifixion of the flesh) is a spiritual blessing with eternal benefits. What He does for man (e.g. physical beauty, provision, protection, wealth, power) is a transient physical blessing often mistaken for recipient's right standing with God. If Israelites were circumcized in the heart (Deu. 30:6), they would not oscillate in a circle of 5Rs: rebellion to retribution to repentance to reconciliation to righteousness and back to rebellion in the Book of Judges (see Figure 18.4.18).

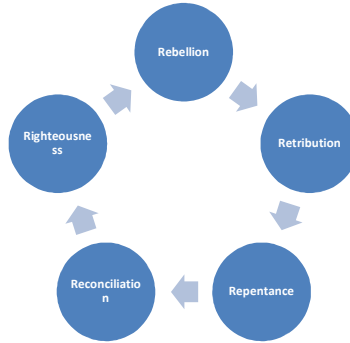


Figure 18.4.17: Cyclic 5Rs - Rebellion, retribution, repentance, reconciliation, righteousness and rebellion
God's physical blessing without a spiritual rebirth sustains unbelief. Seek rebirth (Mtt. 6:33).

Personal Note:

APRIL 19

Often, the reason for postponing an action is fear of failure. Procrastinators are so intent on perfect success that they fail to start (Eccl. 11:4). A man would do nothing if he waited until he could do it so well that no one would find fault (Cardinal Newman). It is often said, 'Anything worth doing is worth doing well.' But, the other side also holds, 'Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly.' Do not fear imperfect success or outright failure, but guard against them, and start now, where you are, with what you have, and be content with the outcome-to-be, which God will increase, bless and prosper (1 Cor. 3:6; Deu. 28:1-8; Isa. 48:15). He would not do this unless you start. Anything worth doing is worth starting.

Personal Note:
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APRIL 20

Devil does not sit idly to watch you progress, but engages the righteous in battles and afflictions, from which God delivers them as more than conquerors (Ps. 34:19; Rom. 8:37). Israel faced and won many battles, to gain entry into, and take possession of, the Promised Land. In your pain, God is still faithful. Keep hope alive. If you have dropped hope, go back and pick it up. If you have lost it, retrace it. If you have killed it, revive and resurrect it. If you have hope till the end, you will make it. Without hope, there is little else to live for. Every success had encountered persistent hope.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 21

No matter how sinful a person is or how low he has fallen, he could still repent and be reconciled to God (Isa. 1:18). Jesus shed His own blood to ransom him (1 Pet. 1:18-20). But, he must seek God while He may be found and call upon Him while He is still near (Isa. 55:6-7). Delay is very risky. And, self-righteousness is out of the question.

Personal Note:

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APRIL 22

We can appreciate another's pains only when we empathize. Your love ought to manifest in sympathy and compassion that lead to kindness and help for another person. Jesus, our perfect example (Heb. 12:2), is not self-centred. While we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), He came down from heaven, took the form of man (Jn. 1:14), that we might go to heaven. He bore undeserved stripes to secure our healing (1 Pet. 2:24). He took our infirmities, sorrows, griefs and diseases (Isa. 53:3-5), our punishment and death, that we might be forgiven, live and have peace with God. God's love is steadfast; His compassion fails not (Lam. 3:21-22). And, yours?

Personal Note:
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APRIL 23

If you have got nearly all that life can offer, become comfortable and influential in the society, you are likely to think that having wealth and/or power is heaven on earth, and that otherwise is hell on earth. Beware! You have rejected God and placed your trust in your possessions. Even if you tout that God gave them to you, it may be skin-deep humility that cannot hide your false self-evaluation. The Laodicean church-people had no place for God because they had and regarded riches and comfort more than God the Giver. In their compromise, they could only pass for church-people – not Christians – and qualified to be spewed out of God’s mouth, unless they repented (Rev. 3:15-22). Beware!

Personal Note:
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APRIL 24

What goes round comes around. Wicked acts (secret or open) against others come back someday somehow to the plotters (Gal. 6:7). The incorruptible God of justice is watching (see Esther 9:1-11). The Jews were either ignorant or conscious of this when they said that their sin of condemning innocent Jesus Christ should be upon their heads and upon their children's heads (Mt. 27:25). Beware!

Personal Note:
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APRIL 25

Regeneration distinguishes Christianity from other religions, including church-going and membership. Regeneration is an inward experience that manifests outwardly in victory over temptation, defeat over sinful inclination, and change of language, taste, desires, company, values and priorities. Regeneration brings transformation called rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). The beneficiary is made a partaker of divine nature, as God's spirit comes into him/her and makes a total change in him/her (Jn. 1:13; 3:3,5; 2 Cor. 5:17). Regeneration is not procured by identifying with a church denomination or participation in its activities or rituals.

Personal Note:
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APRIL 26

Jesus, our perfect example (Heb. 12:2), had something He lived for, a purpose for which He was born on earth (Jn. 18:37). You were also born for a purpose: to reach repentance (2 Pet. 3:9), to live for Jesus (Phil. 1:21) – not for self. If purpose is unknown, abuse is inevitable. If you are unconscious of life purpose, carelessness will consume you. Salvation is God’s will and promise and purpose for every person. Today is the day of (your) salvation (Heb. 3:12-15). Use it!

Personal Note:

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APRIL 27

A big old tree was once a tiny fresh seed – like your thought and word (Lk. 8:11). Whatever goes round, including your conduct, comes around. Be careful what you sow in thought, word and action. Do not sow negative seeds, but compassion and mercy, encouragement and hope, blessing and kindness, and love. Surely, they germinate, grow to maturity and yield fruits of their kind, which you must reap in hundreds of folds (Jn. 12:24).

Personal Note:

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APRIL 28

Life is beyond human comprehension – landmark researches, discoveries and inventions notwithstanding. To go through life successfully requires the help of the Maker of life and world (Jn. 15:5). You must follow His product (life) manual. Those who put their faith in God experience less stress, enjoy higher levels of mental health, feel more connected spiritually, are healed quicker, are more grateful for what they have, and are less interested in the rat-race (1 Tim. 6:6-10). They have the attitude of, ‘I’ve chosen Jesus and left the world for others.’ They impact on time and eternity. What about you?

Personal Note:

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APRIL 29

Shortly after Stephen was murdered and the church in Jerusalem persecuted and scattered for preaching the resurrected Jesus (Acts 8:1), Philip ... *opened his mouth ... and preached ... Jesus* (Acts 8:35, KJV). What a contrast in courage, moreso as Philip was neither an apostle nor ordained minister, but a lay believer. Unknowingly, he fulfilled a prophecy (Zeph. 3:10) and started the evangelization of North Africa. Many just open their mouths to eat, buy and sell, gossip and criticize. A believer is under obligation, and should be eager, to preach (Rom. 1:14-15). Woe to him if he fails to preach (1 Cor. 9:16). His life rots when he does not preach, but joy from heaven attends his soul when he preaches to the lost. Where are you?

Personal Note:
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APRIL 30

Your battle is the Lord's (2 Chr. 20:15). He fights your seen and unseen battles (Ex. 14:14; Deu. 1:30; 3:22; Neh. 3:20; Ps. 35:1-3). He uses supernatural arsenals: stilling the sun and moon, parting the sea, drowning a nation's army, hailstones, thunder, lightning, storms, draught, etc. Turn not to the arm of flesh for help. Your help comes from the Lord (Ps. 121:2). And, He is ever-present help (Ps. 46:1). Trust in Him!

Personal Note:

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MAY 1

God hates a liar, but He is the friend of all who can be trusted (Pr. 12:22, GNB). Yet, the lying spiral is endless. Spouses lie to each other in the name of keeping the peace. Parents and children, employers and employees, colleagues and relations lie to one another. Advertisers lie to sell products. Politicians deceive the masses. Contractors and traders lie in business. People lie to protect their estate and ego. Truth is God's character and nature. As God's children, believers must tell and live for the truth. Christ is the truth personified (Jn. 14:6). Receive Him in a new birth and get healed of lying inclination.

Personal Note:

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MAY 2

Hungry Esau felt that birth-right could wait for now, while he enjoyed appetizing food first (Gen. 25:29-34). Later, he wept for the compromised birth-right, but could not regain it (Gen. 27:30-40). We also ignore integrity and salvation, to catch fun, grab public fund, bribe, power, job, wealth, etc. Later, we cry in vain (see Lk. 16:19-31). Beware!

Personal Note:
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MAY 3

God wants to forgive your sins (Isa. 1:18). Do not let the fear of rejection, condemnation keep you away from Him any longer. His kind invitation and disposition should lead you to repentance (Lk. 15:17-20). He is waiting for your turning to Him (Ezek. 18:21-24; 1 Jn. 1:8-9; Rev. 3:20), whatever your sins and whoever you are (Jn. 3:16-17). Act!

Personal Note:
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MAY 4

Holding something against somebody is self-imprisonment to unforgiveness and bitterness. Indulging in a sinful conduct is self-imprisonment to habit (2 Pet. 2:19; Rom. 6:16). There are many bondages you are struggling to free yourself from. Jesus is the bondage breaker. None else, including you, can help you (Acts 4:12). Please, embrace Him.

Personal Note:

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MAY 5

A womanizer sees more beautiful women than those he previously had. A lady, who goes after men for money, meets richer ones than those she had exploited. The rich insatiably pursue more riches. The Devil keeps dangling a disguised object of doom before you. You can reject it. Appropriate warning.

Personal Note:
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MAY 6

Help comes to those who realize they need, and ask for, it (see Mk. 10:46-52). Others are proud, trust their position and possession, and die in haughty silence. The word, help, occurs 165 times in the Bible, showing its relevance and importance to life. Whatever you do, whoever you are and whatever your condition and position, you need help to attain success, sustain it and end well (Heb. 4:1). Divine help comes through people. May God send your needed genuine, quality help. And may pride not beguile you to fail to recognize and use it. And, may you be used of God to help others.

Personal Note:

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MAY 7

People die or kill for wealth and ‘success’ – not for love. But, love precedes and procures wealth and success, whereas wealth and success neither precede nor procure love. Choose love today – genuine, godly love – and wealth, success and godly peace will surely follow you. Love is the fulfilment of the Law (Rom. 13:8-10), and God blesses those who fulfill the Law. See those around you, who lack love and have wealth and what people call success, they lack peace, no matter their pretences. Lack of godly peace is a symbol of failure. Run to Jesus to help redress your situation.

Personal Note:

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MAY 8

Owners of ill-gotten wealth and/or power claim it is God's blessing. Others celebrate them as being smart. A godly person, who respects the law and the rights of others, is mocked as not clever. God cannot be deceived (Gal. 6:7). His plan for each person cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2). Be not carried away by your achievement, which should rather take you back to the Giver and ultimate Achiever.

Personal Note:
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MAY 9

Wonderful advances in scientific and technological discoveries and inventions reveal the awesomeness of God who created the marvellous world, created man in His image and likeness, and gave him dominion over the whole wide world (Gen. 1:27-28). The anatomy and biochemical workings of human, animal and plant body systems as well as the intricate working of the universe further convince that God is a master planner, designer and builder. No one can be compared with God – not even the Chinese scientists who have reportedly created a genetically modified embryo with potential genetic advantages. God holds the lives of the scientists and the embryos, and can terminate them at will (see Lk. 12:19-20). This all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful God cares for His children, blesses their household and orders their steps (Ps. 34:15; Pr. 3:33, 16:9). Are you one of them? What a thing an unbeliever misses?

Personal Note:

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MAY 10

To accumulate earthly wealth is self-poisoning. To accumulate it for children is intergenerational injustice that denies present generation of common wealth and wickedly seeks to poison future generations in advance with what they need not. (See Ex. 16:19-24; Mt. 6:34.) Gaining more than you need is madness that makes you earth-bound, a failure pilgrim (Mt. 19:16-21). Stealing more than you need is *kleptomania* – a brand of madness. It arises from lacking faith that God will continually provide for you and your future generations. The growing syndrome to outcompete peers in material possessions is Devil’s sickness to destroy unbelievers (no news), and to destroy believers and their leaders (unspeakable reality). The aim of accumulators is self-comfort, but they get distress (Pr. 23:4, 11:24). Life in Jesus makes you seem dying, yet you live on; beaten, yet not killed; sorrowful, yet rejoicing; poor, yet enriching many; lacking, yet rich (2 Cor. 6:9-10). Embrace it!

Personal Note:
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MAY 11

If you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you become God's child (Jn. 1:12), blessed (Ps. 33:12), and full of praises for God (Ps. 33:1-3), for He is faithful (Ps. 33:4). There are church-goers, church-members, carnal Christians (1 Cor. 3:1) who cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). There are also committed, genuine Christians, who are God's delight (see Lk. 9:23-26; 1 Sam. 13:14; 1 Jn, 3:22). Place yourself (2 Cor. 13:5).

Personal Note:

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MAY 12

Where are true friends that love at all times, stick closer and give trusted wounds? (See Pr. 17:17, 18:24, 27:6.) Even in the church, only the type of Job's three friends abound. They were friends only when all was well with Job. When life went sour, Job deserved and expected their kindness. But, they despised, maligned and besmeared him. They were physicians of no value, dry streams that travelers could not rely on for water to quench thirst. (See Job 6:14-23). The real motive behind that relationship, even going to church, is often self-serving material gain. It is far from godly love, which is sacrificial (Gal. 6:2; 2 Sam. 24:24; Heb. 9:22, 26-28). Do you have it? Share it!

Personal Note:

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MAY 13

King David was conscious of God winning his battles, raising him from low estate to a great preferment, crowning him with power and dominion in Israel, and giving him honour and reputation among nations. He appreciated God's goodness in establishing his dynasty (2 Sam. 7:18-29). On the contrary, some people think their achievements were by merit and claim to be self-made men or women, kings or queens, scientists, industrialists, warriors, musicians, artists, generals, etc. They forget that God provides life and other success factors. If He withholds life, where is success?

Personal Note:

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MAY 14

Vengeance is God's, He will repay (Deu. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; 2 Thess. 1:6-7). Leave that matter entirely for Him. Why would you attempt to take God's place, assume God's function to recompense? Why would you, in thought, word or action, try to get even or repay an offender in his own coin? Sure, you are not God.

Personal Note:
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MAY 15

Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38, KJV). We are enjoined not to “withhold good” (Pr. 3:27, NIV). But, in serving self, we gladly and arrogantly accumulate common wealth to the chagrin of the less-privileged in society. It is not late to repent and choose to do all the good you can, with all the means you have and can muster, in all the ways you see, in all the places you go, at all the times you have, to all the people you come across, as long as you live.

Personal Note:

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MAY 16

Serving God must be on His terms – in holiness and righteousness (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16), in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23-24). We cannot serve Him at our whims and caprice. We must avoid sin which pitches us against God (Hab. 1:13; Isa. 59:1-12), and which He watches out to punish wherever and in whomsoever it is found (Amos 2:4), without respecting any person (Rom. 2:11-12), as a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

Personal Note:

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MAY 17

Neglect not the power of the little thing you have. Moses parted the Red Sea with a rod (Ex. 14:16). With a 300-man army, Gideon defeated the Midian nation (Judges 7). David killed giant Goliath with a sling and a little stone (1 Sam. 17:50). Jesus fed five thousand men (in addition to women and children) with five loaves and two fishes (Mtt. 14:13-21). With faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move a mountain (Mt. 17:20).

Personal Note:

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MAY 18

As you await uncertain future, realize that God's love and goodness encircles you, no matter what awaits you. Wait with trust to see what God will faithfully do (Ex. 14:13-14). Surrounded by a storm in the middle of the sea, Jesus's disciples were taught about the power of faith in, and faithfulness of, God. Even the winds and waves obey Him (Mt. 8:23-27). Trust God with that future.

Personal Note:

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MAY 19

As though God's fountain had run dry, we often try someone else for alternative source of help to supplement the demands of life. But, he who knows and relates well with his God, Father, Lord and Master has no need of a human mediator. People can neither replenish our strength, nor feed our souls, hope and anticipation. They have neither springs of faith and life, nor graces to supply. Their love is a travesty of God's love, and their friendship is all about self. Go to God to supply your need from His rivers of delights, fountain that never runs dry. His loving-kindness is steadfast. (See Ps. 36:5-12.) Nothing, but you and your sin, can stop Him from faithfully supplying to you, because He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent.

Personal Note:
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MAY 20

A person's true character or spiritual maturity level manifests when he (suddenly) becomes angry, rich, grabs power or faces a challenge. In any of these situations, compare your instincts with God's intent for human behaviour. Choose a gracious response to please God, rather than striking at people in a regrettable thought, word or action. Endure life wrongs (1 Pet. 2:20-21), since God will make things right (2 Tim. 2:12). When we honour God in our relationships (Col 3:17), He will make our enemies to be at peace with us (Pr. 16:7; Dan. 6:16-24). In anger, richness, authority or perplexing challenge, always abide by God's unchanging precepts.

Personal Note:

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MAY 21

Life's full of ups and downs. Acid test for genuine love or friendship is how a person responds to the downfall of another. Peter denied Jesus when Jesus was arrested and tortured (Mt. 26:69-75). The disciples went fishing when Jesus died, was buried and was no longer with them (Jn. 21:1-4). People masquerade as friends, pretend to love and hang around a relation for what they will gain – not for what to offer, nor for their love of the relation (Jn. 6:26). But, Jesus left His heavenly throne and came to serve – not to be served, to offer His life as a ransom for undeserving sinners (Mt. 20:28). He never abandons us (Heb. 13:5). Even when we are unfaithful, God is faithful (2 Tim. 2:13; Rom. 3:3-4). Be Christ-like!

Personal Note:
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MAY 22

King Joash did what was right in the eyes of God (2 Kg. 12:2) only when Jehoiada the priest instructed him. When Jehoiada died, Joash turned from God to other gods (2 Chr. 24:17-27). Who is your adviser? Will your legacy show continued spiritual growth, faithfulness and fruitfulness throughout your life? Do not turn to any of the modern-day idols: riches and wealth, affluence and influence, materialism and comfort, self-adoration and fame. They cannot fill the void in your life, nor help you in times of unavoidable life-troubles. Turn to Jesus, who alone offers meaning and fulfillment to your life. The time is now. Delay is dangerous. And, commitment is key.

Personal Note:
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MAY 23

Every life is but filthy rag, voidful, an accumulation of junks (see Isa. 64:6). Wisdom, pleasure and toil are all meaningless, and every mind is degenerate and reprobate (see Eccl. 1-2). Ability and achievement amount to a little more than thrash and loss (see Phil. 3:4-8). But, Jesus, in the transformation ministry, changes a life into something new (2 Cor. 5:17), useful and acceptable to God (2 Tim. 2:15, 20-21), and untouchable (Col. 3:1-3). Please, embrace and cling to the salvation in Him.

Personal Note:

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MAY 24

Vision leads to burden, which leads to action, which yields results to be either rewarded or punished by the Maker (see Col. 3:25). Vision is of heaven (Acts 26:19). Burden and action must also depend on God, who works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose (Phil. 2:13). Your life is not your own, nor can you direct your steps (Jer. 10:23). For vision, burden and action, be God-dependent – not self-dependent or human wisdom-dependent or worldly possession-dependent or human connection-dependent (see Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; Rom. 8:14).

Personal Note:

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MAY 25

Most people are in the church for what God will do for them, to be seen to belong or for other unholy motive/s (see James 4:3). Watch your motive! We do not worship God to elicit His blessing, but to demonstrate our love for Him who alone is worthy of our worship. We do not walk in His ways for fear of the consequences of disobedience, but for our joy to obey and please Him, who alone created us and the earth for us (Isa. 45:12). Besides, He first loved us and sacrificed His only begotten Son to redeem us (Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:30).

Personal Note:

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MAY 26

God is pleased when His people worship Him for who He is and what He has done – not for self-serving motives. He formed us from dust and led us into green pasture (Gen. 2:7-8). We sinned and fell short of His glory (see Gen. 2:16-17, 3:6; Rom. 6:23). He rescues us through a Gate (Jesus) into His great and glorious dwelling place forever. Our God is good, loving and faithful (see Ps. 100) – sufficient reasons to worship Him. Come on!

Personal Note:

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MAY 27

Temptations are not lacking, moreso these last days when the Devil has become more desparate to make believers fall and to keep hold of unbelievers as captives. Temptations come through our desires, situations, and people we encounter (see James 1:14-15; Mt. 4:1-2). Good a thing, no temptation is uncommon, and God is faithful to provide escape route (1 Cor. 10:13). Will you do the fleeing, like Joseph (see Gen. 39:9-12)?

Personal Note:

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MAY 28

Some children pray, ‘Oh! God, please make me to be like my parents.’ Some others pray, ‘Oh! God, please make me to be better than my parents.’ Some do not pray at all because they neither know nor believe in God. To which group do your children possibly belong? Are you the ultimate role model for your children? Do you realize that every word and action of yours have effects on them? And, that no other person or outside force has greater influence on your children than you? Do you have a dark side of your life which you attempt to hide from your children? Your children will bring you either joy (if they are wise) or shame and grief (if they are foolish) (Pr. 15:20), depending on your examples. Beware! Do not pass the buck! Avoid wishful thinking!

Personal Note:
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MAY 29

In a farewell speech, prophet Samuel asked the nation Israel to question his legacies of integrity, morality, good governance and sacrifice. All the people, including his enemies/opponents who rejected the leadership of his sons and God by asking for a human king (see 1 Sam. 8:6-7), testified to his impeccability (1 Sam. 12:3-4). In another development, Josiah became king at age 8 and reigned with integrity for 31 years, with incomparable legacy (2 Kg. 22:1-2, 23:25). Stewards must be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2). As a leader, bury your excuses to cheat on your family, church and society, and to build ignominious legacy. Be free from corruption at all levels, which is the undeniable bane of Nigeria that celebrates Democracy today. Corruption is only one of the symptoms of lack of integrity. Integrity needs to be built, encouraged, respected and rewarded in every little corner of the system, rather than spend fortunes on the farce of fighting the symptom of its presence.

Personal Note:
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MAY 30

As you have spoken, so will it happen (Nu. 14:28). God holds people responsible for what they say, and He performs them. Jesus said, *Your words will be used to judge you ... to declare you either innocent or guilty* (Mt. 12:37, GNB). Your situation proceeds from your word. You once spoke into existence your present situation. If you want to live long and well and to end well, use your tongue with a high sense of responsibility - only when and how you must, with positivism and utmost care (James 3:5; Pr. 25:11). As God's child, let your word be flawless (2 Sam. 22:31; Pr. 30:5). Restrain your tongue; speak only what will build, preserve and bless (Eph. 4:29). Since words proceed from thoughts, watch your heart, which is the seat of thoughts. Drop your excesses and excuses, unbecoming tongue attitudes!

Personal Note:
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MAY 31

Like the degenerate Israel of prophet Amos' time, people have less value for human dignity. The fashion and vogue are to cruelly oppress and exploit the poor, get corrupt (even in the judiciary), pervert sex, and delight in every known evil (see Amos 2:6-16). God's grace, privilege and invitation decreasingly lead people to repentance and righteousness. But, in the midst of the boisterous noise of the molten calf worshippers (Ex. 32:6), you can still live for God's glory, if you mean to. Avoid the fashion and the vogue! Narrow is the gate that leads to life, but wide is the gate that leads to destruction. Beware!

Personal Note:

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JUNE 1

Disregarding God's forewarning (in Deu. 11:8-17), Israelites, including the priests and Levites, intermingled with unholy neighbours, embraced their idolatrous practices and intermarried with them. Their sins were higher than their heads, and their guilt reached high heavens, for which they were subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation. But, gracious God left them a remnant, a sanctuary, light to their eyes, and relief in their bondage. He did not desert them, but showed them kindness in the sight of Persian kings who granted them life to rebuild God's house and repair its ruins (Ezra 9). Contrary to God's warnings (James 4:4-5), believers disregard God's words, and the church is going worldly, hence the suffering and confusion in the land. But, God punishes less than our sins deserve (Ezra 9:13) and shall deliver us again through, and for the sake of, the remnants. Do you belong to the masses or the remnants?

Personal Note:
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JUNE 2

A man exists; another lives. One survives; another thrives. People are obsessed with physical needs – food, shelter and clothing - which can only afford their existence and, at best, survival. Yet, existence and survival in darkness produce fruitless deeds (see Eph. 5:11). People seek position and power, money and mammon, fame and influence, which destroy them and their descendants. Only spiritual needs – the full light of God’s presence – make a man live and thrive (see 1 Pet. 2:9-10). Seek them now in Jesus (Mt. 6:33; 11:28). Time is of essence.

Personal Note:

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JUNE 3

The world is incredibly bad (see Rom. 3:9-18). Believers are pilgrims in the world, but are not of the world. In the midst of the wicked world that hates them (Jn. 15:18-21), they have learnt the great secret of being quiet and holy, and have found a joy that is a thousand times better than any pleasure sinful lifestyle can offer. Despised and persecuted, they do not care. They have overcome the world through Christ who strengthens them (see Jn. 16:33; Rom. 8:37; Phil. 4:13). Their troubles turn into triumphs and beget testimonies. Are you one of them? If yes, praise God; if no, you can still become (see Jn. 1:12, 3:16; Rev. 3:20).

Personal Note:
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JUNE 5

Are these coincidences or there is a story behind everything? The tabernacle built by Moses (Ex. 25-27) had only one entrance, just as there is only one Way to God – Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12). The curtain separated the people from the Most Holy Place (MHP), where God’s presence dwelt in the tabernacle, just as sins separate us from God (Isa. 59:1-3). Inside the MHP was the Ark, which symbolized God’s presence. The High Priest was a forerunner of the greater Priest to come – Jesus Christ. The blood of the sacrificed animal atoned for the sins of the people, just as Christ’s blood atones for man’s sins as the perfect sacrifice. Jesus entered the MHP once for all by His own blood, obtaining eternal redemption for those who believe (Heb. 9:12). Kindly respond to His call (Rev. 3:20).

Personal Note:
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JUNE 6

In anguish, Jesus prayed, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (Lk. 22:44). He suffered and died to take away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29). He took our pain and bore our suffering. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His stripes we were healed. (See Isa. 53:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:24.) Appropriate his atonement! May it not be in vain for you.

Personal Note:

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JUNE 7

Through a conversation with Ethiopian Eunuch, Philip shared the good news about the redemptive work of Jesus (Acts 8:35), won the Eunuch for Christ and eventually founded the Coptic Church of Ethiopia. As people tell their ordeals and woes of our hard, perilous time, you need to present the only solution they need – Jesus Christ. Turn gossip time to opportunity for evangelism. It is the Great Commission (Mk. 16:15-16).

Personal Note:

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JUNE 8

Saints are not dead people who lived without sin and whose exhumed bones do Jesus-like miracles. A saint is anyone who belongs to God through faith in Christ Jesus. (See 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1, NIV). He serves God and reflects his relationship with Him anytime, anywhere and in whatever he does (Mt. 5:16). Let the rich love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control of God shine through you as a saint (Gal. 5:22-23.)

Personal Note:

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JUNE 9

When we repent, God chooses to forgive us and to remember our sins no more (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12). Therefore, our past wrong choices of thoughts, words and deeds need not define our future in God's hands and eyes. Confess your sins, ask for pardon, and make a fresh start. God is faithful to purify you. His compassion fails not. (See 1 Jn. 1:9; Lam. 3:22-23.)

Personal Note:

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JUNE 10

Jewish traditions believed that the soul departs from the body three days after death, returns no more, and decaying of the body sets in. This informed the objection of Martha and Mary when Jesus asked for the opening of the 4-day old grave of their brother, Lazarus. For them, Jesus came rather late, when all hope was lost regarding Lazarus living again. They recalled that Lazarus was dead and buried 4 days earlier. The soul had departed from the body and decaying started about 24 hours before Jesus arrived, hence the stench of the exhumed body would be unbearable. But, Jesus told them that nothing is impossible with God. They had expected healing for sick Lazarus, but could get resurrection for dead and buried and decaying Lazarus. Faith was the answer. By raising decaying soul-less Lazarus from the dead and grave, Jesus proved His point. What's your challenge? Childlessness, sickness, poverty, satanic attack, no suitor, no job, etc. still bow at the name of Jesus. Go back to wherever you dropped your hope. Pick it up, and leave it with God in faith. No hope gets lost in God. Your case is a small thing. (See Jn. 11:33-40, 16:24; Pil. 2:10.)

Personal Note:
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JUNE 11

Following God’s wisdom leads to fullness of life. Hence, king Solomon enjoined us to trust in God with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding. In all our ways, we ought to acknowledge (submit to) God, and He will make our paths straight (Pr. 3:5-6). Life is full of snares. Run to God, the master of life’s adventures. Rejoice in the Lord, and He will take care of you (Ps. 37:4).

Personal Note:

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JUNE 12

Bezalel and Oholiab used their God-given talents to design the tent of meeting and all its furnishings for worship of God (Ex. 31:1-11). Are you a graveyard for talents? God designed each person in ways to make his contributions to the kingdom or the church unique and meaningful (see 1 Cor. 12:17-18). Use your talents effectively and faithfully in your family, kindred, town, workplace, church and nation.

Personal Note:

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JUNE 13

Regardless of your make-beliefs, the true location of your heart is revealed by how you use your time, money and talents. Your heart is where your treasure is (Lk. 12:34). If we give our hearts to our Creator, who loves and cares for us and gives us all we have (Acts 17:25), we will invest our resources in things He cares about: people's needs (James 1:27) and advancement of His kingdom (Mt. 6:10). Make no mistake about it!

Personal Note:

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JUNE 14

Sin is hungry for man. It is crouching at his door, desiring to have him. But, he can do what is right. (See Gen. 4:7.) Sin tries to entice by tempting him with curiosity or new experience, yielding to negative emotions, convincing him that living right is old-fogeyish and living wrong is smart and fashionable, or by appealing to his senses (see Mt. 4:3-10; James 1:14-15; Gen. 3:1-6). However, a way to rule over sin, instead of letting it consume his life, is walking by the Spirit, and he will not gratify the desires of the flesh; crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal. 5:16, 24). Only Jesus can help him do them (Rom. 7:21-25). You are that man. Call on Jesus today!

Personal Note:

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JUNE 16

Parents have handed their children to maids, who have handed them to teachers. But, neither maids nor teachers can play the role of parents in bringing up children, nor parents the role of teachers. The roles of parents and teachers are complementary. Neither of them can be substituted with the role of maids. Social and economic pressures have led to rampant attempts at these faulty and impossible substitutions through the loss of godly societal values or placing them upside-down. The victims are children and future generations. The society also pays dearly for it through social vices: boko haram, kidnapping for ransom, ethnic militia, armed robbery, electoral and examination malpractices, political thugery, rape, terrorism, etc., all of which are results of failure of parents to train up the child the way of God (Pr. 22:6). Day of African Child is a day to conscientize self and others towards our role in child upbringing.

Personal Note:
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JUNE 17

Enoch and Elijah pleased God and were taken up by God without their tasting physical death (see Gen. 5:24; 2 Kg. 2:11). No prophet is like Moses, whom God knew face-to-face and who did all those miraculous signs and wonders (Deu. 34:10-11). Israel served God throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him (Josh. 24:31). Samuel led Israel with impeccable character (1 Sam. 12:3-4). Josiah became king at age 8, yet reigned with integrity for 31 years with incomparable legacy (2 Kg. 22:1-2, 23:25). Abraham was trustworthy with raising a godly household (Gen. 18:19). These and numerous others were men like people of today, who have no excuse for breeding decaying society with a bleak future for posterity. Are you part of the society's problems or part of the solutions? Day of African Child is an opportunity for men to reflect on their good or ugly roles and examples in bringing up children in the society.

Personal Note:
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JUNE 18

Medical doctor Sir James Simpson discovered the use of chloroform as an anaesthetic to render patients insensitive to the pain of surgery in 1847. It was a major break-through in medicine. Surprisingly, in answer to a question from his students at the University of Edinburgh, he said, *My most valuable discovery was when I discovered myself a sinner and that Jesus Christ was my Saviour.* In an earlier development, matchless riches and wisdom made king Solomon most famous in the world. After employing all he had for his enjoyment, he asserted that worldly acquisitions and attainments are vain without the fear of, and obedience to, God (Eccl. 12:8,13). Worldly cravings actually block the way to true happiness. Hold the things of this world with loose hands (see Mk. 10:21); do not set your mind on them (Col. 3:2).

Personal Note:
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JUNE 19

It can be easier to get angry, disappointed or to doubt God's goodness than to trust His word and faithfulness. Eve suffered this fate when she listened to Devil, who made her have a second thought regarding God's word and faithfulness and the need to continue in obedience to Him (see Gen. 3:1-6). God's goodness is not something you decide upon with your limited understanding, but something you affirm. In trial times, see the truth that God is good (Ps. 119:68, 34:8). Embrace only thoughts, conversations, arguments, and companies that feed your faith; and avoid those that detract from it.

Personal Note:
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JUNE 20

No greater love can a man have and show than that he dies to save another person. Jesus offered His life and blood as one sacrifice for our sins and perfected forever those who are being sanctified (see Heb. 10:12,14; Gal. 1:3-4). Old lines? But, this willful sacrifice continues to rescue men and women and to offer assurance of spending eternity with Jesus in heaven. It is a constant truth that does not depend on what you choose to believe, disbelieve or practice.

Personal Note:

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JUNE 21

Even when someone offends us, the law of love dictates that we do not say or do a thing we will later regret, but to show patience and understanding. In anger or lack of patience, many have blown up the only bridge that links up their home and spoilt their relationship with God, the consuming fire, who declares that anger resides in the bosssom of fools (Eccl. 7:9). By your patience, possess your soul (Lk. 21:19, KJV,ISV,ASJ).

Personal Note:

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JUNE 22

It can be difficult to appropriate some scriptures. Rejoicing under house arrest that his suffering was causing the gospel to spread, Paul was torn between the desires for life and death, because to go on living would mean fruitful labour for Christ (Phil. 1:22), and dying would end his earthly suffering and take him to Christ in heaven. He declared, *I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far* (Phil. 1:23, NIV). After all, all is well that ends in heaven. Whether a believer lives or dies, he wins. Hear Paul, *For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain* (Phil. 1:21, NIV). Yet, people wishing to go to heaven now want to die later. Underneath this contradiction is being unprepared for heaven. Work on your life!

Personal Note:
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JUNE 23

Can we walk in true fellowship with God without knowing and accepting His word as the fundamental truth and abiding by it? No. (See Amos 3:3). The word of God is spirit and life (see Jn. 6:63). What can you do without spirit and life? Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). And without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Without pleasing God, you cannot walk with Him. Dig into, and abide by, God's word. There can be no better choice. Handle the word of God rightly. Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and teaching (see 2 Tim. 2:15, 4:2). Lest you forget, these are commands.

Personal Note:

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JUNE 24

Believers face challenges because of their faith. But, they have the assurance that God is able, loving, caring and willing to see them through, no matter what. He gives the needed grace to suffering Christians, and they become more conformed to Him at the end of the trial (see Job 23:10). Besides, whatever you are passing through is nothing, compared to the eternal reward (2 Cor. 4:17; James 1:2,12).
Cheer up!

Personal Note:

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JUNE 25

Just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish 3 days and 3 nights, so Jesus was in the grave 3 days and 3 nights. After listening to Jonah, the men of Nineveh repented. The Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon. But, ours is a wicked and adulterous generation, asking for miraculous signs. (See Mt. 12:39-43.) Harken to the gospel. Stop crucifying Jesus again and again.

Personal Note:
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JUNE 26

A believer can be soiled by gazing at a vulgar picture, listening to foul language or wrong music, reading a wrong book, a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thought. He loses purity and strength thereby. Christ's faithful followers must keep away from anything that defiles, and be loyal to Christ exclusively, as His pure bride, without spots or wrinkle (Rev. 14:4). Avoid godless arguments, for they lead to more and more ungodliness (2 Tim. 2:16).

Personal Note:

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JUNE 27

In a home-ward journey, it is foolish to stop paddling the boat in the middle of a stormy lagoon. You are not home yet, and the danger of sinking looms. In the life-long and perilous journey to return to our Maker, our aim is to be like Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, doing away with all sins and throwing off all distractions and entanglements (Heb. 12:1-2). It is a progressive journey – you dare not stagnate.

Personal Note:

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JUNE 28

Contending that heavenly race is an over ambitious goal, the Devil desperately battles to frustrate believers. Apostle Paul was conscious of sins, distractions and entanglements that beset. Only the heavenly goal mattered to him. He would not look behind, not even sideways, but fixed all his attention on that noble goal of conforming to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). He pressed on, until he made it (Phil. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 4:7-8), conquering through Christ who strengthened him (Phil. 4:13). He guarded against self-elation, self-puffing up (1 Cor. 10:12). His weaknesses, failures, weariness, and anything else could neither deter him, nor separate him from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:37-38). Endeavour to finish well!

Personal Note:
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JUNE 29

They were used to the sea, as seasoned fishermen. And, as Jesus' disciples, they obeyed Jesus' instructions. Yet, they were threatened and terrified by the storm, even when Jesus was with them in the boat. No matter who and what a believer is, following Jesus, being with Him and doing His will do not exclude him from the storms of life. But, he needs not be terrified. Jesus calmed the storm, and it could not stop them from getting to their destination. (See Mk. 4:35-5:1.) Whatever the social, economic, religious, political, cultural, spiritual and life-threatening storms and their sources, Jesus will take believers home. I pray and hope you are one, and that your hope and trust are in Him. Peace profound!

Personal Note:
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JUNE 30

A great literature has been described as one that ‘changes you. When you are done reading, you’re a different person.’ The Bible is this and more. Listening to it (Rom. 10:17; Rev. 1:3), reading it (Rev. 1:3), studying it (2 Tim. 2:15), memorising it (1 Cor. 15:1-2) and meditating on it (Josh. 1:8) have a powerful transformational influence in our lives when we put its truth into practice. Buckle up!

Personal Note:
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JULY 1

The Bible, as historical accounts of heroes, inspire us to be courageous and persevering. Its prophecies warn us against the dangers of living by our fallen instincts. The life-changing psalms make us more wise and understanding than our teachers, keep us from evil, are worthy of our meditation all day long and sweeter than honey (Ps. 119:99-104). May the Holy Spirit of God use the Word of God to turn you to God and sustain you in God.

Personal Note:

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JULY 2

Every believer is certainly doing much better than he deserves, because God is most gracious. While he was wallowing in sin, an enemy of God, Christ came to die for him (Rom. 5:8; Col. 2:12-13). God loves, keeps, protects, provides for him and faithfully fulfills many more promises of His in his life. The believer is able to do all things through Christ that strengthens him (Phil. 4:13). He is more than a conqueror over life vagaries (Rom. 8:37). God gives him peace that transcends all understanding (Phil. 4:7). Are you a believer? No proxy!

Personal Note:

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JULY 3

To the marathon reading by Ezra of the law of Moses (first five books of the Bible or the Book of the Law) for 6 hours, Israelites (without exception) reacted by (a) standing up in reverence for the word of God; (b) praising God by lifting their hands and saying, amen; (c) bowing down in humble worship; and (d) listening carefully to the scripture reading and explanation (see Neh. 8:5-8). Contrast their attitude to God's word with yours. In most cases, we hate long sermons, do not desire/seek God's word diligently, and our attitude and confession run contrary to the scripture that we know. May we repent.

Personal Note:

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JULY 4

Sheep can be stubborn. They go astray and turn to their own ways. Man is also like sheep – stubborn, goes astray and turns to his own way (Isa. 53:6) - desiring and doing what displeases God, hurting other people, and being self-centred. In spite of that, our Good Shepherd laid down His life for us (Jn. 10:11; Rom. 5:8) and carried our sorrows (Isa. 53:4-6). He calls us back to safe pasture. Kindly respond!

Personal Note:

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JULY 5

You will be remembered for the works you did – not those you could have done, nearly did or promised/boasted but failed to do. This is outwards, not inwards. It refers to love, compassion, mercies, kind actions to others – not to self or to your folk. Only love, compassion, mercies and kindness to others – not to self or those you are responsible to – are rewardable. (See Lam. 3:22-23; Mt. 9:36; Lk. 10:30-37).

Personal Note:

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JULY 6

You will be rewarded for food donated to the needy, not the best meal you ate or gave to your family; for the drink you gave to the thirsty, not the costliest wine you enjoyed, maybe with friend/s; for hospitality (to strangers), not harbouring numerous relations (for your ego); for the wears you gave to the naked, not the costly and special wears you used; for the house you donated to the homeless or shelterless, not the mansion/s you occupied/owned; for visits to prisons and needy homes, not those paid to friends; for the car you gave for the work of God or for use by others, not the posh car/s you rode; etc. (see Mt. 25:31-40). Again, you must do it unannounced (Mt. 6:1-4) and in proportion to what you have (Mk. 12:41-44). Do not be weary in doing good (Gal. 6:9). And, the motive must be right.

Personal Note:
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JULY 7

God has given us a perfect example of giving by giving His only begotten Son, Jesus, the perfect gift, for sacrifice to save mankind the death penalty for sin (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:7-8). Jesus has given us the best example of selfless and sacrificial giving by leaving His heavenly throne for earth and offering His life and shedding His blood at Calvary to save fallen mankind from eternal damnation (Phil. 2:3-8). What are you giving/doing for God and Jesus? Rather, you keep asking God to bless you the more, give you more breakthroughs, always heal your diseases, protect you, deliver you from mishaps, promote you, widen your coast, etc. Gratefully reciprocate the Lord's doings to/for you by kind actions to neighbours (1 John 3:16-18).

Personal Note:
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JULY 8

King David would not offer to God what cost him nothing (1 Chr. 21:24). King Solomon gave the best for building a temple for worshiping God (2 Chr. 8:14-18). For all God's benefits (see Ps. 103:3-6), what quality material things (in addition to your life and heart) do you give in service of Him and to the people He created in His own image and likeness? Does your gift reflect quality love, reverence and devotion that God deserves, by being the most valuable gift you can afford? Resist the temptation to give a little out of much or a 'blind animal for sacrifice'. We are experts at being miserly and over-calculative in giving (to God and to people). Remember, He gave you all you have (Acts 17:25). You reverence God with quality sacrifice. And, there is love in sharing with people. We can change today.

Personal Note:

JULY 9

God gave, still gives and will ever give to us (2 Cor. 8:9). He ever outgives us, and gives us more than we can imagine or ask (Eph. 3:20). Lacking in sufficient faith, we often fear lack and fail to give as we ought to. Besides, we envy receivers and refuse to give liberally. If we trust God, we will not lack. If we give, we receive reward in folds. If we do not give, the Devil tricks us; God is comfortable, His work goes on and He uses other people to give for His service and to those He wants to bless. Each of us is dispensable. Be wise! (See 1 Tim. 6:17-19.)

Personal Note:

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JULY 10

God has not promised believers a pain-free world, but peace in troubled world and a pain-free, sorrow-free, tear-free, and death-free heaven (see Jn. 16:33; Rev. 21:1-4). Are your mind and emotions clothed with despair, disappointment and heaviness arising from the pains in the society? Release your hurts to God and He will clothe you with garment of hope for despair, of peace and joy for disappointment, of healing for heaviness, of freedom for unforgiveness, of praise for pains (see Isa. 61:3). The choice is yours.

Personal Note:

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JULY 11

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstance (Phil. 4:11). If Paul, an ardent evangelist, confined to prison for Christ, abandoned by friends, in need, and facing execution, could learn to be content, what about you in light and momentary afflictions, which renew you day by day and achieve for you eternal glory that far outweigh them all? Do not fix your eyes on temporal things you are seeing, but eternal things you are not seeing (2 Cor. 4:16-19); nor allow that unpleasant circumstance make you doubt God's plan! Confess your inward grumbling, ask for forgiveness and enjoy peace and contentment.

Personal Note:

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JULY 12

As dearly loved children, believers must imitate Christ in love and sacrifice, avoiding immorality, obscenity and greed, which is idolatry, and foolish talk and coarse jokes, but be thankful. They must not partake in the works of darkness, but expose them, as children of light, whose fruit consists of goodness, righteousness and truth. They must find out what pleases God and do it or work at it, being conscious of time (as the most precious gift – fixed and cannot be created or saved to be retrieved later). (See Eph. 5:1-17.)

Personal Note:

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JULY 13

Believers must do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than selves, not looking only to their own interest, but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:3-5). In this regard, how did you measure up yesterday? and how do you hope to meet up today and tomorrow? Every second and deed count in the life of a believer, even yours. Grab every opportunity to minister to the need/interest of others.

Personal Note:
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JULY 14

A Christian (believer) was once dead in sin and in the uncircumcision of the sinful nature. God made him alive with Christ. God forgave all his sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against him and that stood opposed to him; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col. 2:13-15). Your life ought to reflect this privilege.

Personal Note:

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JULY 15

Believers must put to death whatever belongs to their old, earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming. They must depart from their old lifestyle by ridding themselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and telling lies (Col. 3:5-9). Do not say you were not told.

Personal Note:
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JULY 16

A believer (Christian) labours because he is saved, not in order to be saved. Christ redeemed undeserving mankind by graciously sacrificing Himself (see Eph. 2:10). He rescued mankind from the broad way to hell. God purchased believers at this costly price (see 1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23). Once saved, we need to doggedly continue in the narrow way, in gratitude to the gracious Master, without whose sacrifice we would have been eternally doomed and lost. Like apostle Paul, we need to strive (make extraordinary effort) to preach the gospel far and near (Rom. 15:19). We must not be tired in well doing (Gal. 6:9). Be there for your Saviour. May He count on you always to save the dying souls.

Personal Note:
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JULY 17

A wise man is cautious and departs from evil; but a fool plunges on and is confident (Pr. 14:16). Believers ought to remain conscious of rapture and of the reality of being close to physical death (1 Sam. 20:3). Either can take place in normal circumstances and activities, as in the days of Noah – people eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage – then came the flood and destroyed them all. Also, in the days of Lot, people were eating, drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But Lot - wise and cautious for heeding the angels’ warnings – left Sodom. Then, came fire and sulphur that rained down from heaven and destroyed them all, who plunged on confidently as fools (see Lk. 17:26-29). Will you be caught unawares.

Personal Note:

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JULY 18

Jesus answered that the man was born blind neither because of his sins nor those of his parents, but for the work of God to be displayed in his life. Jesus displayed this work by giving the man sight (Jn. 9:1-7). God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh. Even when Paul prayed three times for God to remove it, He replied that His grace (to bear it) was sufficient for him (2 Cor. 12:7-9). God permitted Satan to afflict blameless and upright Job - a man who feared God and shunned evil (by God's own testimony). (God actually brought the trouble upon Job - see Job 2:3, 42:11). The wicked Devil killed Job's loved ones, destroyed his wealth, and messed up his health for many years running, barely sparing his soul (see Job 1:8 ff). The innocent can suffer in God's hands, and He can prolong the suffering to serve His purpose.

Personal Note:
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JULY 19

The end of a matter is more important than its beginning. The cases of the congenitally blind man (Jn. 9:1), Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7), Job's affliction (Job 1:8 ff), and similar others ended gloriously. The blind man got his sight (Jn. 9:7,25,30). Paul fought a good fight, finished the race, and crown awaited him (2 Tim. 4:7-8) – he was not deterred by puffing up, which God prevented by afflicting him with a thorn in the flesh. Job came out as gold and his latter life was more blessed than the former (Job 23: 10, 42:12). Suffering should lead you to complete dependence on God for hope, life and safety - not harden you like Nigerian prison does to an inmate.

Personal Note:
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JULY 20

Jesus is a perfect example of the innocent suffering in God's hands. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God* (Isa. 53:9, NIV). *He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his life. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly* (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:23-24, NIV). Jesus even cried, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mt. 27:47, NIV). God ignored the cry of His only begotten, innocent Son, just as He had ignored his repeated petition for the cup to be removed from him (Mt. 26:39,42). God's reason/purpose was to let Christ be sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people (Heb. 9:28). God has a purpose in your suffering. Seek and appropriate it!

Personal Note:
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JULY 21

All the apostles, except unjustly exiled John, suffered gruesome martyrdom innocently. Abel suffered murder by his biological brother, Cain, for offering acceptable sacrifice to God (Gen. 4:6-8). Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery for receiving a dream from God (Gen. 37:19-28). He languished in prison for years running for rejecting a free-sex offer from his master's wife and daring to maintain integrity and faithfulness (Gen. 39:6-20). Stephen suffered the first martyrdom for being full of grace and power, performing miracles and having angelic face (Acts 6:8-15, 7:54-58). In each of these and similar cases, God watched the innocent suffer. He was even with Joseph in prison (Gen. 39:21), just as He keeps Israel alive in famine (Ps. 33:19) and gave sufficient grace to Paul to bear the thorn in his flesh (2 Cor. 12:8-9). What are you passing through, for which people condemn you, as if the innocent must not suffer? God witnesses your innocence, is there for you and is working out His good purpose. Disregard the account of the ignorant who serve Satan to accuse brethren (Rev. 12:10).

Personal Note:
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JULY 22

Priest Zachariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were upright for blamelessly observing all the commandments and regulations of God. But, they were childless in their old age because Elizabeth was barren (Lk. 1:5-7). Upright couple childless in old age? A similar case to that of Abraham and Sarah? But, Zachariah and Elizabeth would lose nothing, if they remained childless but through their uprightness gained heaven – the ultimate goal of life on earth. They would lose everything, if they had children but headed for hell (Mt. 16:26). They chose to remain unperturbed and upright, until God gave them John the Baptist at His time and for His purpose. What is your attitude in trying moments? Do not attempt to overtake God. Wait for Him. He is aware of your situation, and is never late to act in love of you.

Personal Note:
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JULY 23

The love of Christ is wide and long and high and deep, surpassing all knowledge. Because of this love, He is able, willing and caring to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. You too can be rooted and established in this love. (See Eph. 3:17-20.) The choice is absolutely yours.

Personal Note:

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JULY 24

Research has revealed that an average person speaks 30,000 words a day, mostly containing lies, slanders, slurs (see Ps. 15:2-3) and unwholesome talks, with limited words to build other people up, convey comfort, encouragement and happiness, thereby benefiting the hearers (see Eph. 4:29). Reflect grace and salt in what you say (see Col. 4:6). Be slow to speak and quick to listen (James 1:19). By your words you will be acquitted or condemned on judgement day (Mt. 12:35-36).

Personal Note:

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JULY 25

It is easy in business, family or church to value or love others based on what we can gain from them, rather than focusing on how to love, serve and sacrifice for them. Selfish love abounds. Apostle Paul admonishes, *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking for your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others* (Phil. 2:3-4, NIV). Self-centred lack of public spirit underlies corruption and other big and small evil practices rocking the society. Shun using people for your own benefit. Use things to love people; do not use people for your love of things. Avoid taking advantage of others, but seek ways to love them and to better their lots. Good life is about donation, not accumulation.

Personal Note:
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JULY 26

... I was in prison and you came to visit me (Mt. 25:36, NIV). ... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me (Mt. 25:40, NIV). Out of love and concern for others, believers ought to visit one another, to show their love for God. The low (those in need, in prison, hungry, thirsty, naked, strangers – Mt. 25:35-36) and the high (e.g. apostle Paul – 2 Cor. 7:6) need such visits, which bring relief to their external and internal pressures. Do not treat the low with contempt when they visit you, nor visit brethren to find faults or to eat and drink, but to bring comfort and encouragement.

Personal Note:
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JULY 27

We easily slip into worrying over life, its needs and ugly developments. Yet, we cannot add a single hour to our life. Hear Jesus, ... *do not worry about your life ...* (See Mt. 6:25-27, NIV). By worrying, we demonstrate faithlessness in God. Jesus invites, *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest* (Mt. 11:28, NIV). We have a loving, willing, able and faithful Father, who takes care of us, if we let Him by faith.

Personal Note:

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JULY 28

Apostle Paul reminds us, *The Lord is near – we ought to rejoice. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:4,6-7, NIV)*. It pays to change from being a worrier to a prayer warrior.

Personal Note:

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JULY 29

Fear often sneaks into our hearts unpermitted, painting pictures of helplessness and hopelessness, stealing our peace and concentration, and paralyzing us. We fear for the safety, health and wellbeing of our loved ones, and panic at the thought of unmet needs, unfulfilled dreams, losing a job or a broken relationship. Fear turns our focus inwards and disables us to trust. The only solution lies in looking to and focusing on God, and He will deliver us from all our fears. The right fear is fear of God – a deep respect and awe of God - who surrounds and delivers us, in whom we can take refuge because He is good, willing and able. Those who have this fear lack nothing (Ps. 34:4-5,7-9). It is the beginning of wisdom (Pr. 9:10). The fear of God is to hate evil (Pr. 8:13). It is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13b).

Personal Note:
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JULY 30

Long search for a job, a sad loss, lasting loneliness, a lengthy battle with pain from illness, delayed hope and other tough situations make us wonder if they will ever end well. Like psalmist David, we may cry, *How long, Lord, will you look on? Rescue me from their ravages, my precious life from these lions* (Ps. 35:17, NIV). This speaks of years when king Saul and his advisors were after the life of David. His trials deepened his trust in God, who delivered him, because *He delights in the well-being of his servant* (Ps. 35:27, NIV). May that tough situation deepen your trust in God.

Personal Note:

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JULY 31

Every believer is an outcast. The rest of the world hates and rejects him. Because of this, God ensures that all who devour him will be devoured; all his enemies will go into exile. Those who plunder him will be plundered; all who make spoil of him, God despoils. God restores him to health and heals his wounds. (See Mt. 10:25; Jn. 15:18-21; Jer. 30:16-17.) Fear not! (Mt. 10:26.) Be encouraged.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 1

In His infinite wisdom, God initiated relationship for man (see Gen. 2:20-23). He set the Ten commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) and 613 Leviticus Laws to guide him. Jesus established 2 greatest commandments (Mt. 22:37-40) and the Golden Rule (Mt. 7:12). Paul affirmed Love as the fulfilment of the Law (Rom. 13:10). In His 33-year life on earth Jesus showed how people ought to relate with one another in a true, healthy and ideal manner. He had and practised a single standard as set by God (no compromise, hypocrisy, nepotism or favoritism). He was selfless, not self-centred (see Phil. 2:3-8); righteous (godly, undefiled), not unrighteous or immoral; spiritual, not carnal; open, not secretive or clandestine; sacrificial - looking out for things to offer for the good of others – not what to gain from or how to undo/exploit others. Check the relationship killers in your life.

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 2

It is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). He needs to relate with others. No one is an island. But, our relationship affects our prayers. Hence, apostle Peter instructed husbands to treat their wives with respect and as equal heirs in Christ, so that nothing would hinder their prayers (1 Pet. 3:7). Also, Jesus taught the disciples to reconcile with their brothers before bringing offering to God, and to settle matters with enemies (Mt. 5:23-26). Life is about relationship with God, self and other people (Mt. 22:36-40). Work on your relationships.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 3

Studies have shown that people go into relationships for emotional stability through gaining certain spiritual and physical expectations. Hardly does anyone go into a relationship for what to offer, which is often seen as what to lose. Everyone aspires to increase, not decrease. This is the bane of relationships. While the one struggles to gain his expectations in a relationship, the other resists to lose anything. Everyone wants self-preservation, contrary to self-offer for fruitfulness (see Jn. 12:24-26). Those who donate or serve for blind love are termed foolish by beneficiaries who think they are smart. If you do not want a heartbreak in a relationship, expect no gain – build the relationship on basis of selfless love, what to offer or sacrifice, and not what to gain. The place to start is developing and increasing true love for the other (1 Thes. 1:3). Genuine love offers (even self); selfish love exploits – even kills the other, to gain. Beware! Make your choice!

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 4

In a series of temptations, the Devil offered food to Jesus (who just completed a 40-day fasting and was hungry). Next, the Devil asked Jesus to dash Himself down a pinnacle, to be caught by angels (quoting Scriptures). Again, the Devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, if only Jesus would bow down and worship him. Jesus turned down each offer, giving the right interpretations to quoted Scriptures to show the real truth to the deceptive Devil (Mt. 4:4-8). Using half-truths, the cunning Devil still entices followers of Christ with food, riches and influence, sinful pleasures, wrongful longings, and corrupt offers (see James 1:14-15; Gen. 3:1-5). Be prepared to shun all his offers and to retrace your steps where you happen to go amiss.

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 5

Life experiences are friends with power to smoothen our rough edges, alter our character for the better, point to our helplessness and shape our dependence on God. There should not be surprises and confusion in the face of a mysterious misfortune or ill-health such as caused Job to curse the innocent day he was born, adding that it was better he had not been born, since his life had turned into a ridicule and a most excruciating experience (Job 3:1). Even in suffering, maintain your integrity and reverence for God. Irrespective of delay in prolonged pain or any trying time, God is working out a far more beneficial outcome (see Jn. 11:1-6, 43-44). Will you wait patiently for Him?

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 6

Compliments and applause from followers would not make apostle Paul feel successful in his ministry. Rather, he demanded their acceptance of holy injunctions of God, belief of the gospel, internalisation of the word preached to them and the consequent changes in their lives for good. A pastor succeeds when members exhibit a life free from sins and corrupt tendencies (see 2 Cor. 3:1-6) – not when he is praised. Are you succeeding as a pastor? Are you part of your pastor’s success?

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 7

Everyone has a destiny containing what to accomplish, how and means to perform, the impact to make, and the happiness for every goal he scores. But, we often bury these divine dreams and wherewithals in our fears, anxieties, ignorance, indolence, mental traps and other dream killers. Abandoning ours, we covet others'. Abraham's dream of fathering a son came true 25 years after the divine promise and at his over-ripe age of 100 and his wife's over-ripe age of 90. (See Gen. 18:11-14; Rom. 4:17.) Yours will still come true, if you identify your destiny, remain focused and trust God. Away with dream killers!

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 8

It can be difficult to accept our faults, and discomfoting to imagine that anyone else knows them. This explains why the self-righteous feel threatened to know God’s word that exposes their darkness (Jn. 3:20). This keeps people from embracing salvation in Christ and from changing old lifestyle. But, God accepts only those who acknowledge and take responsibility for their faults, helplessness and hopelessness, and run to Jesus for a new and eternal life – not those who are righteous by their faulty self-estimation and run away from being worked upon by God’s word. Jesus came to save the sinner, not the righteous (Mt. 9:13). Apostle Paul’s hard and biting letter made Corinthian Christians to be sorry (2 Cor. 7:8-16). What is your attitude to the word of God and those who convey it, especially when it indicts you?

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 9

In His great mercy, God has given believers new birth into an heavenly inheritance that never can perish, spoil or fade. He shields them until the time of salvation in Christ, which will be revealed in the last time. They must greatly rejoice, though they suffer for a little while in all kinds of trials, to prove their faith genuine and to result in praise, glory and honour for God (1 Pet. 1:3-7). They must rid themselves of all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind, and crave for God's word (1 Pet. 2:1-2).

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 10

Jesus is the chosen and precious cornerstone to those who believe, but a stumbling block to those who do not believe (1 Pet. 2:4-8). The choice is yours in this irreligious matter. Peradventure you believe, you ought to live in harmony with others, be sympathetic, love others, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. Keep your tongue from evil and lips from deceitful speech, turn from evil and do good, and do not fear what others fear (1 Pet. 3:8-14).

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 12

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him (Christ) who called us by his own glory and goodness (2 Pet. 1:3, NIV). Believers have God's unlimited spiritual resources within reach at all times. They do not lack any need, such as faith, grace and wisdom, because they know Christ. They have even more because through Christ they have access to the Father, who graciously provides them with all things richly to enjoy (see Eph. 1:3). Do not overlook your power from above and try to live in your own strength. Always thank God for always providing everything you need.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 13

Believers must not stop at being good, but must make every effort to add to it faith, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Possessing all these qualities in increasing measure will keep them from being ineffective and unproductive. A lack of them shows their short-sightedness and blindness. They must remind one another of the Scripture, which men spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:3-15, 20-21). You ought rise above base Christian level.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 14

Joshua obeyed Moses and went with some men to fight Amelekites. Moses did not sit idly behind as leaders often do, but went to God on the hill with the staff of God, Aaron and Hur. As long as he raised the staff before God, Israel was winning. Whenever he lowered his hands (because of pains), Amalekites were winning. For a support for the tired hands of Moses, Aaron and Hur put a stone under him and held his hands, one on either side, until evening when Israel finally won (Ex. 17:8-16). Do you obey your leader? As a leader, do you partake in the work, or merely dish out instructions? When others fought in the battle, king David stayed idly behind and saw Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-5), leading to adultery and murder. Do you support brethren or you work with the Devil to accuse them? (Rev. 12:10).

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 16

While God repeatedly described Job as His blameless, upright, God-fearing and evil-shunning servant without compare on earth (Job 1:8, 2:3), friends of Job insinuated that he was suffering for his sins (Job 4:7-9). Error of judgment of others by people who obviously mean well is common. Every athlete has those who cheer him and those who jeer him. But God, the righteous Judge, gives the victory and vindicates. Do not be discouraged by the erroneous jeers of misguided, misjudging crowd.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 17

A Christian is a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost (2 Cor. 2:15). To God, are you truly the aroma of Christ among the saved and the unsaved? To the saved, are you a fragrance of death? To the unsaved, are you a fragrance of life? No task is bigger. Do not peddle the word of God for material profit, but in Christ speak before God like men sent from God (see 2 Cor. 2:16-17).

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 18

People can be classified into self-pleasers, men-pleasers and God-pleasers. Self-pleasers idolise themselves. Everything is, and must be, about them. They are ego-drunk and sick, deeply self-centred and proud of their vanity. To them, they are no. 1; God and others can come after. But, apostle Paul admonishes brethren not to please themselves (Rom. 15:1-3). Jesus, our perfect example, did not please Himself. His focus was to please God (Jn. 5:30). We must also focus on pleasing God, who saved, called and commissioned us (2 Tim. 2:4).

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 19

The sole purpose for which God created us is to please Him (Rev. 4:11). Anytime you displease God, you negate the purpose of your existence. Pleasing yourself or others displeases God because He is a jealous God (Ex. 20:5, 34:14; Dt. 4:24). Love and kind actions to others must be aimed at pleasing God, who rewards those who please Him. Be no smart about it. Enoch pleased God, and was translated (Heb. 11:5). When you please God, He makes your enemies to be at peace with you (Pr. 16:7). Faith in God and service to man (work) please God (Heb. 11:6; James 2:20-26; Mt. 25:40). Grow in them!

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 20

Jesus called the twelve that they might **be with** Him and that He might send them out to **do** His work (to preach, as fishers of men) (Mk. 3:14). We need to **be with** God before we can **do** His work. Many are **doing** God's work without first **being with** Him. Spend quality time with God in a solitary place for devotion, prayer and communion early each morning to be trained and to get spiritual strength for the day's work for God. If you're too busy to do so, you will either do the right thing wrongly or the wrong thing rightly. God is more interested in our **being with** Him than in our **working for** Him.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 21

Christian activity does not equate to Christianity or being born again or becoming like Christ. Attending a living church, associating with believers, reading the Bible, preaching the gospel, doing miracles, giving and tithing, praying, etc., do not make one a Christian or to grow in the image of Christ (see Acts 10.) Some of these activities are undertaken to look trendy or to belong to a desired class. Others are undertaken by the self-righteous. As signs of Christianity, Christian activities should flow from accepting the salvation in Christ Jesus (Mk. 16:17-18). If you truly believe, you shall aspire to be like Christ through engaging and growing in Christian activities. But, those who fake or aspire for Christianity through engaging in Christian activities will be disappointed (Mt. 7:22-23). Christianity leads to Christian activities, but Christian activities cannot form Christ in someone.

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 22

Hard as the gospel is preached, some people remain blind, obstinate and unreformed. Deluded, they are content without Christ. Satan blinds them against the gospel, which they might study, read, hear or ponder (2 Cor. 4:3-4). Do not resist the gospel from penetrating to change your self-righteous life. Today is the day of salvation; harden not your heart any more! (Heb. 3:7-15.) Do not pretend; be sure of your salvation (2 Cor. 13:5).

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 23

We often write off a nation/man based on its/his present condition. Prophet Jonah wrote off Nineveh as a wicked nation not deserving God's mercy (Jonah 3:10-4:1). After conversion, Paul – a former persecutor of believers - was still despised and feared by disciples of Jesus (see Acts 9:13-14, 20-21). In each case, God had pardoned the sinner nation/man. By Paul's ministry, the Gentiles – a race outside the commonwealth of God's nation – became *heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus* (Eph. 3:6, NIV). God will have mercy and compassion on whom He will (Ex. 33:19). Rahab the harlot was justified by God amidst condemnation by men (James 2:25). Both Ruth the Moabite (a heathen nation) and Rahab became ancestors of Jesus (Mtt. 1:5). Those you write off today may become God's favourites tomorrow.

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 24

Christendom has Pope, Bishops, Priests, Pastors, Evangelists, etc. and laymen with various ministries of deliverance, prophecy, healing, prosperity, miracles, etc. But the common mission is *The Son of Man* (who) *came to seek and to save what was lost* (Lk. 19:10, NIV). You may take all the labels and titles without mantle and perform all the good works and miracles in various ministries, but do not fail to focus on the single mission - to save the lost, for which Jesus Christ has commissioned believers (Mt. 28:19-20).

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 25

Envy and jealousy are twin evils of negative mindset and formidable forces that are hard to tame. When they heard of Christ's miracles, envy propelled the chief priests and the Pharisees to gather to plot against Him. They worried that these miracles were not being credited to them as teachers (of traditions of men and doctrines that cannot save) and resolved to kill Him (Jn. 11:45-54). Envy and jealousy made Cain to kill his only biological sibling, brother, Abel (Gen. 4:3-8), Joseph's brothers pushed him into a deep pit to die and later sold him (Gen. 37:1-28), etc. You may pretend to harbour no envy and jealousy, but it is wiser to prayerfully work on yourself. Killing can be physical or spiritual (Mt. 5:22). Beware!

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 26

Comparison obsession is a disturbing trend. Business executives compare their achievements with others'. A person compares his achievements with those of his siblings, peers and mates. This may serve to keep from dulling, but it more often breeds unhealthy rivalry, morbid envy and jealousy, and do-or-die ambition that easily commit spiritual or physical murder. Satisfaction and commitment diminish when success is defined based on external, rather than internal, criteria; comparing self with others rather than what God wants you to be. It makes you proud and look down on others (Lk. 18:9-14), become jealous of and covet (James 4:1), or fail to focus on God's task to you, but believing that He is unfair (Mt. 20:1-16.). Beware!

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 27

Medical research reports reveal that worry, fear, hatred and grudges are poisons that can cripple and destroy the mind and body. Grudges can bring about arthritis. Rage can trigger off asthmatic attacks. Over 50% of physical illnesses originate from, or triggered off by, negative emotions (i.e. are psychosomatic). Apostle Peter enjoined believers to rid themselves of all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind, and crave for God's word (1 Pet. 2:1-2). Avoid disease-producing emotions.

Personal Note:

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AUGUST 28

A man planted a vineyard, handed it to tenants and traveled. Rather than gratefully render returns on demand, they conspired and mistreated each of three different proxies sent separately by owner for stock-taking. They eventually killed his innocent son to stop him from inheriting his father's vineyard and to enable them inherit it themselves (Lk. 20:9-15). Too wicked! Even the have-not beneficiaries covet possessions of the have benefactors to the extent of murdering the innocent heir. The commonwealth of a nation is in hands of a few who have acquired them by plundering the inheritance of and oppressing the rightful owners. They even claim the ill-gotten wealth is a blessing from God of justice, who fights for the oppressed. Stupor! Self-deceit!!

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 29

Actions derive from words, which depend on thoughts, which flow from hearts. Actions are fewer than words, which are fewer than thoughts, which are smaller than the heart. This is because not all words are translated into actions, not all thoughts are translated into words, and not all the contents of the heart are translated into thoughts. The purer the heart, the cleaner the thoughts, the better the words spoken, and the more godly the actions. Therefore, the state of the heart is of prime importance. Out of his heart flow things that spare or kill a man (see Mk. 7:14-23; Pr. 4:23, 27:19). The heart was conceived in iniquity and brought forth in sin (Ps. 51:5). It is desperately wicked and deceitful (Jer. 17:9). Miserable and helpless man cannot guard or tame the heart, but needs to give it to God to purify and put it to profitable use, if he must live well and be truly successful (Ps. 62:8, 51:10; Eze. 36:26). Give your heart to God today!

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 30

It is easy to see the problem or challenge than God's solution, threat than God's protection, circumstance than exercise faith in God's word and faithfulness. Elisha's servant was afraid of the multitude of the enemy army, until he saw God's greater army with him and Elisha (2 Kg. 6:14-17). Disturbing news abound on devilish activities of robbery, rape, assassination, corrupt practices, fraud, inordinate ambition, immorality, terrorism, ethnic militia, kidnap, religious fundamentalism, bloody war, natural disaster and other sordid reports. These falsely magnify the Devil's hyperactivities and plant fears in our minds. They disable us to realise that *Those who are with us are more than those who are with them* (2 Kg. 6:16, NIV; 1 Jn. 4:4). Fix your eyes on Jesus, and He will strengthen you (Heb. 12:2).

Personal Note:
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AUGUST 31

After spying Canaan for 40 days, 10 spies said, “We can’t”, while 2 said, “We can” take the Promised Land from looming Anakim giants occupying it at the time. The former compared the size and power of the giants with those of Israelites and felt like grasshoppers. The latter compared the size and power of the giants with those of God, and saw the imminent fall of the giants (Num. 13:25-14:9). Faith is the difference. What are your giant enemies? If you compare a subsisting pain or stubborn challenge or lingering unpleasant situation with your stamina, you will be overwhelmed. Faith will rather see the strength of an ever-present, all-powerful God, who loves us and does our battles (2 Chr. 20:15).

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 1

Poor, awry world. Faith in God seems failing. Friends no longer trust friends. Enemies no longer fear enemies. Partners no longer move together. Kings turn one against another. Love's thrown overboard; self-centredness, out-smarting and betrayal are fashions. Natural disasters, famine and poverty, economic hardship, wars and rumours of wars, terrorism and militia, vandalism, kidnapping, bloodshed, leadership ineptitude, oppression and suppression everywhere. Nations turn against nations. Foreign aids are suspects, Greek gifts, with ulterior motives. Little is said/written about more important God's benefits to man and nation. Kindly spread the good tidings, break the news of God's blessings and 'gossip' His benefits (Ps. 103:3-5), and you will encourage many.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 2

I am coming soon, said Lord Jesus. Apostle John replied, *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus* (Rev. 22:20, NIV). We preach it, mouth it. But, are we really longing, prepared for His coming? Do we really love, miss, and want to be with, Him? Often, behind our mind, we fear His coming will interfere with our personal plans and programmes, and meet us unprepared. We long to marry first or cuddle our children and grand children or consummate any other aspiration before He comes. Unlike John, we do not earnestly pray for His coming. Whether we are prepared or not, He is coming soon. Beware!

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 3

It is through our weaknesses that temptations come, and we gradually descend into evil (see James 1:14-15). Solomon had the weakness of loving heathen women. Soon he married them, but resisted their idol worship. Then, he began tolerating it until he became involved in it, seeing nothing bad in it and no longer minding God's command and forewarning against it. His kingdom came to an ignominious end. To overcome all temptations, heed God's protective and relevant commands. Say no where, and to whom, it is necessary.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 4

Fearing rejection, we often dissipate a lot of our energy and resources trying to build image and debunk people's unfavourable impressions, insinuations and outright accusations against us. Sorry, we never succeed at that, because they keep coming. Jesus simply read the prophecy, said it was fulfilled in Him and sat down, while people took Him for a carpenter's son and a good teacher - not the Messiah (Lk. 4:14-22). He did not advertise Himself, flaunt His credentials or exalt Himself, but radiated God's glory. You can avoid "Do you know who I am? Who're you?" mentality, ego-sickness, self-drunkenness. Work on yourself to drop haughtiness for humility and meekness.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 5

Pharaoh ordered Hebrew midwives to spare female, but kill male, babies they delivered (Ex. 1:15-16). When this failed, he ordered all born Hebrew male babies to be thrown into the River Nile (Ex. 1:22) to drown and be eaten by creatures in the river. But, in the case of Moses, God made him fine, and made his mother to see him too fine to die in the river. When she caught, and was willing to co-operate with, God's mission, God gave her wisdom to prepare a life-jacket (special basket) to sustain Moses' life in River Nile. God manoeuvred Pharaoh's daughter to see, pity and adopt him. Although she recognized him as a Hebrew male baby billed to die in River Nile by the king's ordinance, she changed the ordinance of death against him to ordinance of not just living, but being adopted by a princess into the palace of Pharaoh (Ex. 2:1-10). Rest assured God is taking care of contradictions and evil ordinances in your life. Cheer up!

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 6

God alone determines each of the over 28 seasons and times in life listed in the Bible (see Eccl. 3:1-8). He is aware, available and willing to help when you enter any one that is undesirable, contradictory, perplexing, and/or beyond your control (Ps. 31:14-15; Rom. 8:28,37). In your trying moments, reach out for the Holy Spirit, our Counselor (Jn. 14:26). Do not take the laws into your hand, nor lose faith.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 7

In 1974 - nearly 30 years after World War II ended and peace declared in 1945 - Lt. Hiroo Onoda of the Japanese Imperial Army still obeyed his commander's order to be stationed on an island in the Philipines to fight. To avoid enemy trickery or propaganda, he dismissed all attempts to tell him the war was over. He surrendered only when his former commander traveled from Japan to Philipines to rescind his original order. Unbelievers still obey their father's (Devil's) command to fight on, even when Christ has secured them victory (Jn. 8:43-44; 2 Tim. 1:10). Believers must keep on telling them the Good News or Gospel until they regain freedom.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 8

The church consists of people each of whom was formerly a *persona non grata*, without mercy and hope, dead in sin, without God, and God's enemy (1 Pet. 2:9-10; Eph, 2:1,12; Col. 1:21). But now, they are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's people, called from darkness to marvellous light of Christ's kingdom, made alive in Christ, raised from the dead, seated with Christ in heavenly place, reconciled to Christ, and have received mercy (1 Pet. 2:9-10; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 1:22). Do you truly belong to, or contaminate, the church?

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 9

The church has responsibilities to continue in faith, be firmly established, hold on to the hope found in gospel, be presentable as holy and without blemish, present God's incomparable riches in Christ, declare God's praises (Col. 1:22-23; Eph. 1:12, 2:6-7; 1 Pet. 2:9), and evangelize for numerical and spiritual growth (Mtt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; 2 Pet. 1:5-11). How are you part of the success or failure of the church in these responsibilities?

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 10

The church is made up of ministers and followers. To be effective and live up to its responsibilities, both groups must be up and running. More than ever before, the church needs ministers devoted to prayer and ministering the Word (Acts 6:4), as well as caring (2 Cor. 11:28; Phil. 2:19-20). The church also needs followers who obey the scriptures (Jn. 14:15) and serve (Acts 6:2-3). Both groups together produce results (Acts 2:42-47, 6:7). Where do you effectively or ineffectively belong? Do you even belong at all?

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 11

It is dangerous to belong to the class of bench-warming, nominal members in the church. Yet, this class has the greater population with members who may pay their dues/tithes and attend basic church activities when they can, but neglect justice, mercy and faithfulness (Mt. 23:23), have neither passion for the lost, nor concern for the saints. They are lukewarm: neither cold nor hot. Yet, they pride in their wealth and think they lack nothing, and fail to realize they are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. They qualify to be spitted from God's mouth (Rev. 3:15-17). And, God cannot go back for His spit/vomit (see Heb. 6:4-6.). Beware!

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 12

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be believed. The life of Jesus Christ is to be followed. He cannot be our Advocate and Propitiation unless He becomes our Pattern and Example in humility, patience, purity, benignity, and self-resignation. Apostle Paul exhorts believers “to live and act in a way worthy of those who have been chosen”, by being humble and gentle; patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of love; united and at peace with one another (Eph. 4:1-3). Ask God to work on you to will and to do His perfect will (Phil. 2:13).

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 13

Through His resurrection, ascension and glorification Christ demonstrated His triumph over believers' enemies: Satan, sin, sickness, poverty and death. He offered believers differing gifts and graces to unite them, not for rivalry (Eph. 4:4-10; 1 Cor. 12:14-31); but life of steady goodness devoid of bitterness, jealousy and selfishness, which are not of God's wisdom, but are earthly, unspiritual, and inspired by the devil. God's wisdom is pure and full of quiet gentleness, peace-loving and courteous, allows for discussion and is willing to yield to others, full of mercy and good deeds, wholehearted and straightforward and sincere (James 3:13-17, LB). Embrace it! Away with old lifestyle!

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 14

Many pagans do not pray. Those that pray do so to Unknown God (Acts 17:23, Jn. 4:21). God does not listen to their prayers (Jn. 9:31). They babble many words, thinking the strength of prayer lies in the heap, repetitive words. Jesus says you should not be like them, for God knows your need before you ask Him (Mt. 6:7-8, 31-32). After all, our Lord's Prayer contains just about 52 words, yet comprehensive - with ACTS - adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication (Mt. 6:9-13). Quality, not quantity, of prayer matters.

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 15

People worry about life and what to eat and drink to sustain it. They also worry about the body and what to wear to protect it and to cover its nakedness. But, God, who gives life and body, knows that they need sustenance and protection, and provides them even before you ask Him to do so. And, He who creates tomorrow, knows your needs in it and provides them. But, you choose to worry, rather than thank Him, even when your worrying avails nothing but hurts you and displeases God for your lack of faith (Mt. 6:23-34; Heb. 11:6). You can change this harmful attitude today.

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 16

A believer is made by God's grace – not by his smartness, wisdom, wealth, affluence, influence, popularity or whatever else, acquired or inherited. He is what he is by God's unmerited favour (1 Cor. 15:10). Do not forget God's grace and goodness to focus on unmet desires. Appreciate your marriage, rather than focus on childlessness and neglecting that your spouse is God's favour (Pr. 18:22). Do not focus on lack, forgetting God's best gifts in Christ (salvation, riches and prosperity, Rom. 6:22-23; Eph. 2:7; 3 Jn. 2). Do not focus on health challenges, forgetting you were healed by the stripes of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:24). Do not focus on temptations, forgetting that God has provided escape routes (1 Cor. 10:13). Do not focus on setbacks, forgetting you may be down but not out (2 Cor. 4:8-14). Do not focus on any other issue, but remember that all things work together for your good (Rom. 8:28). You can change today.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 17

In addition to the sufficient prophecies of the first coming of Jesus, the Messiah, God sent John the Baptist as a fore-runner of Jesus. Yet, most Jews did not believe in Jesus Christ and His ministry on earth. Also, Apostle John devoted the rest of his life to prove to the world that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that all who believe in Him will have eternal life (Jn. 1:1-14; 1 Jn. 1:1-4). Has he succeeded with you? Be not like unbelieving Jews of old!

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 18

Sure, modernism is of worthy and nuisance values. In a noble quest for new things, it advances art, music, literature, science, technology and innovation. As a nuisance, it holds the older generation in contempt as being uninformed and less wise, crude and undeveloped, and out-moded. It seeks to modernise everthing, including God’s message to mankind. Although old, God’s word never changes (Isa. 40:8) with time or circumstance, even when the world is infatuated with ever-changing modernism. God’s word is true at all times (Ps. 119:142, 160). Choose between old-time religion and new-time religion, but give my household and me the former. Old-time religion follows the truth, and is better. It is better to be old-fashioned than wrong.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 19

God chose Israel to be His witnesses and servants, to know and believe Him, to understand Him and that there is no God and Saviour before and after Him, and that no one can deliver from the hands of the Ancient of Days, nor can anyone reverse His action (Isa. 43:10-13). Besides, you have been chosen by the Lord to go and bear abiding/lasting fruit (Jn. 15:16). How do you fit into God's scheme of things? Have you created a place in your heart for God who created you and your heart? Does God occupy a priority place in your heart, life, plan and programme? Pause a while to ponder. Seek Him while He may be found.

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 20

The secrets of a good, honourable, prosperous and successful life are clear and constant. Be careful to obey God's laws; let them not depart from your mouth, but meditate on them day and night (Josh. 1:7-8). Avoid the counsel of the ungodly and the company of sinners and mockers (Ps. 1:1). Fear God, walk in all His ways, love Him, serve Him with all your heart and soul, and observe His commands and decrees (Deut. 10:12-13). Obey God and seek Him with all your heart. Hide God's word in your heart in order to keep your way pure (Ps. 119:2,9-11). There is neither ambiguity nor contradiction in this most important matter of life success or failure. But, it is only Christ that can help you apply the secrets of life success (Rom. 3:22-24). Seek and run to Him! Hold and depend on Him alone for real life success!

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 21

Only one of all the ingredients poisons the whole meal (2 Kg. 4:38-40). Tiny foxes ruin the whole blooming vineyard (Song 2:15). A little leaven leavens the whole lot of bread, and a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough (1 Cor. 5:6). A tiny stain ruins neatness, one pimple or boil spoils the facial beauty. And, a tiny virus kills the whole complex body system. Similarly, only one lust, act of worldliness, ungodliness, carelessness, or idle talk can ruin your Christian testimony built over the years. Stumbling at one point is equivalent to breaking all the Laws (James 2:10). Observe all the commandments (Deut. 8:1) - not some or most of them. Beware of possibly becoming a castaway on the day of reckoning, after helping others make heaven (1 Cor. 9:27).

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 22

Genuine love can be harsh attimes. When someone God loves continues waywardly, springing a surprising bang, quake may be needed to bring about a rethink and the desired repentance. Saul of Tarsus had to be blinded by Jesus, to get him to confess Jesus as Lord (Acts 9:1-16) and to later become Apostle Paul. What a hard, costly way. How is God humbling you? Recognize the higher height to which He is taking you the hard way.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 23

To help develop our faith, God sometimes hides the blessing for obedience in trouble. Jonah had nightmarish experience when a violent storm threatened to break his ship. As if that was not sufficient, he had excruciating humiliation being thrown into the turbulent sea, a harrowing trouble being swallowed by a fish, and unimaginable distress living for 3 days in the belly of the fish, just to learn a hardest way to exercise faith in God and to promptly and accurately obey Him to preach God's word to wicked Nineveh (Jonah 1:1 to 3:3). Avoid inviting God's trouble before obeying Him.

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 24

Thank God for goodness and mercies following us (Ps. 23:6). Those on the fast-lane may need to stop awhile to embrace them. Since these blessings do not run abreast or ahead of us, only those who wait on, and hear from, God benefit from them and shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever and ever.

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 25

Those preoccupied with their woes, the past, and regrets not only lose the joy for today, but cannot press forward. Also, those who believe they are perfect or “have been made perfect” or have taken hold of that for which Christ took hold of them do not strive to “enter through the narrow gate” (Phil. 3:12-14, Mtt. 7:13-14, NIV), nor pummel their bodies to put them under subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). The Pharisee exalted self in prayer and remained with his sins, while the tax-collector humbled self in prayer and was forgiven (Lk. 18:9-14).

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 26

Those who believe they have “packed well” or “arrived” cannot seek God and His Kingdom. So are those who think they have no need for the “Doctor” or “Saviour”. Jesus said, *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God* (Mt. 19:24). This is the peril of comfort zone. Yet, in his enviable comfort zone as well as trials, Job remained faithful, good and avoided doing anything evil (Job 1:8, 2:3). To void the peril of comfort zone, come to Jesus, who had all authority on earth, but did not misuse or abuse it, nor appropriate it for self. Beware of the peril of comfort zone!

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 27

Acceptable worship pays homage in deep respect, reverence, adoration and genuine love to God. It must be in Spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24). It orchastrates a landmark development in a relationship with God. Hence, in response to Noah’s sweet-smelling sacrifice, God reversed two major curses for the ground and Earth (Gen. 8:20-21). God responded to Elijah’s acceptable worship by unprecedentedly consuming his sacrifice with fire (1 Kg. 18:36-38). In response to acceptable praises by Paul and Silas, God sent earthquake to shake the building foundations, fling open the prison doors, and break their chains to release them (Acts 16: 22-28). Worship/Praise avails more profitably than petition.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 28

All the ten lepers healed by Jesus had been in need of healing, persevered and cried out for mercy. When Jesus told them what to do, they believed, obeyed, and received their healing. But, only one of them returned in gratitude to praise and give thanks to Jesus for healing him. In addition to the healing, he received wholeness (Lk. 17:11-19). More blessing is the reward for gratitude, appreciation and thanksgiving, which avail more than importunity that at best secures only the petition (Lk. 18:1-8). Develop a heart of gratitude, appreciation and thanksgiving today!

Personal Note:

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SEPTEMBER 29

To the world of Israel and its leader, Saul, Goliath stood as a champion and giant (1 Sam. 17:4-7). For 40 days running, they were dismayed and terrified and ran from Goliath in great fear (vv.11,16,24). Saul declared that David was unable to fight the experienced fighter, Goliath (v.33). But, to David, the uncircumcised Philistine, Goliath, for defying the Lord's armies (vv.10,25,45), did not measure up to the bear and the lion he had killed in rescue of his father's sheep carried off by the beasts (vv.34-37). David killed Goliath with a sling and a stone and beheaded him (vv.48-51). Be not scared of that bear, lion, champion, giant, challenge, ill-health, lack or the thief (Devil, Jn. 10:10). They are vanquished midgets.

Personal Note:
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SEPTEMBER 30

Times are hard and the days are evil. Population of the needy is fast growing. Some beggars are genuine, others are fake. People given a ride have killed the benefactor to snatch his car. Alms receipts have been used to procure diabolical means against the givers. Police have tortured innocent, hospitable citizens for the death of their guests and hospitality beneficiaries. Nonetheless, believers must not be weary in doing good (Gal. 6:9). They must do what Jesus did, taught and instructed them to do: going around doing good and healing people (Acts 10:38). They must not withhold good from those who deserve it (as God's creatures – not by recipient potential gratitude or befitting reaction), when it is in their power to act (Pr. 3:27).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 1

Virginity (chastity or righteousness) was the innate enviable commonality of the characters in The Parable of Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13). Other good qualities common to them were conceiving marriage (in ripe time), planning the potential marriage trip, preparing well (e.g. taking their lamps with oil), having night sleep and rest (for strength to outrun other competitors), being vigilant and hardworking (to know when to run after the groom). Their difference was in wisdom levels. Wise five took extra oil; foolish five did not. In spite of their righteousness, marriage conception, good planning, strength, vigilance and diligence, the foolish five lost out and could not achieve their aim of catching with the groom. Christ has provided positional righteousness for many to meet their Creator, but folly or worldly wisdom or poor knowledge of the God's word will deny some heaven. Beware!

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 2

Mustering and exercising self-control are not easy because ego, pride and carnality work against the projects. In man, there is a war between the flesh and the spirit. He does what he knows to be wrong and cannot do the right he wants to do (Rom. 7:15-19). New year resolutions are made in good fate, but are helplessly broken shortly. Promises are reneged upon at slightest excuses. Pledges remain unfulfilled. Bad habit, lousy attitude and wrong mindset persist, despite promises to improve and engagement of accountability group. Self-control is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23). The only way to gain it is to yield to the control of the Holy Spirit, to walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). Resolution or effort or struggle to change will fail, but surrender to the Holy Spirit will not.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 3

There are abounding causes for disappointment and discouragement, disillusionment and depression. Many are broken and battered. Repeated and multiple efforts have failed, leading to waste and despair. Dashed dreams, despondency, confusion, self-pity, regret, complaining and grumbling are common. Come to Jesus! He offers His easy yoke (Mtt. 11:28-30). He will replace your burden from tragedies, pains and sorrows. Relax as the clay in the hands of the Master Potter (Jer. 18:6). He who made you fearfully and wonderfully (Ps. 139:14) can mend you.

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 4

You cannot sustain spending your mental, physical and/or emotional energy on that ugly situation, nor is it wise to do so. Rather, cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you (Ps. 55:22). God supports us if we dare to release our problems to Him. It is distressful, exhausting to try to take charge of our situation. If we allow God to exercise His control, we will have rest (Phil. 4:6-7). He has in His hands the whole wide world, including your situation. If we stop struggling with, but release ourselves and our situations to Him, we will not be consumed because His love is great and His compassion never fails. They are new every morning; great is His faithfulness (Lam. 3:22-23).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 5

Prophet Jeremiah had correctly predicted the fall of Jerusalem. He was now in a miry-pit prison when Babylonian soldiers surrounded the city and set it ablaze. But God asked him to invest in real estate in the same city. He simply saw God's word as incredulous. But God urged him to get up, dust his life, and get back to work (Jer. 32:6-15,37-38). The best time to invest and conquer new grounds is after a fall. No matter how low you have fallen, there is a rising. You cannot sink so low that God cannot pick you up. Do not fold your hands in regrets, self-pity and despondency. Go back to work, and God will restore.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 6

Things, situations and circumstances that are, once were not. They came into being at a point. God spoke the creation into being (Heb. 11:3). He must have felt excited to see the new creation was very good (Gen. 1:31). New accomplishments, acquisitions and things can make us feel real good. You can create one by speaking it forth. If you are tired of old things, stop speaking about them. And, of what use are despondency, regret, lamentation, self-pity, grumbling, etc. over old things and developments? Do you want some new things: life, ministry, family, etc.? Declare them into being. They will spring up. (See Jer. 42:9.) *I believed; therefore I have spoken* (2 Cor. 4:13). **Wise up!**

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 7

When Bramwell, son of General William Booth, founder of Salvation Army (church), revealed the medical report to his father that he (father) would be blind the rest of his life, the father responded, *I have done what I could for God and for His people with my eyes. Now I shall do what I can for Him without my eyes.* Often, we are ready to serve God only when the goings are good, not in affliction (Job 1:9-11). But, apostle Paul was pressed hard on every side, but never felt crushed; perplexed, but never despaired; persecuted, but never felt abandoned; struck down, but never felt destroyed (2 Cor. 4:8-9). At last, he made it (2 Tim. 4:7-8). And, you? Do not be given to excuses to fail.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 8

He saved us to serve Him (Eph. 2:10), but we are scarcely faithful. We call Him Lord, but hardly yield to Him. We go for service, but hardly render service to Him and the people He loves. Rather, we are full of the desires we must get, more blessings to collect. We withhold praises if we do not perceive what He has done to be praised. Church attendance is largely driven by how much of our expectations are met and how many miracles benefit us through God's instruments; not by opportunities to serve God and His people. If our expectations linger, we change our church, fellowship and priest, in search of our desires - not God and opportunities to serve Him and people. We resist being channels of blessings and being available for service of God and people, just as Jesus came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mt. 20:26-28). Let us not just serve, but serve whole-heartedly (Eph. 6:7), knowing that *It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20:35, NIV).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 9

God has a purpose for choosing believers and delivering them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His marvelous light. It is for them to declare His praises. How? By abstaining from sinful desires, which war against their souls, and by living good lives that will cause unbelievers to glorify God (1 Pet. 2: 9-12). Apostle Paul's practical advice on this is to think of whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy, and to practice godly living, so that God of peace will be with them (Phil. 4:8-9). How did you live up to this admonition yesterday? How do you hope to do so today and tomorrow? Only you can discipline yourself to be faithful to God.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 10

The innocent Israeli girl, carried captive by Syrian army under the command of General Naaman – a leper – and made to serve Naaman’s wife as a slave (2 Kg. 5:1-6), was in charge of her feelings. She did not get disappointed with God for allowing her circumstance, nor regard Naaman’s reproach of leprosy as serving him right for her unjust captivity and mistreatment as a slavegirl. Rather, she must be a channel of blessing to her captor. She wished him healing and counseled on how he would get healed of a lifetime disease. We must master our emotions, forgive our offenders, love our enemies, do good to those who hate and persecute us, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who mistreat us (Lk. 6:27-28).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 11

Healthy and enduring relationships with people can issue only from sound and strong relationship with God, who gives the grace to bear and forebear with others. It takes salvation to overthrow 'self' and create space in man's heart for a healthy vertical relationship with God and horizontal selfless relationship with fellow men. In a self-centred relationship, which is commonplace, how can breakdown be inevitable? How can one forgive the same offence 77 times (Mtt. 18:21-22; Lk. 17:4), the offender sue for peace (Mtt. 18:15), the innocent appeal to the grumbler before making an offering to God (Mtt. 5:23-24), one yield to an evil man and give the left cheek for a second painful slap after receiving the first slap on the right cheek, yield one's cloak in addition to one's tunic, and go 2 miles after being forced to go one mile with the wicked (Mtt. 5:38-41)? Meaningful relationship glorifies God and blesses humanity. Let us avoid relationships that depreciate the essence of true friendship and procure reproach; that bring multiple kisses (from enemies, sycophants and self-interest seekers who masquerade as friends) and avoid wounds from trust-worthy friends (Pr. 27:6).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 12

Unlike the early Church, brethren hardly pray for their priest/pastor/leader (Acts 12:5). Often, they believe he is strong enough to pray for himself and others, as a matter of qualification, competence and duty. They erroneously think he is on a higher platform, free from satanic attacks and problems of life. They express surprises and disappointments at his weaknesses, setbacks and failures, and focus on them – not on his good sides. Your priest/pastor/leader faces frontal attacks from the enemy and depends on brethren's/followers' prayers for survival. Spend some time in prayer for your priest/pastor/leader everyday (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 13

Jesus decided/chose to save us (Rom. 5:8). He came and died for us (Rom. 4:25). He has gone to prepare a place for those who believe and trust Him for their salvation. He will come back to take them to share the place with Him eternally (Jn. 14:3). Planning and preparation are very important, and follow from decision/choice. We must decide/choose to accept the salvation Jesus offers, and prepare our lives now to live with Him in eternity. He is giving us time to do so (2 Pet. 3:9). Accept Him and use the time wisely. It is far from a religion matter.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 14

The just (righteous ones) shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4b). The world condemns us, but God redeems us. The pain may increase, but God heals all our diseases. The economy may fail and go into recession and depression, but God supplies all our needs and satisfies all our desires. We are oppressed, but God works justice for us (Ps. 103:3-6). They wish us ill, but God has good thoughts towards us and plans of prosperity, hope and future for us (Jer. 29:11). Our businesses may seem dull or non-performing, but God prospers everything we lay our hands upon (Deut. 28:7-8). They gather against us, but God scatters them. Weapons are fashioned against us, but none of them will prosper (Isa. 54:17). Enemies surround us, but God sets a table for us in their presence (Ps. 23:5a). Many and overwhelming battles face us, but they are not ours, but God's (2 Chr. 20:15). The lion roars and seeks to devour us, but God - the Lion of the tribe of Judah - surrounds us both now and forever as mountains surround Jerusalem (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 5:5; Ps. 125:2). We are weak, but God strengthens us. Our enemies may be mighty, but they are as nothing and perish, and we will see them no more (Isa. 41:10-12; Exo. 14:13). Believe not the situation, but God's word, which is greater than what we perceive, feel, see or hear (1 Jn. 3:19-20). God is true, even when every man (and situation) is a liar (Rom. 3:3-4).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 15

Since we are in the world, we tend to listen to, speak of and gossip about things of the world (1 Jn. 4:5). When the word of God is presented, the attitude of many is, *What's this now? I must resist the selfish preaching seeking to take advantage of me and to make me give up my comfort.* Only a few people want to hear *Thus says the Lord.* At sermon-time, many resign to dozing. Attendance to Sunday School and Bible study is usually dwindling and disappointing. Yet, the word of God is spiritual food for our souls. It contains varied menu for us to chew on and savour to be filled and satisfied, and to guide our living. We ought to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3). The historic books, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy, and other parts of the Bible strengthen us when we are weak, give us wisdom and encouragement, and nourish us for the day's journey (Ps. 19:7-14, 119:97-104; Heb. 5:12). God has set for us a banquet of delectable spiritual food, and uses people and His word to invite us all to come and dine. The Devil beguiles and cheats us with the feeling that those who invite us or preach to us are not perfect, but opportunists, seeking attention. Three invitations we must grab most sincerely are: *Thus says the Lord; Let us give;* and *Let us pray.* Avoid diplomacy about them! God cannot be mocked (Gal. 6:7a).

Personal Note:

OCTOBER 16

When something good happens to our neighbour, we often think of him as unworthy, undeserving of it and feel threatened by his blessing (Mtt. 20:1-15). Yet, we do not covert his mishap. We strive to ensure that others will not be better than we are (Jn. 21:20-22). But God, who owns everything and gives, is free to give to each of us as He pleases. What is our back-garden if He chooses to bless another person better than He has blessed us? God's plan cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2). Let us sincerely rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn (Rom. 12:15). The tenth commandment forbids our coveting another's blessing (Exo. 20:17).

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 17

It is good to watch and observe. But, we must avoid them when they feed our fears, rather than build our faith; inflate our worry, rather than help our joy; enlarge our anxiety, rather than maximize our peace. Whoever watches the wind will not sow, and whoever looks at the clouds will not harvest (Eccl. 11:4). The woman with the issue of blood had adverse doctors' reports and stigmatization, but ignored them to press against a crushing crowd for the edge of Jesus' garment (Lk. 8:42-44). She got the long-awaited solution to her 12-year old issue. The wind, cloud and our situation must not deter us from pressing forward, reaching for Jesus – the bondage breaker, the salvation giver, the healer, the Truth and the Life.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 18

In every struggle with circumstances of life, there are those who encourage and those who mock, accuse, blame and condemn the affected person. May the Lord give us the right word to lift the spirit and eye of the weary unto the Lord, to encourage and sustain, rather than mock, accuse and condemn them. More importantly, the Lord remains the helper of the weary (Isa. 50:4-9). Let us look up to Him always! The arm of the flesh will fail us, but the Lord will not (2 Chr. 32:7-8). Woe befalls those who seek help from Egypt (Isa. 31:1).

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 19

Jesus denounced and rained woes on cities whose citizens failed to repent even after He had performed most of His miracles, signs and wonders in them (Mtt. 11:20-24). This could be our portion if we fail to appropriate God's word we hear and read daily in audio, print and electronic forms. Jesus said it would be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon and Sodom on the day of judgement than for those cities. The judgement would be against the city - no individual citizens would be free. We need to forestall this imminent ugly eternal judgement against us and our community or denomination that influence our knowledge, beliefs, attitude and religious practices. Now is the time to repent - we and our household.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 20

In response to an unfavourable information or situation, the believer must say nothing that can injure the faith or detract from the image of a fellow believer or God. He needs to pray, trust God and speak less; to fret or fear not (see 1 Pet. 2:21-23; Job 2:3). Wise up!

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 21

If an unwanted situation persists and vexes you, complain to God and praise Him amidst trials. Although quick-fix is desirable, some things cannot be fixed, but borne (see 2 Cor. 12:7-9). You cannot stop the rain, storm, wind or fire from trying your building, but you can make sure you wisely build on a solid foundation that stands sure - Christ the Solid Rock - by hearing and doing God's word (Isa. 28:16; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Mtt. 7:24-25). The choice is yours.

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 22

God does not need our praise. Rather, we need to praise Him. Why? Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared (Ps. 96:4). Whether we praise Him or not, God remains Who and What He is. Praising Him from our hearts is for our good.

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 23

Provided you are on the righteous side with God, where you are today is a preparatory ground for your blessed future (see 1 Pet. 3:14). Your situation does not mar or make you, but your response to it does. The response of rich young man to plenty cost him his life (Lk. 12:13-21). When Judas Iscariot realised his sin of betrayal of his Master, Jesus, rather than continue on the path of repentance, he committed suicide (Mtt. 27:3-5). Watch your response to both the good and the ugly!

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 24

Child of God, do not wonder why God allowed you to encounter that ugly situation. But, realise that as God was with, and showed kindness and favour to, Joseph in prison (Gen. 39:21), so He is with and for you in that challenge. He cares, guides, comforts, strengthens you and does all your battles (2 Chr. 20:15). Nothing else, but you, stands between you and His care. Untill we begin to fully trust God, we partially or fully trust self, man, things we get through strife in vainglory, and other forms of god and shrine (Pr. 18:11, 25:19; Isa. 31:1, 42:17; Jer. 7:4). Faith is the difference between the overcomer and the defeated. Choose to be the former, and work on your faith. Draw nearer to God!

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 25

Joseph was thrown into a pit of death (Gen. 37:23-24) and into slavery (v.28) for daring to have a dream and to share it. Both threats to his life were contrived by his brothers. He was also imprisoned for his integrity and fear of God. But, God was with him in prison, showing him kindness and favour (Gen. 39:19-21). These were preparatory grounds for successful occupation of the position of Prime Minister of Egypt – the world ruling power at the time. The life of another hypothetical Joseph was uneventful. Which of the two Josephs would you choose? Child of God, what is your attitude to life threats, hardships and pains? Recognise God's abiding presence and compassion.

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 26

People kill to acquire desirable power/position and affluence because they bring ephemeral comfort, fame, pleasure and security. Their greatest dangers are self-trust and lack of peace of heart, which God alone gives to those who trust in Him (not self) (Isa. 26:3; Jn. 14:27, 16:33). God's presence offers much more to His child than the presence of a mortal father offers to his child who trusts him absolutely. Trust God and dwell in His presence always (Isa. 26:4; Ps. 62:8, 91:1).

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 27

Faith is laughable, dumb, and the opposite of sense. Yet, by faith people received miracles of crossing the Red Sea and River Jordan on foot – without a bridge or boat (Ex. 14; Josh. 3:14-17), collapse of fortified walls of Jericho (Josh. 6:15-21), defeating nations (Josh., Judges, etc.), healing all types and magnitudes of diseases in varying manners and circumstances (e.g. Jn. 9:10-11), etc. Do well to cling to faith in God!

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 28

If we have the gift of prophecy, knowledge and faith, but do not love, we are nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). Also, *If you don't do what you know is right, you've sinned* (James 4:17, CEV). It may be to love, show mercy and kindness, evangelism, etc. Love must be the underlying motive in anything we do. But, almost always, self is. Yet, a gift/service/offering without love is a poison/waste (see Mt. 5:23-24). We ought not to miss the next chance to show genuine love in thought, word and action (Pr. 3:27).

Personal Note:

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OCTOBER 29

We want others to love, honour and empathize with us. But, rather than first do same to others (Mt. 7:12), we take advantage of them. Animal can eat animal to grow, but animal carefully avoid its like (species) for meal. Yet, man preys on man in exploitation. Love is an embodiment of patience, kindness, humility, truthfulness, holiness and faith. It is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom. 13:10). Follow after love – the pinnacle of Christian experience. Be devoted to others in love (Rom. 12:10). Pay your debt of love (Rom. 13:8) to others – do not let it accumulate. Show sincere love; avoid Jacobic manipulations. (See Phil 2:3b-4; Rom. 12:9, LB.)

Personal Note:
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OCTOBER 30

The opposite of love is hatred. It manifests as envy, pride, rudeness, selfishness, unrighteousness, unbelief, hopelessness, failure, evil, injustice, oppression, suppression and exploitation. Envy triggers off a chain of negative emotions that often lead to murder of the victim or his dreams (Gen. 4:3-8, Gen. 37). The envious loses his blessings, gets inflicted, destroyed, and his future generation terminated (Num. 12, 16). Notwithstanding, God's plan for His child cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2) (even by the envious), irrespective of what others wish, label or do to him. *Though it may linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay* (Hab. 2:3, NIV). Envy neither the believer (Gal. 5:26), nor the unbeliever (Pr. 3:31-33; Ps. 37:1-2). Do not deny harbouring hatred or envy, but control it! And, only Jesus can help you do it. Seek Him!

Personal Note:

OCTOBER 31

A person's worth is measured by sacred values he/she has and propagates – not material possessions or smart talks (see Mt. 6:19-20). If you do not honour your word, people will not regard you. A compromiser or smart dribbler seems to succeed in the short run, but destruction awaits him. God is not of double or multiple standards. You can improve on your worth and mean your word from today. Jesus alone can help you do so (Rom. 7:24-25; Jn. 15:5). Embrace Him today!

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 1

God is no respecter of persons, no matter his rank, wealth or influence. He searches out sin to punish it, chastising the believer and judging the unbeliever for sin. Both chastisement and judgement are painful (Rom. 2:11; Heb. 12:10-11). Strive to meet the single standard set by God in the Holy Bible in order to enter into heaven (see Mtt. 7:13-14). Do not be swayed by the allures of the world. Work towards returning in acceptable state to your Maker (1 Cor. 9:26-27; Phil. 3:12-14). Seek His help in Jesus for your enablement.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 2

Flambouyance is dignifying and desirable. So are beautiful and attractive looks. But, when they lack Christ-like heart, they are deceitful and dangerous, profiting the owner nothing. Beauty attracts; character sustains. Filling the heart with God's word is the way to reflect Christ-like character and be truly beautiful (see Ps. 119:11). Out of the heart spring the issues of life (Pr. 4:3). A poor girl desires to marry a wealthy man; a wealthy girl desires a royal marriage. That is man's insatiability for you. Yet, all that man can get in this world is vanity (Eccl. 1:2, 12:8). Believers are not only rich (1 Tim. 6:6-9, NIV), but are sure of royal marriage to Jesus (the King of kings) in heaven (Rev. 19:7-8,11-16), for they are beautiful. Get ready now! And, remain ready!

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 3

Some people worship God when the going is smooth, but back Him when it is rough. Others seek God in perplexing situations, but abandon Him when good season returns. Who can fool, use and dump God? We must worship God always for What and Who He is – not for what He has done or will do for us or when we feel like it in good or bad season. Give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18). We must not loathe bad seasons and disrespect God for them, because God perfects His strength in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9) and overcomes our inadequacy with His sufficiency (Ex. 4:10, 12). Because God never changes (Mal. 3:6), we can rely on Him through our changing situations. Just follow His plan; He will sort the rest faithfully.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 4

God first loved the believer (1 Jn. 4:19) and purchased him with Christ's life/blood (1 Cor. 6:19-20, 7:23). He ought to love and please God by right living (Eph. 2:10). Weigh your motive for that thought, word or action – is it to please God? You must not allow lack and lust to pressure you into displeasing Him. God never changes (Heb. 13:8); His miracle power is still at work as in the days of old. Reach out to Him in faith today for that desire. Like Caleb, see possibility where others see impossibility (Nu. 13:30). Vagaries of life are opportunities to trust God, who alone can, is willing and caring to do it for you. Pray, believe and get (Mk 11:24).

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 5

God bought the believer at a price - Christ's life/blood (Heb. 9:26-28) - to honour Him with his body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Reserve your body for the Owner and resist all temptations to defile God's temple. It is yours no more! Sin (disobedience to God's word) offers pleasure and dangles rewards. But, in the end, is eternal death. Yet, people are adamant to, hardened in, their sinful ways. God does not gloss over sin; He watches out to punish it, to damn sinful soul in hell fire forever (Rom. 2:6-16, LB). Beware! All things, including your enemy and you, were created for God's pleasure (Rev. 4:11). But we often desire the death of our enemy, which is not for God's pleasure (see Ezek. 18:23; 2 Pet. 3:9). Your thought, word and action must please God! Cross-check each time.

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 6

Some people say they are Christians (believers), only they would not like to blow it like fanatics because religion is of the heart (*uka di n'obi* - Igbo). But, man believes with the heart and is saved by confession with his mouth (Rom. 10:10). If being fanatic means liking too much or being enthusiastic, a believer cannot be fanatic enough for Jesus who loves him and died to save him, nor does he deny Him before men, to be denied by Him before His Father (Rom. 4:25, 5:8; Mt. 10:33). A non-fanatic Christian is an uncommitted follower who serves God and mammon at the same time and fails both ways (Mtt. 6:24). Like apostle Paul, believers are not ashamed of the Gospel, but earger to preach it, for it is the power of salvation (Rom. 1:15-17). You either fall-in or fall-out!

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 7

To appreciate God for Calvary, obey and have faith in Him. Serve Him – not self (Jn. 5:17). Hardship must not stop you from performing. It is an opportunity to exercise faith in and trust God, and a forerunner of break-through, since God’s victory is sure. Do not keep salvation to yourself alone, but serve God in spreading the gospel of salvation because God desires that all should be saved (2 Pet. 3:9). He who wins a soul is wise (Pr. 11:30). Be wise everyday! Effective evangelism walks the talk. A combination of good behaviour and appropriate words reflects Christ in the believer (Acts 11:25-27). Be careful to let your light shine, even in a hostile world (1 Pet. 3:16) and your salt to season the sour world around you (Mtt. 5:13-16). No excuses (Rom. 1:20b, LB). God called you and dictates – not your convenience or how you feel.

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 8

Against Phil. 2:4 and Rom. 15:1-2, we easily get wrapped up in our own world, needs and problems – not caring about others’. Inadvertently we practice destructive doctrines of the Devil: ‘Survival of the fittest’, ‘Heaven helps those who help themselves’, ‘The end justifies the means’, etc. Be like Jesus in self-sacrifice. He left His kingdom in heaven, was sinless in the world, was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Repent of self-centredness, confess and make a u-turn. It is the most profitable urgent matter of life and death.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 9

Like the sparrow and lilly, we live by God's grace – not material accumulation (see Deu. 8:3-4; Mtt. 6:25-26). Knowing this predisposes us to giving freely and to being more blessed than the receiver (Acts 20:35) as well as to eschewing envy and strife (James 3:13-16). The Dead Sea attitude has ruined many, just as 'You cannot be greater than me' attitude. Be not one of them! However, acclaimed prayerfulness and devotion in generosity are noticed by God, but cannot earn, or prepare one for, heaven (Acts 10:1-4). To make heaven, one needs Jesus and the salvation in Him (Rom. 3:22-26; 6:23; Acts 4:12). Kindly appropriate (Jn. 1:12) and check (2 Cor. 13:5)!

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 10

While poverty, on its own, does not ruin, riches or power can ruin (if used as bread) or procure blessing (if used as seed) (see 1 Tim. 6:17-19). The way it is used depends on the level of God's wisdom or earthly wisdom in the owner. Most of the formerly poor, humble and spiritual men in Israel became incorrigible when they became kings and rich. Be cautious of fleeting riches and intoxicating power. If you are blessed with wealth or/and authority, use it/them as seed/s to serve God. A man who has riches and/or power without understanding or God's wisdom is like a beast that perishes (Ps. 49:20).

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 11

In the world, some are greater than others – in learning, wealth, cornering public fund/property, oppressing the poor, etc. But, in the Church (*Ecclesia*), all are equal before God. Each believer is fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14), has the same Spirit of God and occupies a unique place in one Body of Christ with different parts. Without him the Body of Christ is incomplete and malfunctions. To which do you belong: the world or the Body of Christ? Critical!

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 12

Naaman was a general, but had leprosy (2 Kg. 5:1), Nebuchadnezzar had power, wealth and comfort of global dimension, but was turned to a beast (Dan. 4:28-37). The young man was rich, but foolish (Lk. 12:16-21). The judge had authority, but was godless (Lk. 18:1-6). The common denominator of these people was a lack of Christ. Those without Christ may have beauty, education, knowledge, wisdom, experience, wealth, comfort, power, authority or any other enviable personal good. But, they all belong to the class that possess vanity (see Eccl. 1:2, 2:21-23, 4:13-16, 5:8-20, 12:8). Does any, some or all of them swell your head? What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but end in hell? (Mt. 16:26). You may also lack Christ and these personal goods. Move to the righteous side of God by seeking Christ!

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 13

Rejoice not in your ‘success’ (wealth, promotion, win, learning, etc.), but that your name is written in the Book of Life (Lk. 10:20). If this becomes our focus (Col 3:1-2), morbid envy and unhealthy rivalry with their attendant evils will definitely disappear and the world will be better for it. The best possession is salvation – life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:23). You not only need to have it positionally by accepting Christ as your Lord and personal Saviour (Jn. 1:12), but also to work it out progressively by maintaining a Christ-like lifestyle (see Phil. 2:12). Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6). An athlete wins, if only he keeps the rules of the game (2 Tim. 2:5).

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 14

To go far with God, one must start, continue and end with humility. Of 7 things God hates, punishes and resists, pride is undebatably No. 1 (Pr. 6:16-19; James 4:6). Kindly ask king Nebuchadnezzar the cost of pride. He was reduced alive from man to animal, from king to beast and from palace to the wild where he was vulnerable to the hunter and predators (Dan. 4:28-37). Humility is acknowledging one's weakness and helplessness and seeing others greater than oneself and their interests more important than one's interests (1 Cor. 10:12; Rom. 12:10), no matter one's position and possessions. Examine self to confess and eschew pride always.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 15

Jesus and His Father are working (Jn. 4:34, 5:17, 9:4). Devil is also working: roaming and going to and fro the earth (Job 1:7, 2:2), sowing weeds at night in farms (Mt. 13:25), telling lies to deceive and ruin people (Jn. 8:44), seeking whom to devour (1 Pet. 5:8), and accusing brethren (Rev. 12:10). Devil is alive to his 3-fold ministry: to steal, kill and destroy (Jn. 10:10a). He uses happenings and thoughts to rob our peace, love, joy, health, faith, strength, etc. Always beware. Resist him and he will flee from you (James 4:7; Eph. 4:27). Are you idle (see 2 Thes. 3:10-11), working with God (1 Cor. 3:9; Col. 3:23) or working with Devil? Every thought, word and action counts, just as every moment. Choose wisely!

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 16

No matter what danger looms, the God of Isaiah and Hezekiah still reigns (Isa. 37:33-35). He longs to hear from us, to show that He alone is God. The grace of God reaches us in our need. May it move you to reach others in need. In a world of afflictions, we have reasons to complain, rather than thank God for belonging to Him and for His faithful care (Ps. 100:1-5). Take time to thank God always and to touch the needy everyday.

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 17

Gratitude clears the vision and lightens the load; ingratitude and conceit becloud the eye and burdens the heart. The strength to toil for, and eat, the fruit is from God (Eccl. 5:18-19). Our life is God's gift. He owes us nothing and we deserve nothing. Yet, He gives us everything (Acts 17:25). We ought to live in abundant gratitude to God and be eager to share with others (Rom. 3:22-26; Mtt. 16:26; 1 Cor. 9:11). You and your household can do it.

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 18

Live in peace (1 Cor. 7:15b), make peace (Mt. 5:9), and seek and pursue peace (1 Pet. 3:11; Ps. 34:14). Live peaceably with others (Rom. 12:18), even the difficult ones. Recognize when you are the difficult one in a relationship, and prayerfully adjust. In a troubled, fearful world, we all need the peace of the Prince of Peace to ease our fears and calm our hearts. (See Isa. 9:6; Lk. 2:10; Jn. 14:27, 16:33, 20:21.) If you have not got Jesus, you cannot have true peace. Having Jesus means being righteous, loving God's law and turning away from unrighteousness. Righteousness and peace kiss each other (Ps. 85:10). Great peace have those that love God's law (Ps. 119:165). There is no peace for the wicked (Isa. 48:22). You still have the chance to drop your pride and haughtiness and open your heart unto Jesus (see Rev. 3:20). Do not be deceived with false alternatives. There is salvation and true peace in nobody, nothing else, but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Wise up!

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 19

The Lord formed you, redeemed you, made all things, stretched out heavens, and spread out the earth like curtain. He frustrates the prophecies of false prophets and confirms the words of His true servants. He makes fools of diviners and nonsense of wisdom of man. His word comes to pass. He restores. (See Isa. 44:24-28.) Is He alone your God? (See Isa. 18:31.) Or, does He complements your other god/s? He is the only true God, and is a jealous God. Beside Him, there is none other. Living in reality of these truths through personal experience of Christ gives true, meaningful and successful life (see 1 Cor. 1:30). Otherwise, one lives or dies to regret it. Eschew masquerading in religious ritualism, which offers no salvation. Use this timely counsel, to avoid ‘untimely death’.

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 20

Child of God, to whom can you liken God? He brings out the stary hosts one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of His great might and power, none of them is missing or lacks anything. The everlasting God regards and cares about you. He neither faints nor grows weary. He gives power to the weary and increases the strength of them that lack might. (Isa. 40:25-29). We are easily tempted to forget God. Our challenges cannot disappear with an evening stroll, but we can find rest and certainty that God is always working towards His good purposes. He is here. You are His.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 21

Your help comes from God Almighty - not from amulets or affluence, connections, etc. He is the Maker of heavens and earth. Without sleep He watches over you; your feet will not slip. The sun will not smite you, nor the moon; you are safe day and night. (See Ps. 121.) Review your response to invitation to come to God, your attitude to things of God and relationship with Him, so that it shall be better with you.

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 22

Lacking in faith in God to bless their children, men acquire ungodly wealth to take care of, and bequeath to, their children. This ultimately destroys the children they love. True love first invests Christ in the child. Be a hero of and propagate faith (see Heb. 11); not of materialism, avarice, toil, wisdom, folly, pleasure, gluttony, oppression, scheming, impunity and other forms of godlessness.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 23

Bodily pleasure cannot displace bodily pain, nor secure freedom from fear. King Solomon, who inherited and increased in affluence and experienced power, honour, fame and sensual pleasure with 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kg. 11:3) used 'vanity' 37 times in his short valedictory Ecclesiastes (ch. 1,2,4,5,12) to express the worthlessness of materialism and hedonism. Beware! What we need is integrity (see Pr. 11:3-7) - always doing the right thing in the open and in secret. A man of integrity is guided (Pr. 11:3), walks securely (Pr. 10:9), and receives God's mercy (Ps. 26:11). Everyone wants integrity and to deal with men of integrity, but cannot discipline self. Like Paul, find the solution in Jesus (Rom. 7:18-25).

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 24

A sound heart is life to the flesh, but envy rottenness of bones (Pr. 14:30). Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6). Do not envy the unbeliever because beneath his prosperity lies some curses (Ps. 37:1-2). Neither envy a believer (see Gal. 5:26) because envy triggers a chain of negative emotions that lead to murder of the victim (see Gen. 4:3-8) or aimed at termination of his dreams (see Gen. 37). The murderer becomes cursed, a restless fugitive and vagabond (Gen. 4:9-12, ch. 42-45).

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 25

Abraham ignored his 100-year childlessness and Sarah's 90-year infertility and focused on the age-long promise of God to give him a son. God not only did it, but counted Abraham righteous for his trust (Rom. 4:14-25). He became the father of faith. Be steadfast and you will receive that desire that seems belated and impossible. Those physical and spiritual challenges cannot defeat you, if God be for you (Rom. 8:31). He can be trusted to deliver 24/7 (1 Sam. 17:47). But, the question is, Is He really for you or you are assuming He is for you? Move to the righteous side of God, while there is time!

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 26

Shake off the hinderance to your eventual coronation. It is that habit, addiction, obsession, attitude, bias, critical spirit, gossip, temper, malice, envy, grudge, pride, unforgiveness, bitterness, selfishness, insincerity, impatience, self-righteousness, unholy ally or company or relationship, etc. Lay aside the besetting sin and run the heavenly race set before you (Heb. 11:1-4). If you are risen with Christ, set your mind on things above (Col. 3:1-2). As a soldier (believer), you need to please your commander (Jesus) by disentangling yourself from the worldly mindset. And, as an athlete, you need to win the crown by keeping the rules (Christ-like lifestyle) (2 Tim. 2:4-5).

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 27

You are fearfully and wonderfully made, a marvellous creature (Ps. 139:13-14), the apple of God's eye (Deut. 32:10; Zech. 2:8). In your darkest moment, darkness is bright with God (Ps. 139:12), who neither leaves nor forsakes you (Heb. 13:5). Reach out your hand for His in total trust and dependence. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God, and that is what we are (1 Jn. 3:1). Relying on this love gives purpose to life and peace with God. But many rather trust their wealth, smartness, influence, parents, god-father, connections, self-righteousness, etc.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 28

A believer is an heir to Jesus' inheritance (Rom. 8:15-17). In a world of permissive and absolute wills of God, he is called to a closer, higher and consistent walk with God (Eph. 1:3-5, 5:15). God's chastening rod is a blessing. Despise it not, nor be discouraged by it (Heb. 12:5-6). It could take the form of perplexing circumstances. It all comes from God's heart of love and is for your good (Rom. 8:28). Respond wisely!

Personal Note:

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NOVEMBER 29

In the untowards and crooked generation (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:15), believers are still exhorted to practical holy living (1 Pet. 1:14-16). Like king David, let's be careful regarding what we watch/hear/read, our company, integrity, and attitude to others (godly and ungodly) (Ps. 101:2+). The days are truly evil and the generation wicked. But, that is no excuse (Rom. 1:20). God's grace is sufficient unto us in a world of relentlessly growing wickedness (2 Cor. 12:9). We are called to be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2) - not to brewing excuses for failures, which are no substitutes for successes. Success has no choice than to come when we must have made appropriate sacrifices for it.

Personal Note:
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NOVEMBER 30

Child of God, our fore-runners are witnessing our heavenly race. They went through similar and worse situations that challenge us today. Yet, through faith they conquered kingdoms, defeated lions, overcame tortures and chains and destitution, to gain what was promised to them (Heb. 11:33-38). What is your excuse? What is that situation you are passing through? It is not new (Eccl. 1:9-11). Your situation cannot defeat you; your lack of faith does.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 1

Having limited time, the Devil has reinvigorated his wrath and determination to steal, kill and destroy earth's inhabitants (Rev. 12:12b; Jn. 10:10a). He uses natural disasters, accidents, crimes, diabolism, fear, etc. in increasing number and dimension. Only God can protect and deliver you and yours (Ps. 127:1; Jn. 10:10b). Be sure you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and personal Saviour and that you are always on the righteous side with God (Rev. 3:20; Josh. 24:15). Trust Him to faithfully deliver (Heb. 7:25).

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 2

God's love for His child is steadfast. He renews His mercies, compassion and kindness every morning (Lam. 3:22-23). What about your love, mercies, compassion and kindness for others? God's thoughts toward you are thoughts of good, peace, a future and accomplished end (Jer. 29:11). What about your thoughts toward the other person? You should be like your heavenly Father in showing steadfast love and renewing every morning your mercies, compassion and kindness to others, as well as having thoughts of good, peace, a future and accomplished end towards them.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 3

Like the fading stars of the morning lose their light in glorious sun (see James 4:4), people quickly pass from the earth and its toiling (see Ps. 102:3), only remembered by what they have done (H. Bonar, 1808-1889). Exit from earth is an inevitable reality. Most people dread it and are uncomfortable to think about it. Worse still, no one knows when, where and how it will happen. But, you can trust Jesus to prepare you for it. When they remember what you have done and what you represented in your lifetime, will successors truly miss you, or rejoice at your exit? Are you serving the Lord, telling the truth, loving genuinely, and sowing godly seeds? (See Phil. 2:21.) Crosscheck! Today, men of God perform in the funeral of, and eulogize, deceased unbelievers, inadvertently bidding them farewell (actually farebad) to hell fire in deceitful grand styles.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 4

From the dust of the earth God created man. He breathed into man's nostrils, and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Besides, God gave His only begotten Son to redeem man from eternal damnation (Jn. 3:16; Isa. 53:4-6). God's purpose in all this is that man shall fear Him and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13; Deut. 10:12-13). Man will be judged by this benchmark. Through empty philosophies men may invent other purposes for their existence, but these cannot distort the purpose of God for man. Eve reasoned (philosophized) with serpent and fell. Consequently, sin reigned in man and death followed (Gen. 3). But, through faith (senselessness, opposite of reason and logic) in the second Adam, Jesus Christ, we are made alive (1 Cor. 15:22). The day of reckoning awaits death (Heb. 9:27) or rapture. Be ready!

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 5

The Lord plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future (Jer. 29:11). God's thoughts for you are precious and vast in number like grains of sand (Ps. 139:17-18). Child of God, as the learning child counts everything from toys to trees, so you must count your blessings of salvation, reconciliation, eternal life, deliverance, healing, etc. Too many to declare are the doings and plans of God for you (Ps. 40:5). Learn to count them. Do not allow cares of the world to distract you.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 6

Security is an issue of paramount importance in life. Workers fear retirement. People save and accumulate wealth for social and economic security. Hard as they try, they never have all they need in life (Eccl. 1:8). They also engage arms, dogs, guards and the police for physical security. These obviously fail to fence their lives and to offer peace of mind. But, the believer has a new birth into a living hope and an inheritance that are secured and can never perish, spoil or fade (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Even in death the righteous has a refuge (Pr. 14:32b). Kindly embrace the new birth, living hope and inheritance in Jesus Christ while there is time.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 7

God comforts us in all our afflictions so that we will comfort others in affliction (2 Cor. 1:4). Stop the Dead Sea attitude, and be no cemetery of God's comfort. Extend His comfort generously. Do not be discouraged and controlled by the weaknesses, ingratitude or other negative attitudes of the beneficiaries, which tend to prompt you to withhold as they deserve and to come down to their base levels. Look back at the opportunities you missed to obey God's instructions to comfort people. Repent of a wrong attitude and determine to get it right from today. Revisit past cases, including those where you offered half-baked comfort. Always do unto others as God does unto you, commands you to do unto others and as you would want others to do unto you (see Mtt. 7:12), no matter your beneficiary's actions and reactions.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 8

Wisdom is a much desired and cherished virtue. Yet, a kind and gentle heart is far better than a wise heart. A small unkindness is a great offense. Good news: Anyone can become kind. You may be incapable of preaching inspiring sermon, fielding hard questions or evangelizing vastly, but you can be kind by praying, avoiding unkind word, and spurring others on toward love and good deeds (see James 5:16; Col. 4:2-6; Heb. 10:24). May the Lord set a guard over our mouths, keep watch over our lips. May our hearts never be drawn to what is evil or harsh (Ps. 141:3-4). In a world of cold love, a heart of kindness is at large, yet the most needed help and healing we can offer to others.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 9

Love of self, family and possessions can hold our attention captive and render us unable and unavailable to love God. We must deny self, hate family members and brethren, and forsake all we have, to go after Jesus (Mtt. 16:24; Lk. 14:26,33). Love for God is primary; love for self, family and possessions is secondary – not the other way round. After all, God gives you life, family members and possessions. He first loved you and commands you to love Him first and above yourself and all other persons or things. If you love God, you will obey His command (Jn. 14:23) and this will put your love of self, family and possessions in right perspective.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 10

Every heart is sick, desperately wicked and deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9). Tailors can mend clothes, but only God can mend the heart. He alone looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7); knows the hearts of all men (1 Kg. 8:39); searches all hearts (1 Chr. 28:9; Ps. 139:23); creates in one a pure heart (Ps. 51:10); sets eternity in the hearts of men (Eccl. 3:11); revives the hearts of the contrite (Isa. 57:15); is close, heals and binds the broken-hearted (Ps 34:18, 147:3, Isa. 61:1); writes His laws on the hearts of men (Jer. 31:33); replaces a heart of stone with a heart of flesh and gives a new heart (Eze. 19:11, 36:26). Go to Him for the cleansing, regeneration your degenerate heart so badly needs.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 11

Seeing the dangers of possessing too little or too much, Agur prayed God to give him neither poverty nor riches, but to feed him with the food allotted to him, lest he be full and deny God or be poor and steal and profane the name of the Lord (Pr. 30:2-3,8-9). What amount of possession passes for riches or poverty? We brought nothing into, and we will take nothing out of, the world. If we have food and clothing, we should be content as being rich, and avoid the temptation and trap of harmful desires that plunge men into destruction. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:5-10). Discontentment makes rich people poor, while contentment makes poor people rich. Only our needs are worth desiring, and God grants them (Pr. 10:24b). Choose to be content.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 12

All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing (Eccl. 1:7-8). Man can never possess enough; insatiability remains the bane of his life, and it is only godliness with contentment that can solve it (1 Tim. 6:6). If it is not your basic need, do not seek it – Jesus did not. If you must, do not lose your sleep or be desperate or hurt another person in pursuit of it. If you acquire beyond your basic need, the excess decays and becomes useless or harmful (see Ex. 16:13-21), even if you reserve it for your children, thereby wishing them inability to fend for themselves.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 13

James and John desired to be greatest in God's kingdom (Mk. 10:37-40). A man who is obsessed with the thought of being greatest is truly a patient. He cannot sleep, obsessed with an impossible and foolish ambition. Yet, he is full of (and fools) himself and is unteachable. Blind, he cannot see his weaknesses and the areas others are better than he is. By implication, he wishes to be greater than his children, which is a sickly mind-set worse than witchcraft. Such a man is deadly - murderer in thoughts, words and deeds of his wife and children (for rituals) and those who overtake him. While he needs prayers, he must be watchfully avoided. On the other hand, no one can thwart God's plan (Job 42:2). With the services (deceits) of all the seers and sorcerers, man remains short-sighted and cannot see God's plan as to who will be 'greatest', let alone be able to change it. By the way, greatest in what? In a world of dualism, no one is truly greatest. If you are greater carnally, the other is greater spiritually. If you are greater materially, the other is greater in rest of mind and the potential to make heaven (see Mtt. 19:23-24). The list goes on. Kindly seek to be where/what your Creator wants you to be. This alone is success.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 14

The mother of James and John Zebedee requested of Jesus that the one of her two sons sit on Jesus' right hand and the other on the left in His kingdom. Jesus described her as ignorant and made it clear that only God determines who occupy such positions. The selfish and ambitious request stirred indignation in the remaining 10 apostles (Mtt. 20:20-24). Parents still ignorantly, selfishly and ambitiously desire that all their children be greater than all others. The rivalry spirit stirs bad blood in peers. Some are petty enough to boast about it. Sorry! God alone creates a person and allots a position to him. There is nothing you can do about it (Job 42:2).

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 15

Give and you will receive beyond measure in return (Lk. 6:38). Everybody gives in thought, word or action all the time. And, each giving is sowing what the sower must reap (Gal. 6:7). That is why we must be careful about what we give. Do not give envy, anger, malice, grumbling, hatred, stinginess, greed, smartness, murder, slander, filthy language, lie or other unrighteous issues (see Col. 3:5-9). And, note that what matters is what you give – not the recipient. Therefore, you cannot justify hatred for your enemy, killing those who threaten your life, refusing to help those who did not help you, etc. (see Lk. 6:27-36). Do not take the place of God to revenge (see Rom. 12:19). Sow righteousness righteously!

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 16

God is kind to those who are faithful, righteous and upright in heart (1 Kg. 3:6,14). But, many live lawlessly, a life of “It doesn’t matter”, impunity (*ginigeme, odeshi* – Igbo). They ignorantly settle for reckless life that refuses to recognize that there is a God in heaven, who made them for a purpose by which they are accountable to Him. Their thoughts, words and actions everyday God gives them life must be judged. This just and righteous God has eternal dominion, rules in the affairs of men, enthrones and dethrones kings, and humbles the proud (Dan. 4:34-37). Be careful!

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 17

When Noah made a thanksgiving sacrifice, God perceived the pleasing aroma and changed His mind against cursing the earth to suffer man (Ge. 8:20-22). Thus, God touched the entire world by the sacrifice of one man. Similarly, when king Solomon made a thanksgiving sacrifice, God appeared to him and asked him to make request. Because his request bordered on the interest of others (wisdom to govern others well), God granted it and added two other blessings (riches and honour) (1 Kg. 3:4-5,7-15). God still rewards sacrifice with favour, moreso sacrifices made for the welfare of others – friends or foes, loyal or disloyal, distant or close, relations or neighbours. Your sacrifice needs to be selfless and bigger than your interest.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 18

King Solomon recognized his weaknesses, swallowed his pride and asked God to help him with wisdom to govern others well. In addition to wisdom, God gave him riches and honour (1 Kg. 3:4-5,12-13). Unlike Solomon, many people, especially the wealthy and the kings and the powerful, are swollen-headed with pride and cannot recognize or acknowledge their weaknesses and needs/interests of others, let alone approach God, sacrifice to and depend on Him to supply them. They are full of themselves and their power and material possessions. Many have questionable riches and/or illegitimately occupy seats of power that procure dishonour – not honour. Some corner the commonwealth and show kindness with little to a few, robbing the masses of wealth and oneself of honour to pay a few, who mostly become sycophants and massage their ego into hell fire. Fear God!

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 19

God appeared to king Solomon, and his life was favoured with the position of the wisest, richest and most honourable king (1 Kg. 3:5,12-13). God came down to Joseph in prison, and his life was favoured with kingship among inmates, as a foretaste of the position of Prime Minister of Egypt (Gen. 39:20-23ff). You can attract God's presence and the attendant favour, or grieve or quench the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) for ugly consequences. You might as well be carefree – leave God out of your life and mind your business. It is up to you.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 20

Poor world, made up of societies that need to be governed. People aspire to, and even usurp, positions of leadership, not for public interest, but to take advantage of the system to loot public treasury, suppress and oppress the led, kill imagined and real enemies, bequeath stupendous wealth to children, etc. They care not about legacy, for what to be remembered and the reality of facing the Creator in judgement. Those who do so are seen to be stupid, not smart and political bananas. But, God could not have designed positions of authority for evil and/or selfish purposes. A leader is entrusted with God's precious people, who He created, loves and paid an invaluable price to purchase their lives. In your little or big corner, you are that leader, who must be blameless and his children godly (see Titus 1:6-9).

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 21

If a believer's only comfort is the thought of the life he alone lives as worthy of salvation, he is wretched indeed and the most miserable of all men. He must preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage - with great patience and careful instructions (2 Tim. 4:2), so that others might be saved as well, even if as snatching them from fire (Jude 23). God's kingdom is too big for him and his alone, nor can he and his alone exhaust the treasures in heaven for eternity. Heaven must be enlarged with souls that God laboured to create and paid a priceless ransom to redeem. For the hell, meant for the devil and his loyal angels (Mtt. 25:41), it must be depleted of souls the devil cannot create. Kindly get to preaching work!

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 22

Rejoice that Christ is being preached. It does not matter whether from false or true motives, envy or rivalry (Phil. 1:15-18). Give no hoot about what the target think, feel or say; relent not in preaching Christ (see 1 Tim. 4:11-15). You must resolve to obey your Master, who gave the great commission for evangelism (see Mtt. 28:18-20). Disregard people's attitudes and be neither ashamed of nor dissuaded from preaching the gospel. You are obligated to the wise and the foolish (Rom. 1:15-16), the poor and the rich, the listening and the snobbish.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 23

A calm, undisturbed mind and peaceful heart are the life and health of the body, but envy, anger and worry rot the bones (Pr. 14:30). Peace in the heart flows outwards to others, while it has benign, medicinal effects on the owner. Envy, anger and worry in the heart flow outwards to others, while they have adverse, destructive effects on the owner. Most often, we allow the wrong attitudes of others to disturb our peace and stir envy, anger and worry in our hearts such that we fail to be kind to them, or even satisfy ourselves by wrathfully getting even with them through regrettable reactions to their wrong words and actions toward us. However we possess envy, anger or worry, and whatever our reasons or justifications, they hurt and destroy our system. Be careful to always eschew envy, anger or worry in your heart.

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 24

When a poor choice leads to ugly development in life, you can decide to continue in destructive living or wallow in regrets, self-pity and worry, or repentantly run to God for His freezing and healing power. He never gives up on us and has a good and glorious future for those who trust in Him (Ps. 103:3-4). Self-examination for the passing year, month, week and day enables us make things right with God and man, and spares us the penalties for sinful choices (1 Cor. 11:31). Mirror and camera images and people's impressions are good, but too shallow for healthy, spiritual life. The Lord sees the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chr. 28:9). Penitence and contrition are the answer (Ps. 51:17).

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 25

Sure, the world is not the way God intended it, because of man's activities. At a point, God regretted creating the world (Gen. 6:5-6). He destroyed it with flood, sparing only Noah and his folk (Ge. 6:11-13ff). But, the world soon regenerated in its wickedness (Isa. 64:6). God would not fold His hands and watch moral and spiritual darkness enveloping the world. He intervened by sending Jesus, the Light of the world, born on a day like today. Although, the world did not recognize Jesus, those who receive Him are given the power to become sons of God (see Jn. 1:4-5,10-12). There is no other way to get to God, except Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12). Life is not the way it ought to be, as families break up, children go hungry, natural disasters abound, and wars are waged. But, through faith in Christ, you can begin a new life. Christ is God's plan to change your life here on earth and to change your destination from hell fire to heaven. God does not embark on unnecessary projects. Embrace Christ now!

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 26

Through the birth of Christ on earth, God came down from heaven seeking man. Jesus came to earth to seek and to save the lost/sinners (Lk. 19:10; Rom. 5:6-10); to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mtt. 20:28); to deliver men from darkness and to speak the word that judges the world as God directs (Jn. 12: 46-50). Through the death of Christ on the cross, man was reconciled to God (see Rom. 5:10; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:18; Rom. 5:10-11). But, it is only those who repent of their sinful ways and confess the salvation faith in Christ's sacrificial death that are saved (see Acts 2:38; Eph. 2:8). Thereafter, they must live as befitting of the heirs of the kingdom of God Most Righteous. There is neither exception nor exemption (Rom. 1:20). Man's wisdom, philosophy and tradition are inimical in this eternal life and death matter for every individual (see Col. 2:8; 1 Cor. 1:18-31). Kindly humble yourself and get it right – no proxy, pretence or approximation.

Personal Note:

DECEMBER 27

Jesus came to model a new man (Rom. 5:12, 17-19). Have you conformed to Christ's image? (Rom. 8:29) He came to carry man's sins on the cross and to be striped for man's healing (Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24). Are you still bearing your sins and sicknesses? He came to destroy the devil's works in our lives to set us free from satanic bondage and blindness (Lk. 4:18-21; Heb. 2:14-15). Has He set you free to be free indeed? (Jn. 8:36.) He came to give life abundantly (Jn. 10:10). Have you received life in Jesus? (Rom. 6:23.) He came to redeem, justify and make us righteous (Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 1:30), to make us rich (2 Cor. 8:9), and to give us sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). Has He succeeded with you in these regards? He will return to take those who believe to heavenly mansions (Jn. 14:3). Are you one of them? Strive to be in the number!

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 28

Christianity is sacrificing Christ to redeem the fallen humanity (Rom. 4:25). The sinless Man died for the sins of men (Isa. 53:9; 1 Pet. 2:22). The Creator, out of love, reduced Himself to the manger at birth, the cross at death and the hell in burial. Indeed, sacrifice is at the heart of true love, and is love's truest measure. It is the heart-beat of Christ's birth – Christmas – completely about Christ's love. Have you appropriated this sacrificial love by accepting Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour? How sacrificially do you love others? You are being weighed on the scale.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 29

The Greatest and Mightiest Gift was born as a small and fragile baby in unsanitary manger (Lk. 2:7) to a poor carpenter's parentage (Lk. 4:22) of mean Nazareth (Jn. 1:46), to shun the mighty and shame the strong (1 Cor. 1:27), and to be like man to save men. At Christ's birth, heavenly hosts praised God and brought the world the message, *Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace, goodwill toward men* (Lk. 2:14, NKJV). Jesus' birth at Christmas brought peace. Ensure you have the peace and enjoy it every moment of next year by knowing and embracing the substance of Christmas, Jesus Christ, and His salvation mission. Sure, there's no peace for the wicked (Isa. 48:22), but great peace have those who love God's law (Ps. 119:165). Come out from the folk of the wicked (2 Cor. 6:17). Live as a child of light (Eph. 5:8-17).

Personal Note:
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DECEMBER 30

One thousand (1,000) years after Solomon expressed the vanity of carnal possessions (Eccl. 1:2), Jesus taught us the futility of storing earthly treasures (Mt. 6:19-21,24), of forfeiture of one's soul for gaining the whole world (Mt. 16:26), of weighing life by material possessions (Lk. 12:15), and of trusting in riches (1 Tim. 6:17). Also, pleasure is vain and laughter is foolish; human wisdom, toiling and projects are meaningless (Eccl. 2:1-11). Let's learn, acquire the right attitude and live correctly in the new year. Circumstances of life will not defeat us much as our wrong attitude to them.

Personal Note:

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DECEMBER 31

The great book of Psalms has a general appeal because it contains poems or songs of praise, worship, thankfulness, and repentance, and displays a variety of familiar feelings, emotions, attitudes and interests. The way the Book ends teaches a lesson on how to end the year. Psalm 150 asks us to praise God, who created all things for His pleasure and glory. It enlightens on where, why, how and who to praise God. We must praise God in the sanctuary, mighty firmament (Ps. 150:1) and everywhere (Jn. 4:21,23). We must praise Him for His excellent greatness and for sustaining the universe (Ps. 150:2). Praise Him for What and Who He is and for what He did, does and will yet do. Praise Him with musical instruments (Ps. 105:3-5), that is, rhythmically, loudly, enthusiastically, bodily, boldly and fearlessly. Everything that has breath (including you, in sickness or health, riches or poverty, good or bad times) must praise Him (Ps. 105:6).

Personal Note:
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