

Working for GOD in the Marketplace

Insights from the successes and failures of ordinary Christians, as they struggle to exemplify Jesus Christ in the fast-paced international business world

Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli

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First printing 2005

Second printing 2010

Third printing 2016

Fourth Printing 2019

ISBN: 978- 068 -3445

Published &Printed in Nigeria by

SAMTOB VENTURES

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Adjacent Afariogun street,

Orile/Church Bus Stop,

Oshodi Lagos.

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Dedication

For my wonderful parents, Professor Paul and Professor (Mrs) Rina Okonkwo, who have always showered me with their unconditional love, reflective of Jesus Christ's agape love for his children.

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ, the source of my strength, the reason I live! This book was inspired by Him, for His Glory.

I would like to thank all the courageous men and women of God who identified with the vision for this book and took the bold step of sharing their stories. I appreciate the time and energy that you devoted to making this dream a reality. Your testimonies have already changed my life and will inspire millions of people across the globe!

I would also like to recognize the support of Pastor Brian Green of Pentecostal Tabernacle in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Pastor Wale Adefarasin, of Guiding Light Assembly in Lagos, Nigeria, who wrote excellent commentaries at the end of each story.

I would like to thank my parents, Prof and Prof (Mrs.) Okonkwo, my amazing sisters, Adaora, Una and Nwando, and my brother, Aneto. You are God's greatest gift to me. I would also like to acknowledge the support and counsel of my sisters in Christ-Laura Nneka Mobisson, Ekene Ajene Onu, Adhiambo Odaga, Cassandra Johnson, Toyosi Kolawole, Oge Modie, Nwamaka Okoye, Nancy Nwuneli and Shaunti Feldman. Thank you for always believing in me! A special thank you to the late Mrs. Lynn Chukwura for her editing support.

I would also like to recognize the Chapel of Redemption family on Enugu Campus, who laid the foundation for my walk with God, and all the amazing men and women of God who have nurtured my walk over the years, particularly, Jeff Barneson, Pastor Brian Green, Pastor Tony Rapu, Pastor John Enelamah and Pastor Poju Oyemade.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband and best friend, Mezuo Nwuneli, for his wonderful love and support. Your friendship, advice and prayers through the years have been a priceless blessing. I love you!

Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli

Foreword

Writing from her experiences with friends and colleagues, both at Harvard Business School and in the international marketplace, Ndidi reminds us that God is trustworthy, good and engaged in our lives. In the face of a business culture that tells young energetic MBA's to take charge and be masters of their own destiny, these stories - all true with only the names being changed - remind us that Jesus Christ is Lord of the marketplace and invite us to follow him.

- * Doing the right thing
- * Engaging in a risky business,
- * Leaving home to find work
- * Facing a costly ethical decision
- * Working in a low-paid, uncomfortable place
- * Accepting God's mission over your own agenda
- * Lifting up worship in the midst of hardship
- * Honoring family calling in a business environment which declares that the Market is God

All these issues can't be addressed by maxims and there are no easy answers. The only way it is safe to meet them is in the context of a life-defining relationship with Jesus and his unqualified acceptance, love, presence and Holy Spirit empowerment.

Jeffrey Barneson

Inter Varsity-Harvard United Ministry

Chaplain, Harvard University

Introduction

The corporate environment, characterized by individualism and cut-throat competition, presents unique challenges for Christians. Caught in the web of 14 to 16 hour days and weekend work, many Christians have little or no time for the spiritual support and fellowship that they desperately need and desire. These Christians rarely become active members of local Churches or participate in weekly Bible studies or fellowships. As they struggle to find time for fellowship with God, they also face the unique pressures and stresses of the business world. These believers crave support to help them through the maze of obligations that fill their lives.

This conflict is an unexpected and extremely difficult reality for new entrants into the corporate world, especially those who were actively involved in fellowships in their undergraduate or graduate programs. School provides a protected environment, where Christians are often surrounded by their peers, who encourage them to participate in weekly fellowships. After leaving their universities and entering the business world, these young Christians often find themselves in new cities, faced with difficult issues in the work environment. Confronted with the stories of “larger than life” men and women of God who run top companies, many find themselves inept at fulfilling their own vocational callings in this environment.

Working for God in the Marketplace provides a glimpse into the lives of “ordinary” Christians struggling to live for Christ in, the fast-paced business world.

This book has its origin in three primary convictions:

- First, God has called us to be different from the World “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Rom 12:2 (NIV). He holds us to higher standards, above the widely accepted moral norms that the world has set.
- Second, He wants us to exhibit fruit that reflect His presence in our lives “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Gal 5 :22-23 (NIV)
- Third, in spite of the hectic pace and difficulties that the business world often presents to believers, God has called many of us to enter, succeed and transform distinct industries.

By sharing short stories of the lives of ‘ordinary’ Christians who are struggling to fulfil the call of God for their lives in the world, while living above the world’s standards, this book hopes to provide readers with the following points:

- The realization that other Christians in the business world share experiences similar to theirs;
- Insights and encouragement for thriving as Christians in the corporate world;
- Principles for excelling in the business world as illustrated by the achievements of other Christians;
- Direction and tools for addressing challenges in the work environment, and the
- Inspiration to exemplify Christ and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, even in difficult work environments.

God laid the idea for this book in my heart in 1998, during my second year at the Harvard Business School. At this time, a number of my close Christian friends from Business School, who were a year ahead of me, had already entered into the business world and were struggling to walk with God.

My interactions with them during this time, coupled with my own personal experiences as a management consultant prior to enrolling in business school, enabled me to understand their plight and compelled me to capture the experiences of Christians in the Marketplace.

As a result, this book offers five unique stories based on true experiences of recent entrants into the business world. These individuals have extremely diverse educational, racial, ethnic and geographical backgrounds. Their names and the names of their companies have been changed to protect their identities. In addition, the exact timing and sequence of events is not reflected in the narratives. However, their accounts attempt to create a realistic glimpse into the lives of these individuals, as they attempt to reflect Christ in their work and in their daily lives.

I decided to utilize the case study approach pioneered by the Harvard Business School because I believe that this approach fosters active learning. It allows the readers to gain an in-depth glimpse into the protagonist's life and pushes him/her to consider the options that may arise out of the scenario.

Still struggling with many of the issues explored in the book and with no formal theological training, I felt grossly inadequate to provide commentaries on the cases. As a result, I identified two amazing pastors, who shared my vision and who were willing to provide short feedback at the end of each story.

This book can, with equal benefit, be read by individuals or used by fellowship groups in the marketplace, at schools or in Churches to address the critical issues that young men and women face in the business world as they strive to exemplify Christ at work.

My prayer is that this book will bless your life and will empower you to walk for and with God in the marketplace.

God Bless!

Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli

CHAPTER ONE

Waiting on God

A story about the tension between waiting on God for 'promotion' and 'recognition' versus relying on the world's tactics.

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30-31)

12:00 Noon Friday, May 5th, 2017

As Jennifer strolled across Soldiers' Field Park on the Harvard Business School Campus in Boston, Massachusetts, she appreciated the beauty around her. She had just submitted the final paper of her entire educational career and felt some lightness in her steps.

Spring had started relatively late this year. The trees were in full bloom, covered with pink and blue flowers. As the birds chirped, the bees buzzed and the lawn mowers roared, Jennifer could not keep herself from trying to estimate what portion of her outrageous tuition had been devoted to maintaining the school's gardens and lawns in the most exquisite condition. Upon sighting her classmates, Rod and Sam, Jennifer picked up her pace and took a slight detour. She needed the fresh air to clear her head, but she was not prepared to engage any of her classmates in discussions about her post-business school plans.

"Why does everyone have to ask you what you plan on doing in the fall?" she pondered.

In the past week, she had seemed to run into inquiring classmates at every turn in the gym, in the laundry room and even at her local hairdresser. The conversation was always the same.

Inquiring classmate: "Hi Jennifer, how are you doing? How is everything going? What have you been up to?"

Jennifer: "Oh, just finishing up my papers and preparing for graduation? What about you?"

Inquiring classmate: "As you may have heard, I will be joining Coca Cola in the fall. I just got back from a trip to Atlanta. They flew me down to check out some potential housing options. I have also been busy mapping out my summer travel schedule. I plan on visiting China and Australia. I intend to spend as much of that signing bonus as possible before September, when I will finally have to roll up my sleeves and get to work. What are your plans for the fall, Jennifer?"

Jennifer (with her eyes lowered): "Still working on it...I will keep you posted."

Inquiring classmate: "That's hard to believe. Are you just pulling my leg? Back in March, you told me that you already had two offers. With graduation around the corner you must have made some decisions? I know a super woman like you should not have any problems finding something sweet...."

Jennifer always hated these discussions. They really tested her confidence and pushed her to re-evaluate whether or not she had taken the right decisions.

Indeed, the past five months had been extremely grueling. By early January, most second-year year students already had three or four offers and had made decisions about their next employment by late February. However, Jennifer had only received two offers, one from her former employer, Johnson & Johnson, and another from General Mills, the company that she spent the summer with. Exactly four months later, she had declined both of these offers, because they did not correspond with what God had laid on her heart earlier in the year.

Her close friends could not understand what they termed "irrational behaviour." They wondered how Jennifer could give up the only options that she had with nothing else to fall back upon. She tried to block out their reactions, but this tactic was almost impossible to maintain, as doubts and fears often flooded her thoughts.

Everyone heard from God differently, but Jennifer always felt that God engaged her in direct conversation, just as a friend would. They often had meaningful discussions, and sometimes they even engaged in debates. Back in March, during one of her study sessions in the Baker Library, she clearly heard God telling her that she would be working in the financial services sector in September. She could not understand where this instruction was coming from. After all, God knew that she hated finance and was not interested in the financial services sector in the slightest. Prior to business school, she had

worked in the human resources department of some of the largest consumer goods companies in the world. She had thrived in these environments, and had earned enough money to buy a home and accumulate significant savings. Johnson & Johnson, her previous employer, had even given her a loan to cover her business school expenses and promised to forgive this loan, if she accepted their offer to return to the company. This type of gesture was extremely rare among consumer goods companies and clearly indicated the immense value that they placed on having her return to their fold.

During that afternoon back in March, God had simply reminded Jennifer that he was in complete control of her life and that he could see her future, and would expect her to be obedient. She had resisted and argued with God, reminding Him of her offer from Johnson & Johnson and how she thought that this was a direct gift from him as well. In spite of these arguments, her spirit was not at peace. With two offers under her belt, neither of which existed in the financial services sector, she was really perplexed about what God had laid in store for her.

Jennifer recognized that depending on God required faith. She was committed to acting and living according to His will, but often got frustrated. Between March and late April she had glanced at Harvard Business School's job bank, which listed all the new job openings that could potentially be filled by MBA students. Unfortunately, none of the postings leaped out at her as the ideal position, specifically in the financial services sector. She actually dreaded signing on to the job bank and had simply resorted to hoping and praying that God would send an opportunity her way.

Her classmates advised her to take a trip to New York City, the financial capital of the world, to try to set up some informational interviews with companies there. According to them, this was a risk-free approach for establishing relationships with potential employers, who ordinarily would not give Jennifer's resume more than a five-second glance.

Jennifer could only imagine that there were quite a few strikes working against her. First, her last name revealed that she was of Asian descent. Many recruiters were wary of individuals whom they felt were foreign, and sometimes they assumed that these students could not speak English fluently. In addition, on face value her resume was geared heavily towards consumer goods. Given that she did not have any work experience in the financial services sector, she could not imagine how she could possibly package her experiences to make herself attractive to recruiters in the financial services sector.

Waiting on God was definitely not an easy task. Each time Jennifer prayed, she felt God telling her to hold on. Her praying pattern seemed repetitive. Even Sandy, her prayer partner, had a difficult time trying to reassure her that God would come through. Each time they prayed, it sounded more and more like a broken record.

Today, as Jennifer strolled around the Harvard campus, she tried to block out these fears and concerns. "I have handed in my last paper... It's a beautiful spring day in New England...I need to rejoice and praise God. ...," she thought.

4:00 p.m. Monday, May 8th, 2017

"This is Theresa Mitchell with JP Morgan Chase. I would like to speak with Jennifer Wong," the voice at the other end of the telephone said.

Bubbling over with excitement, but trying to contain it all and remain professional, Jennifer responded, "This is Jennifer. How can I help you?"

"We came across your resume and would like to conduct some preliminary interviews with you, if you are still exploring: career options," Theresa said.

"It is wonderful to hear from you...I am definitely open to speaking with your firm," Jennifer responded, still fighting hard to appear calm, but struggling to conceal her excitement.

"Great, can you speak to Sylvia James, a vice president at JP Morgan Chase, tomorrow afternoon at 4:00 p.m.?" asked Theresa.

As they sorted out the logistics of the call, Jennifer muttered under her breath, "Thank you Jesus. . . This might actually be it."

She knew very little about JP Morgan Chase, but recognized that they were an international company with a great reputation. She tried to calm herself and resolved to learn as much as possible about the company, and to prepare for the interview as well as she could. She even planned to call up a few of her friends to conduct some practice sessions before the 4:00 p.m. telephone call. Jennifer also realized that she would need to enlist the spiritual support of some of the members of her prayer group, many of who were already vacationing during the three free weeks between the end of finals and graduation. She knew that Sandy, her prayer partner, was already holding her up in prayers but recognized that she needed as many intercessory voices as possible. Jennifer also committed herself to fasting and praying over the next 24 hours.

Regardless of the long list of activities she had to accomplish, Jennifer experienced a sudden rush of energy and zeal, which felt great, given that these feelings had definitely evaded her over the past few months.

4:00 p.m. Thursday, May 25th, 2017

The day had started at 6:00 a.m., when Jennifer jumped out of bed in time to prepare for her 8:00 a.m. departure for the Miami International Airport. Only a few hours had passed, and she was already on the plane back to Boston's Logan Airport.

Despite her apparent fatigue and the rumblings of her stomach, her spirits were high. She was grateful to have a full airplane row to herself, so that she could stretch her legs and get comfortable for the three-hour flight back to Boston.

After her initial telephone interview with Sylvia James earlier in the month she had become ecstatic about her prospects at JP Morgan Chase. Sylvia's assistant had set up some additional appointments for Jennifer to speak to staff in both the New York and Miami offices of the firm. For the first week it seemed as if there was genuine interest in her from more than one division in the firm. The telephone interviews had been impersonal and arduous, but had given Jennifer considerable hope and gone a long way to boost her confidence in God's perfect timing. The more she learned about JP Morgan Chase, the culture of the firm and its growth prospects, the more excited she became.

A couple of days lapsed and then Jennifer received a call from Ms. James' assistant, inviting her to fly out to Miami for a face-to-face interview. For some reason, this appointment kept on getting rescheduled. Jennifer at this point did not know what to make of these signs but kept trying to believe that if God had told her that she would work in the financial services sector, he would make this promise become a reality. With graduation only a week away, Jennifer's confidence in her ability to secure a job before her parents arrived in Boston on June 3rd waned. On many occasions, she simply lay on her bed in Hamilton Hall and cried out to God, "Lord, please demonstrate your power and grace in my situation. I have given up all my other options in obedience to your Word. I am totally dependent on You. I am waiting on You..."

Finally, in the third week in May, Theresa, Sylvia's assistant, finally called, once again requesting that Jennifer fly down to Miami for face-to-face interview. What made the request more bizarre was that Ms. James would be flying out of Miami on the same day and would only be able to meet Jennifer at the Miami airport for an hour, before she would need to fly to Costa Rica for a client meeting.

They met at a little cafe within the Miami Airport, and what has initially supposed to be an interview turned more into a sales pitch, with Ms. James highlighting the amazing attributes of JP Morgan Chase and why it would be the ideal next move for Jennifer. She emphasized the important role that diversity had come to play in the organization, and noted the company's commitment to ensuring a work-life balance, specifically for women. She also outlined the numerous training programs that Jennifer would engage in during her first few years with the firm.

Jennifer was excited about the prospects of working with JP Morgan Chase. She clearly understood that it had a strong international reputation and would be one of the best options for her, since God had instructed her to stay in the financial services sector. She liked Ms. James and hoped that their meeting would result in a formal offer and a conclusion to her months of anguish.

As Jennifer reflected on her hectic day, confined to the Miami airport, her eye glazed over and she eventually dozed off.

8:00 p.m. Friday, June 23rd, 2017

"Sandy I have a huge praise report!" yelled Jennifer, bubbling over with enthusiasm.

"Less than 30 minutes ago, I got a telephone call from JP Morgan Chase offering me a job in their New York office. Not only do I get a six-figure salary but I also get my business school loans paid off, a very generous signing bonus and all my relocation expenses covered. This offer is way beyond my expectations. Now I know why God made me wait until five days before graduation to throw this in my lap just to prove that it was His own doing."

"In my wildest dreams I would never have imagined that God would move in this way. I am better off financially than I would have ever been accepting the offers from Johnson & Johnson or General Mills. In fact, this probably is the most generous offer that any MBA in the whole of the United States has received. I'm overwhelmed. Of course, I don't know exactly what division I will be working in, but I have been told that they would like me to spend a few months in human resources before I move into the core financial services business."

All Sandy could muster in response to Jennifer's amazing testimony, in between the few pauses that she offered, were the words "Praise God!", "WOW," and "I am so happy for you; this is definitely one of the best pre-graduation testimonies that I have heard in a while."

“Yes, God has honored His promise. When do we celebrate?” Jennifer yelled.

Together, they resolved to meet for dinner later that evening to celebrate God’s goodness.

Questions

- How would you explain Jennifer's relationship with God and her conviction that God was going to provide an opportunity for her in the financial services sector?

- Would you have declined the two offers available to you, without having any other post-graduation options?

- Could she have done anything differently?

- What aspects of Jennifer's experiences are relevant to your life?

- What if anything can you learn from her decisions and experiences?

COMMENTARY

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. Isaiah 1:19, Jennifer chose based on the word she had heard from God to turn down the two offers she had under her belt for the promise of a financial sector job, which she neither asked for nor particularly wanted. This demonstrates a heart that was keen to please God. Abraham was called by God to leave the familiar territory of his homeland and to head for a land God would show him along the journey. Faith is a risk that defies logic, is often irrational but is founded on a word from God.

Could Jennifer have handled things differently? I think so. She was faultless till the JP Morgan Chase offer came along, and then she assumed this was God's plan for her, it could have been a red herring, but she wouldn't 't know because she had stopped praying for direction.

When doors open for us we must be careful that they were opened by God, because going through the wrong door, no matter how miraculous its opening can be just as destructive as not going through any door at all.

PASTOR WALE ADEFARASIN

Senior Pastor,

Guiding Light Assembly,

Lagos Nigeria

Prayer

In Jesus' Name:

Lord, I thank you for my life. I recognize that You know the purposes and plans that You have laid in store for me. Please teach me to wait on You. Keep me focused on walking in Your way and Your will. Help me to stand firm, even when I see others employing different and somewhat "ungodly" tactics for attaining recognition and reward. Teach me to listen to and obey Your Word. I recognize that you make all things beautiful in your own time. I will wait on you in the beauty of Your holiness!

Amen.

Bible Verses

Psalm 27:13-14

13 I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Psalm 33:20

We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

Psalm 37:7

Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Psalm 37:34

Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.

Psalm 38:15

I wait for you, a LORD; you will answer, a Lord my God.

Psalm 40:1

I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.

Source: New International Version

CHAPTER TWO

IN SEARCH OF SPIRITUAL FOOD

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV Hebrews 10:24-25)

10:00 a.m. Monday, December 25th, 2016

Jeff lay on his couch daydreaming, with a glass of orange juice in one hand and a blueberry muffin in the other. A large artificial, sparsely decorated Christmas tree stood in the centre of his living room, and two partially damaged presents lay under the tree.

This was the first time that Jeff had been alone on Christmas day. With his parents away in Malaysia, his brother in Europe and no invitation for Christmas dinner, he was stuck at home. Under normal circumstances, he would have planned a road trip to visit distant relatives and close friends, but his boss had refused to give him any vacation days. He had worked until 6:00 p.m. on the 24th and would be expected to work on the 26th.

Given his hectic work schedule, Jeff was outside the apartment for the majority of his waking hours. As a result, he had chosen to spend only a small portion of his modest salary on furniture and electronics. However, today, unlike other days, Jeff noticed the absence of a television in his apartment. He longed to hear someone else's voice, and recognized that Christmas day sports or a movie would be a welcome distraction from his loneliness and emerging depression. "Life never seems to work out as one plans it," he thought to himself as his eyes glazed over. He reflected on his transition to Atlanta and his current position as a programmer with Lockheed Martin.

From when he was five years old, Jeff had dreamed of becoming a fighter pilot. He had hoped that joining the Air Force would bring him a little closer to this dream, but twenty-two years later, his reality was totally different. After a short stint in the Air Force, serving as a flight test engineer, and a masters program at MIT, he had decided to join corporate America by taking the only offer that was available to him.

Jeff had been initially hired to serve as a flight-test engineer with Lockheed Martin. However, this position was eliminated on his first day on the job, and he was quickly transferred to the programming department. Not only was Jeff's current job as a programmer extremely boring, but more importantly,

after almost four months of the job, he still felt like an outsider. His boss, Kevin Paterson, behaved as if the programming department served as the lifeblood of the company. Kevin made his team members work long hours with few breaks. Jeff could not fully comprehend why programming elicited such a sense of urgency.

The most difficult part of working at Lockheed Martin was that Jeff felt spiritually isolated. Unlike the amazing Christian community in the Air Force, through which Jeff had been able to obtain significant spiritual support and mentorship, there were no visible Christians at LockheedMartin.

From his first day, during a formal tour of the office, Jeff had strained his eyes looking for a glimmer of spirituality. He looked out for little Bibles on desks, post cards with scriptures, crosses as pendants, but saw no visible signs. Jeff continued the search for spiritual life in the Lockheed Martin lunchroom, as he stole glances for guys who prayed before meals, and was disappointed with the obvious stares that he received when he prayed. Jeff thought to himself, "I know there must be some Christians here. I guess they are all locked in their personal closets."

Jeff believed that God had brought him to Atlanta for a purpose, but he had not yet received any profound revelations.

--

A telephone call from his parents to share the Christmas cheer jolted Jeff out of his daydream. As is expected from most parents, they inquired about his new job and his life in Atlanta. They asked whether Jeff had been able to find a Bible-believing Church and wondered if he had made any good friends at work. Of course they were also interested in finding out if he had a "special lady friend". Jeff told them about the wonderful new Baptist Church that he had discovered and the strong singles ministry, which had become a pivotal part of his daily existence. However, he was embarrassed to tell them that he hated his new job and had made few friends at work.

Jeff's mom always made people feel a little better about themselves and their future. Jeff got off the telephone with his parents feeling challenged and inspired. He resolved that in the New Year he would make a greater effort to find Christians at Lockheed Martin and to cultivate a stronger Christian family outside the work environment. He would need to develop a new routine of working less and praying more, if he expected to survive and thrive at his first full-time job in corporate America.

12:00 noon Tuesday, January 10th, 2015

Jeff lifted his eyes in response to a light tap on the thin walls surrounding his cubicle. He was surprised to see Aaron, a new employee in the programming department, standing over his desk. Aaron had just relocated to Atlanta from Australia. "Hello, would you be interested, in joining me for lunch?" he asked Jeff in a thick Australian accent. "Sure," Jeff immediately responded. He welcomed the opportunity to escape from programming, even for only 45 minutes.

As Jeff and Aaron walked to the cafeteria, their conversation danced around superficial topics such as the differences between the weather in Australia and the United States and the quality of the food in the Lockheed Martin cafeteria. However, immediately after they sat down to eat, the conversation began to flow smoothly.

-

From the onset, they exchanged information about themselves, their backgrounds and what had led each of them to Lockheed Martin. Then, they spoke about the company, their department and the nature of their work. Two things struck Jeff during their interaction. First, Jeff noticed that Aaron prayed before his meal, and secondly, he noticed that despite Aaron's outgoing demeanor, he seemed to have a quiet and gentle spirit. Jeff wondered whether Aaron was a Christian.

Despite his fear of rejection and ridicule, Jeff decided to ask, "Aaron, what are you doing on Sunday morning? I have found a really great Church and would like to invite you to attend service with me, if you don't already have plans".

Aaron responded, "I must confess that I have not been to Church since I moved to Atlanta. I was quite active in my Church back in Australia...Yes, I would be happy to come along. By the way, what type of Church is it?"

These words were music to Jeff's ears. For the first time since he joined Lockheed Martin, he felt he had found a kindred spirit. He was delighted to share everything about the First Baptist Church of Atlanta with Aaron.

At about 1:00 p.m., Jeff and Aaron noticed that they were among only a few people left in the cafeteria. They immediately hurried back to their desks, before Kevin their manager noticed their absence.

8:00 p.m. Monday, February 6th, 2017

"Lord, I need your joy and peace," Jeff whispered as he drove out of the Lockheed Martin parking lot.

On Sundays, after a spirited teaching and wonderful fellowship at Church, he always felt energized, as if he could overcome any of the obstacles that the devil might throw in his path... but by Monday evening, he had already begun to feel relatively deflated. "Why do I always let Kevin and his temper tantrums get to me? Why do I feel the same inordinate amount of self-doubt and unhappiness that I had felt during my first few months on the job?" he wondered.

Jeff recognized that his frustrations were tied to his total distaste for programming. It was always difficult to get motivated by tasks that did not challenge or interest him. In addition, he really did not have a good working relationship with Kevin. In fact, no one in the department seemed to get along with him. Kevin always gave instructions in a very condescending manner, exhibited high stress levels, and seemed to lose his temper relatively easily.

Jeff had a difficult time trying to conceal his distaste for the work and his disapproval of Kevin's work style and habits. He really hated getting out of bed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Friday was the only day that he skipped into the office, anticipating the respite that the weekend would provide.

Jeff recognized that he had to do something to change his current situation. His friends from Church advised him to pray for God's intervention, but apart from prayer, and spending more time with Aaron and some friends outside work, he could not really come up with any alternative solutions.

7:30 a.m. Thursday, February 23rd, 2017

It was a chilly Thursday morning. However, the weather did not deter Jeff and Aaron from their power prayer walk around Lock heed Martin's premises. Over the past month, they had become very good friends. They consulted with each other over work-related, issues and attended Church together. Socially, they had slightly different interests, with Aaron wanting to spend most of his limited free time watching rugby and cricket games on cable television, and Jeff more interested in reading novels and watching American football. However, they had a tremendous respect for each other's intellects and commitment to serving God.

Early in the month of February, on one of their lunch breaks, in a relatively direct manner, Jeff had suggested that he and Aaron meet to pray for themselves and their department.

They agreed to meet at 7 a.m. on Thursdays and to pray during breakfast at the company's cafeteria or to take walks around their office premises. Beforehand, they discussed the format for the prayer sessions and agreed to make them relatively informal and to let the Holy Spirit lead their time of fellowship. They also agreed to be as inconspicuous as possible during the sessions. They even role played responses to questions from inquiring colleagues who might wonder why they were walking around the premises or closed their eyes during breakfast sessions. "Hey, let's, just be honest and tell them that we are praying for ourselves, the department and the company. Isn't this the perfect opportunity to witness?" Jeff suggested.

As time progressed, these prayer sessions became a part of their weekly routines, one that they both enjoyed and came to depend on.

On this particular February morning, Jeff and Aaron shared some of the blessings that they had received from God since their last prayer session. They also discussed their department and some of the issues that they were facing. Then, they discussed some of the tasks that they had been charged with for the remainder of the week and some of their fears and concerns. Finally, they started praying, first in thanksgiving to God for his blessings, and then one by one, they raised their requests. Top on their list of prayer points was the company's overall success, their department and Kevin's demeanor, Jeff's desire to get transferred to the flight-testing department, and favour and excellence in their individual duties. They also prayed for the salvation of their colleagues and for the boldness to share their faith.

The 30 to 45 minute time period devoted to these prayer meetings always seemed to fly by! Today was no different. As the wind blew against their backs, Aaron and Jeff headed for their cubicles, spiritually renewed and ready to take on the day's challenges.

7:00 p.m. Saturday, March 11th, 2017

Plugging away at his computer, Jeff did not notice the darkness around him. He had come into the office at 10:30 a.m. with the intention of leaving at 4:00 p.m., but was still far from completing the immense tasks that Kevin had assigned to him on Thursday afternoon. Two other colleagues, including Kevin, had come into the office on Saturday as well, but they had left a couple of hours earlier.

It seemed like the entire department was working harder. Evening and weekend work had become more of the norm, and on two occasions, Kevin had instructed all the staff to report to work on Sunday morning.

While Jeff was willing to work long hours during the week, and on Saturdays if necessary, he was not prepared to sacrifice his Sundays. He had become attached to First Baptist Church of Atlanta and was planning to enroll in the new members' class. More importantly, he recognized that he needed spiritual support and regular fellowship with other Christians in order to survive and excel at Lockheed Martin.

During one of their lunch meetings, Jeff told Aaron that he had decided to write a letter to the head of their division, Tom Phillips, Kevin's immediate boss, requesting work-free Sundays. He argued, "As salaried employees, if we receive equitable workloads from Kevin, and work diligently during the week, and on rare occasions on Saturdays, why would we need to sacrifice our Sundays?"

In response, Aaron pushed Jeff to consider sending the letter directly to Kevin instead of Tom. However, Jeff felt strongly that it would prove wiser to send the letter to Tom rather than Kevin, because he was one step removed from managing them on a daily basis and would be more objective in his assessment of the request. Committed to devoting some time and energy to praying and fasting, Aaron decided to co-write the letter with Jeff. Fortunately, they were never called into Tom's office to explain the rationale behind the letter, and Kevin never asked them to work on Sundays again.

Given his heavy workload on this particular Saturday evening, Jeff was forced to cancel dinner plans with friends from the singles ministry and was committed to working as long as it would take to complete his tasks before the Monday deadline.

Despite the long hours, his complete distaste for computer programming, and Kevin's temper, Jeff's attitude towards work at Lockheed Martin and his overall demeanor had improved significantly. With regular spiritual support and guidance from his friends at First Baptist and his regular prayer sessions with Aaron, he felt that his relationship with God was growing stronger. On two occasions, Kevin had flared up at Jeff for what seemed no apparent reason. In fact, a few days earlier, Kevin had called him into his office to say, "Jeff, I noticed that you had such little overtime on your time sheet last month. We are going to have to change that."

Tongue-tied, Jeff just nodded. "Where in the world is overtime encouraged and even demanded?" he thought to himself. However, through these experiences, Jeff felt an inordinate amount of peace and joy. He believed that his reactions to this unpleasant work environment were a direct result of his increased dependence on God and his consistent prayer life.

Jeff still hoped for a transfer to the flight-testing department, but was determined to keep a positive attitude about his programming responsibilities until God decided to grant this request.

At 9 p.m., completely exhausted, Jeff finally switched off his computer and walked out of the Lockheed Martin building and into the parking lot.

3.00 p.m. Tuesday, May 23rd, 2017

“Hey Aaron, I’d like to introduce you to Pete. He joined Lockheed’s flight-testing department last week and guess what? He is a believer.”

“Welcome to Lockheed,” Aaron said, reaching out his hand to Pete. “You should join us for lunch tomorrow... Maybe we can even do some Bible study during this time, if you are both open to it,” he added. They all agreed that this would be a 'good idea and made plans to meet the following day.

Jeff and Aaron had contemplated starting a Bible study group for many months. This tradition had been an important part of Jeff’s experiences in the Air Force and instrumental to his ability to survive the long and grueling months abroad. However, both Jeff and Aaron felt the need to wait until they had been able to identify a few more people who would be interested in getting involved in this activity.

Witnessing in the workplace had become a hot topic at First Baptist. Jeff and Aaron listened to countless teachings on this topic, but often struggled with issues of the "right time and the right place" to share their faith with others. Given his outgoing nature, Jeff felt a little more comfortable with the notion of telling colleagues with whom he had purely professional relationships about his Christian walk and even inviting them to attend Church with him. However, Aaron was a little more reserved and preferred to share his faith with colleagues with whom he had been able to establish strong friendships at work. After some debate, they decided to observe their colleagues closely and to reach out gradually to individuals whom they felt displayed some spiritual leanings.

At this moment, Jeff and Aaron were still in their observation phase. However, with Pete's arrival in the company, it definitely appeared as if the tide was turning.

Barely five minutes after Jeff introduced Pete to Aaron, was he sitting in his cubicle when a call from Aaron came through. Aaron could not contain his excitement.

“Jeff, how did you and Pete find each other?”

"I really can't take any credit for this one," Jeff responded. He then proceeded to recount how barely a week before, Pete was taking a self-guided tour of Lockheed's facilities and spotted a book called *The Messenger* on Jeff's desk. Apparently, Pete had read the book and struck up a Conversation with Jeff about it. It became clear that Pete was a Christian from the level of comfort that he exhibited during their discussion about the book. In no time, Pete was bombarding Jeff with questions about Lockheed's culture and the struggles associated with transitioning into one's first real job in a new city. Given his own experiences, Jeff was thrilled to share some survival tactics and offered to provide Pete with ongoing support, should he need it in future.

By the end of their telephone conversation, Jeff and Aaron had discussed the format for their first informal Bible study session scheduled for the following day. Jeff agreed to secure a conference room in an obscure location and to prepare the first study session. Aaron offered to pick up a large pizza from the company cafeteria. They agreed that it would be best to keep the session short, to allow enough time for dialogue and prayer. They both hoped and prayed that Pete's involvement would lead to a ripple effect within their department.

Realizing that they had both totally lost track of time and had pressing deadlines, Jeff and Aaron hurriedly ended their discussion, eager to convene the next day.

12:00 Noon Wednesday, August 9th, 2017

Today, for the first time since Jeff, Pete, and Aaron had started meeting in the obscure conference room in building B, there were seven men and two women around the conference table. Three of the men worked in Jeff's new unit, the flight-testing department, while the women worked in the finance and accounting department.

This turnout was no small feat. It was really a reflection of Jeff's, Aaron's and Pete's spiritual growth over the past few months. Each passing day, they felt more empowered to share their faith freely. They openly discussed their Bible study and prayer sessions and the impact of these activities on their productivity and success at work. They also started an email chain and posted daily Bible verses to their growing list of friends and acquaintances at work.

It was Jeff's turn to lead the Bible study session. Finding it hard to conceal his excitement, he asked Sara, head of payroll in the Finance and Accounting Department, to open the session with a word of prayer.

Sara prayed:

“Dear Lord, Thank you for today, a beautiful day that you have made! Thank you for this gathering. Thank you for Jeff and Aaron and their faith in you. Despite their youth, Lord, you have used them to draw all of us here to study your Word. Bless this gathering and our time together. We give you glory and honour. Amen”

Questions

- I How would you explain Jeff's progress at Lockheed Martin?

- What factors led Jeff to send a letter to Tom Phillips? Was this justified?

- Is it appropriate to expect spiritual support and growth in the workplace?

- Do you feel comfortable praying at work? Why or why not? How do you think your co-workers would react if they find you praying alone or with another colleague?

- What are the prerequisites for starting a prayer or Bible study group in your current organization?
What can you learn from Jeff and Aaron's experiences?

COMMENTARY

Jeff's story is a testimony to perseverance. It was hard for him at first when he thought he was all alone at Lockheed, but God will never allow us to be tested beyond our endurance. A meeting that might have seemed to Jeff and Aaron as a pleasant coincidence was really orchestrated by God at a time when Jeff's faith was on the verge of lagging.

Clearly Jeff and Aaron were committed to spreading the gospel and it is refreshing to see how God taking their commitment was gradually building a network of believers at Lockheed I am sure that as this group continues with Bible study, prayer, and witnessing they would not only grow in numbers but would each enjoy progress in their work and mature in their faith.

We as Christians are world changers, but a world changer starts with himself, you cannot master the world if you have not mastered yourself. We want to make a huge impact, but those who have made a great impact for God in our world started by making an impact in the small intangible things. Do the small things well and the Lord will commit the bigger things into your hands.

PASTOR WALE ADEFARASIN

Senior Pastor,

Guiding Light Assembly,

Lagos Nigeria

Prayer

In Jesus' Name:

Dear Lord, I thank you for this opportunity to reflect on the issues of spirituality in the workplace. I ask for your divine wisdom to understand Your will for me concerning my source of spiritual food-whether it be at work or outside the office. I ask you to surround me with men and women who will serve as positive role models as I seek to grow in my walk with you. Finally, I ask for boldness and an obedient spirit to fulfill your purposes and plans for me, specifically in this area.

Amen

BIBLE VERSES

Hebrews 10: 24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray continually.

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Source: New International Version

CHAPTER THREE

SEE NO EVIL

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4Perseverance must finish its work so' that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8he is a double- minded man, unstable in all he does. 12Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. 1 James 1: 2-15)

5:00 p.m. Sunday, September 24th, 2017

John was only 30 minutes away from the Enugu tollgate. He had been driving for three hours, at 100 K.M. per hour, in an effort to get to his destination before dark. The Port Harcourt-Enugu Expressway was notorious for armed robbery. On this particular day, he had not encountered any plain-clothes armed robbers, but seemed to run into "officials who just happened to be armed." These men, called mobile police or federal highway patrol officers, depending on whom you asked, stopped John every 15 to 20 minutes along the way. At each of these stops, they casually asked him, "Oga, Happy Sunday! Wetin you go give us make we chop for this Sunday?"

At some spots, a smile and casual conversation was enough to let him off the hook. Unfortunately, at other spots, this was not sufficient. What might have started off as friendly conversation eventually emerged into a command, with the officer demanding significant sums of money and threatening an arrest or seizure of the car unless he complied. John observed that most experienced drivers on the highway already had smaller notes in their palms as they drove up to the checkpoints 'and just threw them on the road to facilitate their easy passage through. The sad reality, according to John, was that many of these individuals might actually be ones who needed to be stopped and searched, but often got away with tossing a few bills out of their windows.

John was excited about his upcoming week of business meetings in Enugu. As a young Christian entrepreneur, he often felt that the odds were stacked against him in the competitive Nigerian architectural landscape. Most of his competitors already had grey hair and a significant number of

connections, both in the political and business sectors. He found that in most cases, when projects were formally announced and bids were requested, the decision had already been made by the advertisers. Less qualified individuals who were connected by family or business ties to the project managers, would often get the bids. Sometimes they would have already agreed on some profit sharing arrangement to ensure that all parties involved got a payoff, above and beyond the formally stipulated amounts. Therefore, most of the time, John did not stand a chance in obtaining design or building management contracts, because the market did not operate on a level playing field. On one occasion, he had tried to compete on these terms, by aggressively seeking out potential clients and “playing by their rules.” He decided to devote a significant amount of time to hanging out in nightclubs and bars, where he felt he could meet high-net-worth individuals, who might be willing to launch new building projects. He even made a few trips to Lagos and Abuja, trying to find a few more established players who he could partner with in his efforts to win sizeable contracts. He enlisted the support of more experienced players to lobby on his behalf in order to ensure that he secured some potential deals.

In one instance, he actually obtained a contract valued at N400 million to build a four-storey banking complex for Universal, one of Nigeria’s largest banks, in Sokoto, Northern Nigeria. Once this happened, he was thrilled and hoped that this initial deal would lead to additional breaks'. In the first month he finished the designs for the complex, and they were approved by the senior management of the bank. For these services alone, he expected to receive N8M. However, he recognized that a sizeable chunk of these funds would need to be released to the project managers and the other stakeholders within the bank who had been instrumental in helping him secure the deal. As a 29-year-old entrepreneur, even N4M was a sizeable pay-off, and he quickly started outlining potential uses of this money. He could purchase a brand new car, and dispose of the used car that his parents have given him as a graduation gift. Alternatively, he could actually take the plunge and spend this money on his wedding, something that he had been postponing until he felt that he, had enough funds to support a family. Unfortunately, these plans proved difficult to execute. In the weeks that followed the submission of his initial architectural designs, his Northern partners informed him about slight changes in plans. According to them, Universal was rethinking its initial decision to devote N400M towards the new initiative. They were also worried about cost overruns and seemed to have gotten into significant disagreements with the project managers. Regardless of the reasons cited, what previously appeared to be a legally binding agreement between all the parties involved quickly evaporated. The project was halted, and no one would receive any payments for the time, energy and effort that they had already invested into the entire ordeal.

This initial encounter with the “fast and furious” business landscape in Nigeria really scared John and made him very apprehensive about any future attempts to “play the game.”

Towards the tail end of this ordeal, John found a new home Church in Port Harcourt, the city in southern Nigeria in which he had decided to settle. Under the council and direction of his pastor and friend, Samuel Peters of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, John received significant instruction on the

need for Christians to differentiate themselves from the rest of the world through their way of life and the choices they made

In a society with one of the largest 'Christian' populations in the world, and a massive wave of Pentecostalism sweeping through the nation, most people professed to be "born again." However, the biggest paradox was that corruption was rampant. In fact, annual ratings released by Transparency International, ranked Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Massive poverty in the nation, and the poor state of the legislative and judicial systems, often resulted in levies and bribes that were accepted ways of doing business in the nation.

The Universal bank experience and the recent teachings that he had received in his home Church forced him to seriously re-evaluate his approach to securing architectural projects. He resolved to seek God more diligently before he bid for and accepted projects. In fact, during one of the all-night prayer vigils that his Church held on a monthly basis, he promised God that he would use only transparent methods for securing does. He recognized that this approach would require tremendous inner strength, patience and financial sacrifices. If he really planner to stand for God, in an environment which accepted ungodly practices as the norm, he would need to grow in his faith and reliance on God.

In less than two months, God honored John's pledge. He learned about two projects around Enugu, one with the Specialist Hospital, Nkanu and another with the Igbariam Polytechnic. Without any previous relationships with the administrators of these institutions, he decided to submit his company's profile and preliminary budgets for the projects. Immediately, he was invited for interviews with the Specialist. Hospital and was selected as a contractor. Unlike the Universal Bank project, this one proved extremely straightforward and transparent. John was not forced to make any "under the table" payments. In addition, he received his fees on time, with minimal delays on every front.

This time around, John was on his way to Enugu on invitation from the rector of Igbariam Polytechnic, Professor Emmanuel Edo. He had learned that he would be hiding against five other architectural firms. John was excited about this meeting and convinced that if it were God's will, he would win the bid.

As he continued his drive to Enugu, he noticed the beautiful sunset against the green hills surrounding the city. He felt at peace and closer to God than ever before.

3:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 3rd, 2017

“John Madu please come into the office to make your presentation,” the receptionist finally said. Upon hearing his name, he jumped up from his chair.

John had been waiting on that seat since 9 a.m., which his letter of invitation had stated would be the time of his appointment, and he had only taken a quick break to buy a bottle of coca cola and use the rest room. He was a little frustrated than the Rector, Professor Edo, had kept him waiting for six hours. John had noticed streams of visitors piling into the office ahead of him, without even having to wait their turn.

“I am the underdog in this situation and I have to take what I can get,” John thought to himself. He wished he had worn more comfortable clothes, as opposed to the black corporate suit that he had chosen for the occasion. With no electricity in the building, John was sweating profusely and unfortunately had exhausted his supply of tissues.

As he walked into Rector’s office, he could not help but notice the two other school officials sitting around the table. He greeted each of them in turn, introducing himself and thanking them respectfully for inviting him for an appointment.

After about five minutes of small talk, the Rector, Professor Edo, launched into a monologue that no one dared interrupt. He described the rationale behind the project as part of the Federal Government's mandate to provide accommodation for university students. According to him, most campuses operated as commuter schools, because of the serious housing crises that the majority of them faced. He noted that this problem hampered the college experience of the students and restricted their personal and professional development. Most students were forced to share, one room with three or four other classmates in terrible conditions. Professor Edo stated that the current initiative was a Federal Government mandate, complete with a predetermined budget and preset architectural designs. He also stated that he had decided to select John and his company, Exquisite Designs, to supervise the erection of two dormitories for students. He explained that this decision was based on the fact that he and Mr. Ibe, the school's director of physical planning, had divergent opinions on the two other finalists.

According to him, Mr. Ibe had wanted to use a different company that was run by his nephew, while he personally had selected a company run by an old classmate of his. Given their inability to reach a compromise, they decided to use an independent third-party with whom neither of them had an existing relationship. Professor Edo then proceeded to share the government-approved designs with John and a proposed implementation timeline that the team had generated. He told John that as the supervisor, he would be solely responsible for managing all the moving pieces of the project, including overseeing the work of the quantity surveyor, the construction manager, the electricians, and everyone else involved in the project. He told John that they would be working with a N100 million budget, and that he would expect him to manage these funds carefully, to ensure that they were sufficient to cover

the costs of the project. According to him, other schools had been able to successfully complete similar buildings in decent time frames with the same amounts of money.

At this juncture, Professor Edo asked John if he had any question or concerns. A little unprepared for this type of initial meeting, John was rather tongue-tied. He simply stated that the time frames and budget sounded reasonable, but that he would need to spend a little time at the site and in the market, reality testing the estimates. He asked the Professor for his contact details and shared his business card with him and the other staff in the office. He thanked them for their time and promised to bring a more refined budget and detailed timeline towards the end of the week.

As he exited the rector's office, John reflected on the nature of the meeting. He had expected a complete interview, during which he would have been grilled about his background, capabilities and previous projects. Granted, he had already shared much of this information in his initial introductory package, which he had submitted earlier in the year, as a prerequisite for the interview. John praised God for the project and the miracle that landed the deal in his favor. However, he remained a little perplexed about the Rector's ease in sharing the explanation regarding the selection process.

4:00 p.m. Saturday, October 7th, 2017

John was awakened by the sounds of his roommate Stephen calling out his name, in an attempt to wake him up from a short nap in time to prepare for and get to the 5:00 p.m. workers' meeting at their local Church. John was exhausted after a busy week in Enugu and his three-hour drive back to Port Harcourt. Being the head of the Youth Vineyard the fellowship class for teenagers in the Church he was required to attend the Church's weekly workers' meeting. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, one of the largest Churches in Nigeria, with parishes all over the country and a growing number of parishes around the world, made spiritual growth amongst its workers a priority. To become a worker in the Church, individuals were required to be baptized by immersion in water and to complete a three-month training program, during which time they were also required to complete a series of tests and assignments.

John had become extremely involved in the Church less than nine months earlier. He never missed Wednesday night Bible studies and prayer meetings, Friday night vigils, and the Saturday workers' meetings, unless he was out of town. In the past two years, his faith and relationship with God had really grown.

On this particular Saturday, he felt emotionally and physically drained. He had missed the weekly Church activities because of his trip to Enugu and definitely felt the need for spiritual rejuvenation and an immersion in the Word of God.

As he splashed water across his face in an effort to get himself energized, John reflected on his decision to take on the Igbariam project and the progress he had made over the past week. On Friday, after conducting extensive field research to determine the most current market prices of building materials and consulting with the different stakeholders, he had submitted a revised budget and timeline for Professor Edo. Unfortunately, the Professor was not “on seat” when he called; However, he left the documents with his assistant, Mrs. Amadi. Their interaction was generally pleasant, but as he walked out of the building, she called out, “John, we are we going to share this miracle from God!” This comment really worried John, but he chose to ignore the comment and just smiled. In retrospect, he wondered whether he should have tried to address the situation more directly by clearly stating that he did not operate under the terms that she was alluding to, because of his Christian beliefs.

John realized that he had to commit every aspect of his business, including his decisions and interactions with different stakeholders, to God. He also understood that beyond his tithe, he did not need to compensate others who had not worked on the project. This would be a bribe, something that his spirit did not feel comfortable getting involved in.

John decided to use the next twenty-four hours as a serious time of fasting and praying. He decided to commit the project and all its components completely into God's hands. The workers' meeting and Sunday activities at the Church would present him with a needed opportunity to focus on his relationship with God and to benefit from spiritual counsel.

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 10th, 2017

It was a really warm evening in Igbariam. John and six other men sat around a table at Celebrate Cafe, one of the few hang-out spots within a 10-mile radius of the polytechnic. It had been a long grueling day on the project site. John had assembled the project team, including the quantity surveyor, the construction manager, and the electrician, based on strong recommendations from Professor Edo and Mr. Ibe. To-date, their professional interactions had been minimal, but they all seemed like decent individuals.

Towards the end of the day, Mr. Ibe had suggested that they all troupe to Celebrate Cafe for a few beers. According to him, this was the one spot in the neighborhood where they could enjoy some peace and quiet, without having to deal with a constant stream of boisterous students.

John was clearly a little uncomfortable about hanging out in bars and ‘cafes’. Earlier in the year, after the Universal Bank project fell through, he had made a covenant with God regarding his business. One of

the things that he had decided to give up was alcohol. He had also told God that he would not waste his time in spiritually unedifying environments. However, given his role as supervisor on the project, he felt it was unwise to let the team meet alone without him. As the youngest member of the group, being only 29 years old, he did not feel comfortable openly challenging Mr. Ibe's suggestion for the evening activity. Given the tremendous weight placed on respect based on age in Nigeria, John did not want to step on any toes this early in his relationship with the team. No one talked directly about their ages, but John could guess from the evidence of grey hair and their discussions about their children in universities across the globe, that most of the team members were in their fifties and had children his age. Only one member of the team, Mr. Santos, a Cuban quantity surveyor, who had for the most part lived and worked in Nigeria since he was 20 years old, was in his early 40s.

Mr. Aja, the construction manager, was already on his third bottle of Star beer, when he noticed that John was drinking a warm bottle of Coca Cola. "Hey John, what are you trying to do, make us guilty for drinking on duty?" he said with a smile.

Caught a bit off guard, John responded, "I am working on becoming a better Christian, and have decided to give up alcohol."

Immediately everyone around the table stopped their conversation and seemed to interject responses all at the same time. "Alcohol has never killed anyone. Aren't we all Christians? Unless this is for health reasons, you cannot expect us to accept this stupid excuse that you are giving to your elders."

Despite serious cajoling, John would not budge on his decision. He wondered if this would be perceived as disrespectful or whether it would position him as someone who could not be toyed with.

As the evening progressed, the discussions spanned a broad spectrum of issues, from the economic and political challenges facing Nigeria, to the dearth of effective leadership in the region, to the escalating costs of building materials.

Eventually, at the end of the evening, Mr. Ibe passed on a hefty bill of N50,000 to John. A bit surprised by this gesture, John had no choice but to pay the bill. He hated having to pay for others to consume alcohol and prayed under his breath that God would forgive his initial ignorance. He was lucky that he even had that much money in his pocket. Clearly, he had not included any line items for entertainment in his revised project budget for Professor Edo, but guessed that this came with the terrain and would have to be deducted from his own profits.

As they strolled out of Celebrate Cafe, Mr. Ibe patted John on the back, and said, "Let's do this again, but next time, it will be Zodiac Hotel, and we will only accept Moet Champagne, Remi Martin and Johnny Walker.

4:00 p.m. Thursday, November 9th, 2017

"Good afternoon sir," John politely greeted Professor Edo, 'as he disembarked from his official university vehicle at the project site.

"I have come to check on the progress that you and the team have been making on the dormitories. We would really like to have most of this work done before we close down for the Christmas break in December," Professor Edo responded.

John then proceeded to give Professor a guided tour of the project site, pointing out new developments on the premises since the Rector's last visit in late October. It was difficult to engage in significant conversation through all the drilling and banging noises being generated by the workmen. John could not even hear himself over Mr. Aja's commanding shouts to his employees.

As they neared the end of the tour, Professor Edo's voice turned into a whisper, and John was forced to edge in a little closer to hear what he was saying. The Rector proceeded to tell John that he had spent quite a bit of time thinking about the revised budget that John had shared with him in early October. He felt that John had been a little too conservative on some cost items and had over-estimated others. He wondered if John had built in any contingencies for miscellaneous expenses.

Professor Edo went on to state that he knew that Mr. Ibe had already been in talks with his close friend Mr. Aja, regarding "settling him" in due time and that he did not expect to be left high and dry.

As the conversation progressed, it dawned on John that Professor Edo intended to ensure that a sizeable chunk of the budget would be allocated to his personal account. In fact, the entire song and dance about contingencies and over-billing was an indirect avenue for Professor Edo to assert himself and his claims to a portion of the fees.

John did not know exactly how to respond to Professor Edo or whether he should respond at all. He chose to simply ignore the comments and proceeded to thank the Rector for visiting the site and assure him that the work would be completed in a timely and cost-effective manner.

John's spirit was perturbed by Professor Edo's remarks. He clearly realized that these types of practices were the norm in most business deals within and outside Nigeria. However, he hoped that given his covenant with God, he would not be forced into any positions in which he would have to compromise himself. At the end of the day, he was committed to building state-of-the-art dormitories which would serve the needs of the students; buildings that Creative Designs would be proud to be associated with.

8:00 p.m. Friday, November 10th, 2017

"Hello I.J., how are you doing?" John said over the telephone to his fiancée. "I am stuck in Enugu for the weekend, and will not be able to get back to Port Harcourt because of this Igbariam project that I am working on. I know I promised that we would have lunch on Saturday and work out some of the wedding plans during this period, but things have become a little hectic down here. I hope you will forgive me."

In response, I.J. assured him that she completely understood. John was typically a very reliable man and rarely cancelled previously scheduled meetings. She knew that his decision to stay in Enugu for the weekend was an indication that the situation on the Igbariam project had become a little more difficult than John had originally anticipated.

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They talked for twenty minutes about plans for their upcoming wedding, and successes and challenges that they had faced during the week. John spent more time describing the situation on the Igbariam project. He told I.J. about the short conversation that Professor Edo had had with him regarding the expected "pay-out." He also told her about an incident with Mr. Aja, the construction manager that had occurred earlier in the day.

"I.J., you know that I am the supervisor on this project, so I am supposed to have the final say on most developments. Well, today I woke up excited about the prospects of coming home to Port Harcourt. I stopped at the site around 11 a.m. just to check on the building progress and Mr. Aja's plans for work over the weekend. Right before my eyes, a truck pulled up with dozens of sanitary wares and fittings, all labeled "Made in Taiwan." I was a little perplexed about this, because my initial budget had stated that we would purchase only Edger products that had been made in England, which were considered of significantly higher quality than the Taiwanese products, and as a result, were expected to last longer. When I asked Mr. Aja about the use of these substandard products, he simply stated that they were much cheaper and that he was working under some budget constraints, which Mr. Ibe was aware of and had signed off on. I had a hard time maintaining my composure when I heard this. I think that this is exactly what Professor Edo alluded to the day before, when he mentioned that Mr. Aja was already working with Mr. Ibe to ensure that he got a sizeable chunk of the proceedings.

I told Mr. Aja that we had enough funds to buy the best quality materials for the construction and that I would like to personally sign-off on any purchases over N50,000 going forward. Of course, he was furious at his request and told me that he was insulted that I would challenge his decisions. After-all, he said, he had been managing building projects before I was born. He then proceeded to tell me that if I thought that I could survive in the business world with this holier-than-thou attitude, I was in for a big surprise. He proudly informed me that he was a deacon in his Church and was born again, just like I was....and God had not struck him down. "Nna", he said to me, "Open your eyes...This is the way we do business in Nigeria."

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I.J., "I really think they hired me to supervise this project because they thought that I was young and immature and would be someone who could be pushed around and side-lined, while corrupt practices ran rampant. I cannot stand aside and let them line their pockets with most of the funds intended for the project, but I need divine wisdom in order to handle these circumstances gracefully, with minimal stress."

In response I.J. promised to intercede on John's behalf. She told him that God would give him wisdom and direction on how to handle these delicate issues. She especially recognized the negative consequences that could arise from a mishandling of the situation. Granted, John had already received 15% of his fees upfront, but payment of the rest of the fees could be jeopardized. More importantly, he would compromise his covenant with God. I.J. also promised to raise this challenging situation as a prayer point at the weekly women's prayer group that she belonged to. She was unsure of what type of reception the members of the groups would give to this particular prayer request. She suspected that a few of her prayer partners, though "born-again" Christians might, view the situation as a normal part of everyday business life in Nigeria.

As they ended their conversation, they prayed together recommitting their lives and their relationship to God.

9:00 a.m. Wednesday, January 10th, 2017

The last two weeks had been blissful for John. Following his wedding ceremony on January 1, he and I.J. had indulged in a romantic honeymoon in a lovely tourist resort in Benin Republic, a small West African nation bordering Nigeria. They had enjoyed strolling on the long stretches of virgin beaches lined with beautiful palm trees. They also loved the slow pace of life and got a chance to practice the little French they could remember from school.

During his time off, John had enlisted the support of his father, a seasoned contractor with over thirty years of experience, to help him keep the project afloat. Business in Nigeria typically slowed down between December 15th and January 15th. As a result, little progress was made during this time period, because most of the workers went home to their villages to celebrate the Christmas and New Year festivities.

As John drove into the Igbariam Polytechnic, he was unsure of what type of reception to expect from Professor Edo, Mr. Ibe, and Mr. Aja. He knew that they were satisfied with the quality of his work and respected his integrity, but realized that they were frustrated with his reluctance to "play their game."

It was a new year. He had a family to support and needed to get paid for the work that he had already done. However, he was reluctant to cut corners or pad expenses in order to satisfy the needs of others involved in the project, especially to the detriment of the students, who would be stuck with a substandard structure.

He wondered, "Should I forget about the fees, stand my ground and walk away or play the game?"

Questions

- What do you think about John's struggles in this story?
- Could he have avoided the situation in which he currently finds himself?
- What do you think about Mr. Aja's statement "If you think you can survive in the business world with this holier than thou attitude, you are in for a big surprise."
- What would you do if you were in John's shoes?
- What can you do to stand firm in the face of temptations?

Prayer

In Jesus' Name:

My Lord and Saviour, I humble myself before you and declare that you are God. I lay my life, my work and my business before Your throne of grace. I ask for divine wisdom. Give me the strength to make difficult decisions, and the power to stand firm, in spite of temptations. Teach me to deal honestly with all the different stakeholders in my daily work. Prosper my path, so that in the face of trials, I will stand.

I praise you, I honour you and I bless Your holy name.

Amen.

BIBLE VERSES

Matthew 26:41

“Watch and. pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Luke 11:4

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

1 Timothy 6:9

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

James 1:2

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...

1 Peter 5:6-9

6Humble. yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7Cast all your anxiety on him because he’ cares for you. 8Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Source: New International Version

CHAPTER FOUR

Witnessing in the Workplace

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

7:30 a.m. Monday, October 10th, 2016.

There was never a dull moment on train rides between New York and New Jersey. Even though Bola had been making the same trip almost every morning for the last year, she still marveled at the number of people on the trains, and the speed with which everyone seemed to enter and exit. Typically dressed in conservative colours, with a newspaper in one hand and a cup of Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts coffee in another, all the commuters seemed engaged in their quest to get to work on time and return home at a decent hour.

It was definitely easy to fall into the relative monotony of the fast paced corporate environment that Manhattan provided. Bola had heeded the call to join the rat race among other ambitious corporate lawyers in the city when she chose to accept a high-powered job as a litigator with Davidson & Hudson.

This environment presented a clear contrast to her relatively sheltered childhood and youth in Southern Nigeria, and her short stints in London and Geneva. However, as a relatively new immigrant in the city, Bola felt quite comfortable. She believed that New York City was, one of the few melting pots in the world, and presented opportunities for individuals from different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds to find their niche.

Bola typically used her 45-minute commute into the city to catch up on her case briefs and files. She had often contemplated using this time to read her daily Bible devotion or to spend some time in prayer. However, she felt that the venue was too public and that it would be a little deceptive, in the sense that it would seem like she was fitting God into her schedule, instead of taking time out of her schedule to bask in his presence.

As Bola exited the train station on this particular Monday morning, she was accosted by an enthusiastic evangelist, who handed her a Christian pamphlet and urged her to commit her life to God before it was too late. Bola was a little surprised by this encounter, which she had not experienced before in the

United States. She felt like telling the woman that she already had a relatively strong relationship with God, but was tongue-tied. Bola accepted the religious track, whispered “thank-you,” and quietly walked away.

“That must take a real measure of boldness,” she thought to herself as she walked briskly towards her office complex. Immediately, scenes from her home country flashed across as her mind, as she reflected on the numerous preachers and evangelists who entered buses and other public places in Nigeria to preach the Gospel. They were often considered religious fanatics and Bola never imagined that God would ever direct her to utilize this method to win souls for Him.

As she approached the office complex on 1st Avenue, her mind quickly shifted to her “to-do” list and the numerous tasks that she had to attend to at work.

8:30 p.m. Thursday, December 1st, 2016

Bola lifted her head from her desk for a split second, in response to an unexpected greeting from Andrew, one of the two employees who were responsible for keeping the 18th floor of her office complex clean. He had come into her office space to empty her dust bin, as he did three times a week.

Over the past few months. Bola and Andrew had engaged in a few conversations, the first of which started when Andrew noticed the schedule of Church services and activities hosted by Times Square Church, on Bola's bulletin board. Upon spotting the schedule, he proceeded to ask her about the Church and how long she had been attending services. At first, Bola did not know how to respond to these inquires. She felt herself tightening up and was surprised by this reflex action. Andrew seemed to sense her discomfort, and immediately informed her that he served as an assistant pastor in a Baptist Church in the Bronx. He spoke at length about his activities in the Church and his passion for God. In no time, Bola heard herself telling him about Times Square Church. She described how much she valued the teaching that she received at the Church and how she loved the fact that it was an interdenominational Church that drew people from all walks of life. She confessed that, given her hectic work schedule, she rarely attended mid-week events and had not gotten involved in any of the ministries at the Church.

As they chatted, Bola realized that Andrew was the first person to whom she had spoken about her faith since she had joined Davidson & Hudson. She marveled at the fact that he had actually noticed the Church schedule on her bulletin board. She had placed the schedule on the board as a reminder, when she had first joined the Church for her own personal viewing. She had even forgotten that it was on the board and none of her other colleagues had seemed to notice it.

Since that early encounter, Bola and Andrew had developed a cordial relationship. Unfortunately, their interactions were limited; because Bola was typically engaged in conference calls or meetings outside the office, when Andrew came by for his tri-weekly rounds.

On this particular day, following Andrew's cheerful greetings, Bola lifted her head from the piles of paperwork on her desk and proceeded to engage him in conversation about his family, his Church and their plans for the Christmas holiday. He in turn asked her about her work, Times Square Church, and her family back in Nigeria. Like old friends, they chatted about their mutual love for the Christmas season. Bola told Andrew about her love of Christian music and her participation in the choir at her Church in Geneva. She reminisced about how much she enjoyed worshiping God through song and the difficulties associated with committing herself to regular participation in the Times Square Choir.

Upon noticing that it was almost 9:00 p.m. and realizing that she would miss the 9:10p.m. train to Jersey City if she did not get moving, she politely ended the conversation and scurried to the elevator, in an effort to get home before 10:00 p.m.

10:30 p.m. Saturday, December 3rd, 2017

In between mouthfuls of fried rice and chicken, Bola and Cherise, her closest friend from work, laughed out loud as they reflected on the Off-Broadway Show they had just watched. It was a classic satire about the struggles faced by single men and women in New York City. Since both Cherise and Bola were single, they could relate to the experiences depicted in the show.

Bola enjoyed spending her free time with Cherise. She appreciated Cherise's sense of humour and confidence. In fact, their friendship had evolved so naturally, with minimal effort, right from the first day of their orientation at Davidson and Hudson.

They spent quite a bit of their free time outside work in each other's company, visiting art galleries, going to fun restaurants, movies and plays. After their typically hectic work-week, it was always a nice treat to take a break and explore the sounds and sights of New York.

Religion was not among the many issues that Bola and Cherise freely discussed. In fact, apart from Andrew, Bola had not discussed her faith with any of her friends from work. From her first few days on the job, Bola noticed that while most people talked openly about being gay or lesbian, and others felt it was hip to take Yoga classes, most Moslems and Christians kept their faith to themselves. Somehow, through this observation, Bola decided that discussing her faith would make others around her

uncomfortable. She feared that this might make her colleagues view her in a different light or potentially hold her to some higher standards. Most of all, she was scared about being blamed for creating an uncomfortable work environment. Unsure of where this fear stemmed from, but reluctant to test its validity, Bola had established clear boundaries between her faith and her work.

As a result, even though Bola knew almost everything about Cherise's family background, passions, career interest, struggles at work and tastes in food and fashion, she did not know anything about Cherise's religious beliefs or convictions. She did not know if Cherise was agnostic, atheist, Christian or Buddhist. Somehow, not knowing was fine with Bola.

As the evening dragged on, Bola rummaged through her purse in search of her wallet to pay for her share of the dinner bill. She immediately noticed a flier advertising Times Square Church's Annual Christmas Concert. She had heard that this was always a wonderful event and wondered if she should share the flier with Cherise...but immediately decided against it.

3:00 p.m. Sunday, January 1st, 2017

"Auntie. Happy New Year!" Bola yelled, bubbling over with excitement.

After placing a few calls to her parents in Nigeria and her sister in England. Bola had decided to surprise her spiritual mother, Mrs. Ogunsola, a close friend she had met in Geneva. Mrs. Ogunsola, whom Bola fondly called 'Auntie', had played a pivotal role in drawing her closer to God.

Bola treasured the amazing relationship they had established as prayer partners and members of the International Fellowship Choir in Geneva. Whenever Bola was in Auntie's presence, she always felt a little closer to God. Somehow Auntie's passion for the things of God and her boldness about her faith always seemed to rub off on Bola. Often times, Bola attributed the ease with which she took time from work to attend mid-week services or invited her co-workers from the UN to the International Fellowship to Auntie's counsel and prayers. Bola still regularly played the worship tape that Auntie had given her as a parting gift. She turned it on during her morning devotions, to draw her into God's presence. Bola considered that tape one of her most prized possessions.

Upon hearing Bola's voice at the other end of the line, Auntie's face lit--up. They spoke at length about Bola's life in New York City, her satisfaction with her job and her spiritual walk. Bola told Auntie that she was happy to be in New York. She was learning a lot about law and was enjoying the challenges and the

pace of work. She confessed that somehow it seemed much harder to reflect Christ in her new environment. She told Auntie how much she missed the boldness for Christ that she had had in Geneva

Auntie tried to encourage Bola, exhorting her to take some risks regarding witnessing for Christ. "Since you spend so much time at work, and with your friends from work, they have to know where you stand. Maybe some of them share your beliefs, but are caught-up in the same bind that you have placed yourselves," she said.

Bola struggled to craft the right response. "Auntie, I don't know if you can fully appreciate how different this environment really is..."

Questions

- What do you think about Bola's struggles in this story?
- What risks, if any, is she up against?
- What would you have done differently if you were in her shoes?
- How can you increase your boldness in order to witness in the workplace?
- What tactics or strategies can you employ to make the process easier?

COMMENTARY

Bola's reluctance to witness at work seems more to be borne out of fear, the fear of being rejected or the fear of making others uncomfortable. I agree with her 'Auntie', she has to be prepared to take a risk. Andrew took a risk by talking to her about his faith. I think that Bola is aware that the Lord has been trying to get her attention, the twinge of guilt she felt when she was handed a tract and her lack of devotional time are all pointers to the fact that she was getting immersed in her work, and her relationship with God was gradually slipping. People need to know where you stand.

As Christians, we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and our focus must be beyond ourselves to the world around us. God expects this of us. The reason we are at work in the first place is not about us or our career, but to bring God's rule to our workplace.

PASTOR WALE ADEFARASIN

Senior Pastor,

Guiding Light Assembly,

Lagos Nigeria

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I recognize that you have called me to “go into the world and make disciples of all nations.” Please give me the courage, wisdom and direction that I need to fulfill the Great Commission. Lead me by your spirit, and touch the hearts that I speak with. Position other believers to water the seeds that I sow, that others may gain eternal life.

Amen

BIBLE VERSES

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is Wise.

2 Corinthians 9:12-14

12This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

Luke 9:5-6

5 If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you- leave their town, as a testimony against them.” 6 So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

1 Corinthians 9:17-19

17If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. 18What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it. 19Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

Source: New International Version

CHAPTER FIVE

Faithfulness

. . . But I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. (Psalm 89:33; NIV)

2 a.m. Tuesday, November 22nd, 2016

Sill fully clothed in an expensive black suit, Bridget jolted awake to the sound of a police siren screeching past her window. She threw away the remnants of her take-out from Alfredos and dressed for bed. Her cell phone flickered and mail covered her dining table, but she cared little about these distractions.

Bridget could barely remember what life was like before her move to New York four months earlier. She was proud of her new career as a management consultant with MBB, one of the world's leading consulting firms. She enjoyed the thrill of solving business problems for the world's largest pharmaceutical and healthcare companies and loved working with her cosmopolitan and highly educated colleagues.

Her learning curve over the past few months had been steep. She was proud of her ability to craft strategy recommendations. Most of all, she enjoyed the team environment and the stimulating hallway conversations. Sometimes Bridget wondered how she had been able to survive the three rounds of rigorous case study interviews that had resulted in the six-figure offer to join MBB. Whenever she shared her recruiting experiences with others, Bridget eagerly gave God the credit.

From the onset, Bridget recognized that MBB hired only qualified individuals and operated under a competitive “up and out” system. Managers, partners, and directors maintained extremely high standards of performance. Evaluations conducted in the middle and at the end of each consulting engagement were used as the basis for firm--wide reviews. Each entering class of consultants was evaluated at the same time and compared with each other. The results of these meetings determined which consultants would be counselled out of the organization and which staff would be promoted.

Given this realization, Bridget was determined to consistently exceed the expectations of her managers. As a result, immediately after her graduation ceremony from Harvard Business School, while her classmates were globetrotting on their \$20,000 signing bonuses, Bridget enrolled in accounting and statistics classes at a local university. She also enlisted her family and friends to provide her with the spiritual support and guidance that she would need to ensure a smooth transition into this challenging environment.

To her utmost delight, after a general two-week training program for all new consultants, Bridget was staffed on a high-profile project for J&J, a leading pharmaceutical company in the New Jersey area. From the onset, the staffing manager had impressed upon Bridget the importance of excelling on this first project. She told her that MBB had struggled to secure an engagement with J&J over the past five years and that many other consultants had lobbied to take her place on the team.

At the first project meeting, when Bridget was formally introduced to the five-person team, she was excited to learn that two of the most respected directors in healthcare practice would be involved in the project. She was a little surprised that Simon Sege, a new manager, had been selected for the project. As the teamwork plan was reviewed, she was delighted, but a little concerned, that a pivotal piece of the project work had been assigned to her. On one hand, this demonstrated the faith of her bosses in her abilities, but it also put an inordinate amount of pressure on her to perform.

The first few weeks of the project were exciting. Bridget received significant exposure on the team and at client meetings. The team seemed to have a great working relationship.

Bridget had recognized early in the project that Simon, given his status as a new manager, would have a difficult time leading the team. As a result, she took the initiative to develop creative strategies for communicating with him. She provided daily updates to the team via email and long telephone messages. She worked 14 to 16 hour days and enlisted Jonathan, her other team member, who was a 2nd year consultant from Columbia University, to provide her with regular feedback at the end of team meetings.

As days passed, Bridget buried her head in her work for J &J. She rarely had time to interact with her peers outside the team. After work, her life consisted of a few telephone conversations with her mom and close friends, quiet time and daily Bible study sessions, and Church activities on Sundays.

Unfortunately, Bridget's daily routine was short-lived! Barely two months into the project, just prior to the team's first major deliverable, Katie Costello was added to the team. She was a senior manager, who was at the cusp of promotion to partner level. The two senior directors' involved in the project never formally discussed the rationale behind her addition to the team. However, Bridget and her peers on the team suspected that the directors felt that Simon Sege was not effectively performing his role as the manager on the project. Given the importance of the J&J engagement, they did not want to take any chances on the project's success.

Katie's presence on the team radically transformed the culture of the group and Bridget's experiences. All Bridget could remember from their first interactions was the look of disgust on Katie's face as she reviewed the PowerPoint slides that Bridget had created for the upcoming client presentation. "This is poor work and definitely not created according to MBB format. Did Simon actually teach you anything over these past two months?" Katie asked. Hurt by this comment, but determined to move beyond it, Bridget responded, "What specific suggestions do you have for me to make these charts more compelling?"

Prior to Katie's joining the team, Bridget's efforts appeared to be yielding positive results. On two occasions during informal feedback sessions, Simon had praised her work ethic and communication skills. He had also recognized her strong interpersonal skills as demonstrated through her strong relationship with the client team. However, over time, with Katie's presence and as the project deliverables mounted, Bridget began to feel overwhelmed. She often sneaked out of the team room for quick prayer breaks. Her constant moan was "Lord, please give me wisdom and strength; Grant me favour. . ."

Unfortunately, as Simon's role quickly became usurped by Katie's presence, Bridget was forced to interact with her on a regular basis and to face up to what seemed like constant criticism and little encouragement. On several occasions, after she had worked for 18 hours, consulting with other members of the team, Bridget's work was still viewed with disdain. Over time, she began to struggle with self-doubt and her confidence in her abilities waned.

2:30 a.m. Tuesday, November 22nd, 2016

Memories of the day ran through Bridget's mind as she lay on her bed desperately trying to fall asleep. "Today definitely goes down as one of my worst days as a consultant," she thought to herself. Her feedback meeting with Katie had been awful. The team had just completed its first major deliverable for the client, and their client appeared extremely pleased with the team's efforts and MBB's overall capabilities. Regardless of this outcome, Katie had spared no niceties in her discussion with Bridget. Her words rang loudly in Bridget's ears and heart.

"Unfortunately, Bridget, you have some clear development needs and are performing below your peers. Your problem-solving skills are weak. You appear committed to helping our client solve their most pressing problems; however, it seems that it takes you a little longer to accomplish tasks."

As the words hit Bridget, she tried to remain composed, but could not hide her disappointment and hurt, as tears filled her eyes.

Bridget recognized that on two distinct occasions, she had missed preset deadlines. She had honestly believed that she could conduct research and create charts quickly, and had optimistically told Katie that these tasks would be completed before the end of the day. However, she found that the tasks were immensely trickier than she had anticipated. As a result, she had produced disappointing results. In fact, in the week leading up to the client meeting, she was charged with managing the complete presentation, or “deck,” as it is referred to in consulting. This involved collecting edits from team members and managing the complete revisions process. This type of task was rarely given to a new consultant, but Katie had insisted that Bridget manage the deck. Bridget struggled with this task and the constant time pressures imposed on the “deck manager.”

As the conversation came to a close, Katie tried to provide some words of encouragement and advice to Bridget. “Bridget, do you like MBB? Do you like consulting? Do you want to stay here? If your answer is yes, which I hope it is, then you just need to fight. Focus on improving your skills and reaching out to your peers for support to ensure that by January, when we conduct the final project evaluation, you will receive a positive evaluation.” That evening, as Bridget stared at the dark ceiling, she moaned to God in between sobs, “I waited on You for months before taking this offer! You even sent people into my life to confirm that this was the right place for me...I turned down three top companies for this one! Why is this happening to me? Lord, I am Your child and You promised in Your Word that You would never let me be put to shame...”

Finally at 3:30 a.m., she cried herself to sleep.

6:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 23rd, 2016

Bridget leaned over her dresser to hit the snooze button. A few minutes later, her sleep was interrupted once again, by a telephone call from her mother. “Bridget, I've been worried about you. I left two messages for you yesterday evening. Is everything O.K.?”

“I am not doing too well, but I will live” Bridget groaned. She then proceeded to recount her feedback session with Katie. “I know that there are quite a few issues that I have not been able to control... like the team dynamics... but I assume that Katie has to be right about some of my weaknesses.” Bridget admitted that she had isolated herself from her peers and had not reached out to others outside her team for help. In her desire to impress Katie, she had often over-promised and had set overly optimistic deadlines for herself. She had improved significantly on her PowerPoint skills, but obviously, this was still not good enough. Bridget told her mother that she really wanted to improve her personal effectiveness and that she wanted to stay at MBB.

After listening for at least twenty minutes, Bridget's mom, a minister in her local Church, proceeded to share her assessment of the situation. "Bridget, recognize that throughout your life you have always met with success. God has been there for you, providing for you, prospering you, protecting you and answering every one of your prayer requests. Your current struggle is a test. You are being molded into a vessel. You have to stand firm and recognize that this is a spiritual battle. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you can overcome!"

Given her determination to see her only daughter succeed in this environment, Bridget's mother offered to fast and pray with her and to enlist the support of the members of her Church to do the same. Their telephone conversation ended with a powerful prayer, through which Bridget's mom committed the situation at MBB to God and asked Him to build a hedge of protection around her daughter. She also prayed that God would grant Bridget favour, specifically in her interactions with Katie, and would bless her with wisdom, strength and clarity of thought.

Spiritually renewed, and only a few minutes behind schedule, Bridget scrambled out of her apartment.

During her train ride to mid-town Manhattan, she jotted down three critical steps that she would take over the next month to improve her performance:

I will...

- I Reach out to peers and find out how things are done at MBB.
- I Collect good presentations that my peers have' created, study them and use them as guides
- I Take a formal PowerPoint presentation course and a course on deck management

Bridget resolved more than ever before to do everything in her power to succeed at MBB. "With God on my side, whom shall I fear?" she thought to herself.

12 noon Thursday, March 16th, 2017

Bridget stood outside the entrance to Ryan's Deli, waiting for Karen, her close friend and prayer partner. It had been almost six months since they had seen each other, even though their offices were only six blocks apart. However, they spoke and prayed often over the telephone.

As a leader of the Women's Bible Study at Harvard, Bridget had cultivated close relationships with numerous women. Like many of her peers in Business School, Karen had always admired Bridget's relationship with God and her steadfast commitment to serving him against all odds. She marveled at Bridget's prayer life and her disciplined approach to living a holy life in spite of numerous temptations.

Bridget and Karen had developed a strong relationship during their time at Harvard. They prayed and fasted together regarding job offers, relationship issues, family sickness and financial struggles. Throughout their time in business school, it seemed that every prayer that they put before God was answered.

Bridget had initiated this lunch appointment with Karen because she really needed to confide in a close friend outside MBB. The past few months had proved even more difficult than the first four. Bridget felt physically, emotionally and spiritually drained. A comment from a senior director at MBB, whom she considered a mentor, had further pushed her to the edge of sanity.

"Bridget, I have heard that things have not been too easy for you. You are here during the day and at night. I have even seen you in the office on weekends. What is going on?" In her defense, she tried to assure him that she was doing just fine. She wondered how many other people within the firm had gotten wind of her struggles.

A light tap on her shoulder brought Bridget back to reality. Minutes later, she and Karen were seated in a tight corner of the restaurant, chatting away. For the first time in months, Bridget actually laughed out loud as Karen shared stories from work at American Express.

"Enough about me," Karen said abruptly. "I would like to hear about your life. Bridget, how are you coping?"

"Honestly, life has been rough. Since I received my mid-project review from Katie in November, I have worked diligently at resolving some of the "development opportunities" that she identified. I reached out to my peers, and a few confessed that they have experienced similar problems. They assured me that most people at MBB are extremely paranoid about their performance. Some of the more experienced consultants warned me against internalizing any of the negative feedback that I have received and emphasized that this often leads to a downward spiral in performance. Some consultants were kind enough to share their presentations with me and to advise me on how to create compelling charts. I even enrolled in a PowerPoint refresher course, and in my spare time, I have actively created mock charts and practiced managing decks. Prior to our final presentation for the client in the middle of January, Katie's negative criticisms subsided. In fact, my final evaluation with her was a little better than

the mid-term evaluation, but she tended to focus more on my earlier mistakes as opposed to my performance during the latter part of the project.

Sadly enough, since mid-January, I have been working on internal projects for the organization. My time is considered not billable, because the work that I am doing does not generate any direct revenue for the company. Typically, these types of tasks are indicative of three major issues – a decrease in demand for consulting services, too many employees in the company at one time, or a poor reputation. Unfortunately, I can only imagine that my situation is directly linked to the third reason. The office is incredibly busy, other consultants are complaining about being overstretched on their projects, and here I am working on internal projects.”

“Karen, MBB has been an incredible learning experience. The way that I think about issues and evaluate problems has changed. However, I am terribly unhappy. I initially believed that God led me here... but my confidence is waning. I second-guess myself all the time. Whenever I see Katie, I am gripped by fear. Most of all, I am worried about my reputation at the organization.”

For a minute, Karen was tongue-tied. She could sense the anguish that Bridget was in. Throughout their relationship, it was often Bridget who encouraged and supported her. At this point, the tables were turned...

“Bridget, I am confident that God directed you to MBB. Do you remember how we prayed and fasted about this decision? We really believed that we had heard clear instructions from God. I have definitely seen some positive changes in your life over the past few weeks. I marvel at the way that you structure and assess even the most complicated problems. However, I am worried about you. You look like you are not getting a lot of sleep and you appear emotionally drained. Remember that in our weakness, God is strong. You are not fighting these battles alone. God is with you and he wants you to trust in him with all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. Bridget, you need to create a life outside work and Church. MBB cannot dominate your entire existence!”

After their lunch Bridget felt encouraged but still unsure about her future at MBB. For the first time, she day-dreamed about what her life might have been like if she had accepted a job with another company.

9.00 a.m. Monday, May 8th, 2017

Dear friends and family,

Thank you for your prayers and fasting over the past six months. I could not have made it through this difficult period without your support. First of all I must apologize for sending an impersonal group email... but I had to share the good news with all of you and did not want to put this off any further. As you know, since my client engagement ended in January, I have been working on internal research and proposal projects. I have learned quite a bit from these projects, but this type of work is characterized as not billable (and does not bring in any revenue for the company. As a result, it is often not a sustainable way to survive in this cutthroat environment.)

Over the weekend, I received a voicemail from the staffing coordinator informing me that I have been placed on a three-month project with one of MBB's most loyal and respected client!

This is a real answer to prayer and a move in the right direction!

Don't stop praying and fasting... I need it now more than ever before.

God Bless!

Bridget

As Bridget pressed the send button, she hummed one of her favourite Gospel songs under her breathe "He's able. . . I know that He can do it, He said He'll see me through it, He's able..." For the first time in many months, Bridget felt at peace. She had started to regain confidence in her analytical and problem-solving abilities. She believed that she could create compelling presentations with little assistance. She had gained significant practice on her internal projects and had worked on honing these skills during the weekends. Most importantly, she believed that she had built strong enough relationships with her peers and could reach out to them whenever she needed help.

As she strolled to her the kick-off meeting for her new project, she reflected on the same walk that she made last August. Still excited, she felt less naive and spiritually and emotionally a little tougher.

9 p.m. Wednesday, August 16th, 2017

Karen's telephone rang exactly at 9 p.m. and it was Bridget's voice on the other end. "Hi Karen, how are you doing? Is this a bad time or can you talk?" she asked.

“It's a great time, Bridget, what's up?”

“Well, tomorrow is my end of year evaluation, and I am a little nervous. I need some extra special prayers! Basically, this evaluation is critical because it is an assessment of all my work for the past year. The partners actually interview everyone who has worked with me through an instrument called a 360-degree evaluation. They also compare my performance to that of my peers. Anyway, I am terrified! This year has definitely been a mixed bag. Part of me hopes for a good evaluation, which would be a good indication that I could potentially have a long and meaningful career at MBB. Another part of me, the part that hates the smell of failure, just wants to run and hide somewhere for a long time. I don't want to get my hopes up high because they may be dashed as they have been many times in the past year. I also don't think that I can pray for favour from God, because I have been doing this everyday. Sometimes, I don't even recognize the person that I have become...Please pray for me tonight. The evaluation is scheduled for 1:00p.m. so please pray then as well... if you can.”

In response Karen assured Bridget that she would pray and that everything would go smoothly. They exchanged brief goodbyes and scheduled some time to speak again over the weekend.

10:00 a.m. Sunday, September 3rd, 2017

If Bridget's mom had not called three times on Saturday evening and twice already in the morning, she probably would not have gotten out of bed. “Bridget, you need to get up and go and receive a word from the Lord this morning!” her mom had insisted. “You cannot let the Devil steal your joy... or let yourself become consumed by what others think about you.”

Bridget pulled herself together and headed towards Brooklyn Tabernacle, a 10-minute walk from her home. She had decided to settle on this Church after extensive searches within New York City and across all the major boroughs. Despite its size, she felt at peace with the spirit of the Church. A gifted singer, Bridget regretted not being able to join the famous Brooklyn Tabernacle choir. She realized that she could not commit herself to the frequent practice sessions that this award-winning choir required.

As Bridget strolled to Brooklyn Tabernacle, she could not help but notice the sights, smells and sounds of summer. She was overcome with nostalgia as she reflected on all she had missed these amazing months in New York. Unfortunately, she had spent most of her free time in MBB's mid-town Manhattan office, plugging away on her computer. “No picnics or outdoor concerts in Central Park, no weekends trips to the beach or the amusement parks, no barbecues... oh well, I guess I picked this life style,” she thought to herself “I really wish that I had something to show for all that hard work.”

What Bridget had expected would be her second chance to succeed at MBB, turned out flat. Everyone at MBB had assured her that they had all experienced at least one terrible evaluation, and that with determination and hard work, they had been able to excel on future projects. Bridget expected to have the same type of story.

Amazingly, her last project was a successful one. The team dynamics were wonderful, the client was engaging, and the problems were interesting. Bridget put in her best into every slide that she created and, every deck that she managed. Fortunately, her efforts did not go unnoticed. On multiple occasions, her manager pulled her aside and commended her for her hard work and dedication.

In spite of all of the positive energy that she felt during the experience, ' she was shocked to receive a poor end-of-year evaluation. Her evaluator, Jeff Peters, started off by telling her that quite a few people had noticed improvements in her performance. However, he noted that given the amount of time and energy that she put into completing routine tasks, there were some valid concerns among her managers about whether or not she had what it took to move through the ranks at MBB. He alluded to the notion that MBB might not be the ideal fit for her. What upset Bridget the most during their conversation was the feedback that relative to her peers, she had not worked on enough billable projects.

“How can MBB blame me for this when I have had absolutely no control over my staffing situation?” she asked Jeff.

All he could muster as a response was, “That's just the way things work here, Bridget.”

These words were extremely painful for Bridget. She struggled to block them out. “Could this be a gentle nudge to consider options outside the company?”

That morning as Bridget sat in the pews, she tried hard to remain focused and to listen to the sermon. Every word from the pulpit seemed to hit a brick wall. She sat there looking, even staring, but not receiving.

As the worship leaders began the closing hymn, Bridget felt a lump in her throat...

Great is thy faithfulness

Great is thy faithfulness

Morning, by morning, new mercies I see

All I have needed thy hands have provided

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me

As she began to sing along, the words seemed foreign. She thought to herself, "Right this minute, I cannot proclaim God's faithfulness! Yes, I finally got staffed on a client engagement. I worked my butt off. I put in everything that I had into it. I got positive feedback throughout the project, but somehow I cannot seem to shake off the stigma that follows me Yes, I am miserable! I have prayed, fasted, studied the Word and lived a holy life. In spite of these efforts, my situation is as desperate as that of any unbeliever." She decided that no one would notice if she walked out a little early.

4:00 p.m. Thursday, October 12th, 2017

The last month had moved at a crawling pace for Bridget. Her eyes glazed over as she waited outside David Johnson's office. David, her Development Group Leader and a senior partner in the firm, was running a little late for their prescheduled meeting. Prior to this meeting, Bridget had only interfaced with David on two occasions once during the interview process and again when she first arrived at MBB in August 2015.

Unlike her discussions with Katie in January, Bridget was prepared for the outcome of her meeting with David. She had requested a meeting with him to discuss her desire to leave MBB. Before anyone would have the pleasure of formally counselling her out, she had decided to depart gracefully.

As Bridget waited for David, she reflected on her journey to MBB. Since her teenage years, Bridget had always felt God's hand at work in her life. She excelled at every single employment opportunity that He allowed her to take on. During her early internship experiences with top companies in Corporate America, and eventually, as a full-time employee with a leading asset management firm, she had received promotions on a regular basis. Never once in her life had she felt inadequate!

During her time at Harvard, she relied completely on God for direction and guidance. She had prayed and fasted for weeks regarding the MBB offer and clearly heard God telling her to accept it. However, a year after joining MBB, she had become a different person beaten, bruised, hurt and consumed with self-doubt.

What perplexed Bridget was God's role during her struggles. Throughout the year, she had prayed with her mother at 6 a.m. before she left for work, and with Karen, on Sundays. She had explicitly asked God for strength, wisdom, favour and grace. Yet, she felt that no breakthrough solutions had emerged! She needed some answers. Where was God? Didn't He approve of her move to MBB? Did she misinterpret His voice? Had she really trusted in Him for a breakthrough or had she relied on her own strength? Why did she feel so alone? Is this the outcome that God had intended?

Bridget resolved to begin the job search process the following week. It would be a challenge to provide a truthful and compelling explanation to recruiters about why she had only spent a little over a year at MBB, but she had no other choice.

One nagging thought echoed in her heart and mind. "Would she be able to trust God for her future as she had in April 2015, when she accepted the offer to join MBB?"

Questions

- o How would you explain Bridget's experiences with God in this story?
- o Could she have done anything differently?
- o What aspects of Bridget's experiences are relevant to your life?
- o How do you demonstrate "faith" in your current work environment?
- o What can you do to build your faith, in the face of failure or negative outcomes?

COMMENTARY

Bridget makes a mistake that is often common among Christians. She assumes that because she has "prayed to God for His guidance" that she will meet with immediate success. We often forget that Moses' first two days on the job as Israel's new CEO met with disaster. His first day resulted in murder (See: Exodus Chapter 2). His second day, although forty years later, was the cause of economic hardship for the company and nearly ruined his reputation as a leader (See: Exodus Chapter 5). Yet Moses ends up being one of the greatest leaders in the history of the world.

We must all understand that God is far more interested in our developing a trusting relationship with Him than our meeting with immediate success.

Most of us would agree that we have learned more about ourselves and about life during moments of failure and disappointment. Could it be that God was actually trying to develop a deeper trust in Bridget's relationship with Him? Could it be that God was trying to teach her something very intimate, about herself that she could never have achieved through any other, experience? Could it be that God was trying to show Bridget that He has the ability to turn apparent failure into appreciative success? The problem is God first needs individuals who will trust Him during those times of failure!

PASTOR BRIAN GREEN

Pentecostal Tabernacle,

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Prayer

In Jesus' Name:

My Father, increase my faith in You. Teach me to love You and serve You unconditionally. Teach me to lean on You and not on my own understanding! Help me to understand that You are faithful to work out all situations for my good. I lay my life before You my goals, my dreams and my aspirations. Lord, may Your perfect will be made manifest in my life.

Amen

BIBLE VERSES

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Psalms 33:4

For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Psalms 100:5

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalms 111:7

The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

Matthew 17:20

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

New International Version

CONCLUSION

“Working for God in the Marketplace,” is a tall order. As depicted in the case studies in this book, there are tremendous challenges and tests associated with entering, working and succeeding in the business world. While some Christians respond admirably when faced with these challenges, others struggle to sustain their Faith and to reflect Christ in an often hostile environment.

God has called us to serve as the light of the World and the salt of the earth. As a result, fulfilling his purposes and plans for us in the Marketplace demands that we walk in holiness, integrity, boldness and confidence, always recognizing that our source of strength and success lies in God.

Today, as you strive to walk with God and to work for Him in the marketplace, remember to:

- I Constantly wait on Him for direction and promotion. As depicted by Jennifer Wong's story, God is always on time. He demands our patience and complete trust, and requires that we communicate with him on a regular basis, in order to hear his voice and understand his perfect will for our lives.
- I Make the time to fellowship with God and other believers. If your work schedule conflicts with your ability to actively engage in a local Church and fellowship activities, identify other believers in your workplace, who can partner with you in your search for spiritual food. Like Jeff, remember that you are not alone. God is omnipresent. In addition to His awesome presence, He will always send other believers to encourage you in your walk.
- I Demonstrate integrity and accountability in every aspect of your life. . Craft a moral code of conduct for yourself, which clearly outlines the boundaries for your life. Share this code with your prayer partners and close friends. Empower them to hold you accountable in your efforts to live a holy life. In addition, like John Madu, be prepared to walk away from friends, situations and environments that pose a serious threat to your ability to live a life of holiness and integrity.
- I Witness in the workplace, through your attitude, actions and testimony. Always remember that God needs you in the marketplace. Just as he needs individuals to commit to fulltime Ministry in the Church, he needs you to commit to fulltime ministry in the business world. Never let yourself feel inadequate, relative to others in the vineyard. You are working in God's vineyard. This is your

ministry-excel in it. Let your attitude to work and your colleagues, your actions and your testimony reflect Christ. Let the joy and peace that radiates from your life lead others to question its source, and create an open door for the Good News.

- I Stand firm, in spite of trials, setbacks and even outright failures. You are a work in progress, and God is not through with you yet. Treat each negative experience as an opportunity for growth and learning, one which can strengthen you and prepare you for the future path that God has ordained for you. Fight hard to sustain your faith and trust in God. He will never test you beyond what you can bear.

- I Give God the Glory for your success! With each passing day in the marketplace, it is easy to attribute our success to our level of intelligence, talents, hard work, connections or luck. This slippery slope often leads to destruction. God will not continue to raise you up, if He does not believe that you can handle it. Remember that as God blesses you in the marketplace, allowing you to grow and prosper, He demands and deserves the credit.

Finally, though the path to success in the marketplace may appear long and rocky, you have everything that is required to enter, survive and succeed. Beyond success, God needs a new generation of young, vibrant and visionary leaders who will transform that business environment. He is depending on you!

Step out in faith, and exert dominion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ndidi Nwuneli is the managing partner of Sahel Consulting which works across West Africa, unlocking the agriculture and nutrition potential in the region. She is also the co-founder of AACE Foods, which was established in 2009 to fight malnutrition, reduce post-harvest losses among smallholder farmers and displace imports. She is the founder of LEAP Africa which inspires, empowers and equips a new cadre of principled, disciplined and dynamic young leaders in Africa.

Ndidi started her career as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company, working in their Chicago, New York and Johannesburg Offices. She holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and an undergraduate degree with honors from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She was a Senior Fellow at the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business & Government at the Harvard Kennedy School and an Aspen Institute New Voices Fellow.

Ndidi was recognized as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum and received a National Honor from the Nigerian Government. She was listed as one of the 20 Youngest Power African Women by Forbes. Ndidi serves on the boards of Nestle Nigeria Plc., Nigerian Breweries Plc. (Heineken), Godrej Consumer Products Ltd. India, Fairfax Africa Holdings Canada, Royal DSM Sustainability Board, Netherlands, the Center for Memories and the African Philanthropy Forum.

Ndidi is the author of "Social Innovation in Africa: A Practical Guide for Scaling Impact," published by Routledge. She is a TED Global speaker and her work has been featured on CNN, BBC and a range of international and local media outlets.

“This is an easy to read, practical book on the real life struggles of Christians as they try and live out their faith in an imperfect world. The truth is that it requires boldness, courage, and sacrifice (being willing to walk away) to live our faith.

This book is a word of encouragement to genuine Christians who daily face the challenges of living out our faith, reminding us what we are not alone in this struggle”.

MRS. SOLA DAVID-BORHA

CEO, Stanbic IBTC Holdings

“This book is a great blessing, I read it in one sitting, such is the style-engaging, easy to read and well structured. Of greater significance though is the wonderful ministrations. It speaks deeply into the situation of a lot of people starting out in their careers, conveying the doubts, struggles and fears they face. The testimonies shared in the stories are motivating and faith lifting not only to younger ones but to older people too. I am personally challenged to be more fervent in prayer and intercession. I can't wait to get copies of the book into the hands of my children and their friends, and mine too.

Ndidi has certainly achieved her objective of providing inspiration to us for “Working for God in the Marketplace”. May she continue to be a blessing to many in the myriad of ways that God is using her.

DR. NADU DENLOYE

Chairperson GDL Asset Management Ltd.

“Practical relevant and easy to read, “Working for God in the Marketplace” is one of the best books I have read on working with God in today's “Marketplace”. The typical dilemmas, issues and challenges captured in the stories as well as the questions, commentaries and model prayers make the book a complete reference piece for today's Marketplace Christians”.

OLUSEGUN OLUJOBI

CEO, Vertex Energy Inc