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LEADERSHIP LESSONS

FOR KINGDOM TRAILBLAZERS

TOPE S. ALADENUSI



ABOUT TOPE S. ALADENUSI

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WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK?

Since the inception of the Christ Lifeline Ministry, I have written and posted over 300 articles online on www.todayslifeline.com, www.christlifeline.org and www.topealadenusi.com. One day I decided to flip through some of my old articles and I was amazed by what transpired. Apart from being greatly inspired by the articles, I was captivated by some of the supernatural experiences and lessons I had shared. This was because it appeared I had forgotten some of them.

Following this experience, as we planned the 10th anniversary celebration of Christ Lifeline Ministry in 2013, I pondered on some of the key lessons I had learnt over the years... *From the revelation of a vision in the heart of an ordinary school student to the coming together of 4 young university graduates for the public take-off; from using the only affordable platform (Yahoogleroups on the Internet) to the establishment of several platforms worldwide; from tagging our first convention "world outreach convention" even though it was only held in a small ward in one city, to actually going to other continents of the world; from having just 4 partners in a city to having hundreds of partners in 5 continents...* It occurred to me that I could share these lessons to encourage believers to birth and execute their God-given goals. After all, I could not guarantee that I would still remember details of some of these key lessons and experiences in another 10 years because God keeps inspiring new episodes of supernatural adventures daily.

In addition, God has given us a goal to raise 10,000 leaders for him by 2023, and it is our desire that sharing our story will inspire some of these leaders. I trust that this book will inspire you greatly.

WHAT THIS BOOK WILL DO FOR YOU

This book will:

- Inspire you to birth and execute God's plan for your family, ministry and career
- Show you God's standard regarding leadership in His kingdom
- Motivate you to blaze the trail in whatever area or sphere God is laying in your heart and inspire you with several real-life testimonies of fellow brethren
- Inspire you to have a lasting legacy as God gives you the privilege to build the next generation of leaders

Expect a supernatural encounter!

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DEDICATION

*I dedicate this book to all the **Partners of Christ Lifeline Ministry**. I have been so privileged to work with you and I trust God that we will press on with His work and die or be raptured in active service – serving the living God.*

LESSON #1

IF GOD SENDS YOU ON A MISSION, NEVER TAKE A BEND WITHOUT HIM!

“Stop saying you cannot start that ‘God-given mission’ because you don’t have money. You don’t start God’s work with money; you start with Him ... and everything you need will follow” ~ Tope Aladenusi

Few months before Christ Lifeline Ministry clocked 10 years, I was chatting with Segun Eshorun, one of the executives of the Ministry. While talking, I looked steadfastly at him and said – “you have laboured in this Ministry for a couple of years. If someone asked, what would you say the number one secret of this Ministry is?” Segun looked to the sky and down, and in less than 10 seconds, he said – following the leading of the Holy Spirit. When he said that, I smiled and muttered the following words under my breath – for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father which is in heaven.

Over the years, we keep learning to thrive not based on good ideas, but on God’s ideas. The reason is simple; Christ Lifeline Ministry does not belong to us, but to God. Therefore, we must always remember that God has a way He wants to run His organization. This same thing applies to our lives as believers and every church or Christian organization in the world that is founded based on God’s inspiration. It would be a problem if we started out well with the Spirit of God, but later began to run with ideas of mere men or, imitating other fellow ministers. You don’t run God’s organization by imitation, you run it by inspiration – getting cues from God as you execute His agenda on earth. I hope the point is driven home as we meditate on Galatians 3:3 (MSG) - *“Are you going to continue this craziness? For only crazy people would think they could complete by their own efforts what was begun by God. If you weren’t smart enough or strong enough to begin it, how do you suppose you could perfect it?”* Hmm! Many believers are going crazy because they are not following the leading of

God. There were times we also went crazy in the Ministry. I recall I once carried some finance permutations for running the Ministry in my head for a few days; for instance, if 500 partners give minimum of a thousand Naira per month, then we can do this and that project every month. But I stopped the craze the day God showed me that you execute divine plans based on God's leading and not on our financial projections; in fact, the support of one man (through God) can outweigh that of 500. And we have never regretted every instance of following God.

For instance, when we first organized the World Outreach Convention (WoC) in Manchester, we didn't spend a single dime from our accounts in Nigeria. God had spoken to me about going to Manchester and few days after the vision was shared with other executives, I received a mail that I will be sent on an errand to Manchester by an association I support. And that was the beginning of a miracle. Also, I was in the bathroom in January 2013 when God told me about holding India WoC in February. My first reaction was to protest. I said, "Lord, we just concluded our budget for the year, and it wasn't budgeted for". There was no response from Him and we had to swing quickly into action. A week later, a lady that God healed at our Lagos WoC in January 2013 called to inform us that she would like to financially support India WoC. This was just the beginning of another miracle. When we saw the awesomeness of what happened in India, we remembered the principle – when God sends you, He funds you.

We have got hundreds of testimonies. But we believe today you can thank God with us for His constant leading in Christ Lifeline. Also, stop saying you cannot start that 'God-given mission' because you don't have money. You don't start God's work with money; you start with Him ... and everything you need will follow. And when you have started, never take a bend without Him. It is a great lesson we learnt from Jesus Christ and he described it this way- *"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do"* John 5:19 (KJVA)

LESSON #2

IF GOD GIVES YOU A DREAM, WAKE UP AND WORK WITH THE DREAM TEAM

“A great dream with a bad team is nothing more than a nightmare”

~ John C. Maxwell

At one of our monthly executive meetings, Emeka Ofia, our Mentoring Director, made a remarkable comment. He said, “I don’t think God is going to take Christ Lifeline Ministry beyond where the Executives and Partners are willing to go.” There was a brief silence as those words reverberated in our minds. I’m sure every other executive member was doing what we have been trained to do over the years i.e. checking to see how that statement aligns with Scriptures. As I pondered more on that statement in the following days, I could not help but appreciate the importance of teamwork in fulfilling divine mandates. I also recalled how God put together the current team in the Ministry.

The first 3 years in Christ Lifeline were very passive because the team was not vibrant. During this period, I always gave excuses to God for why I thought I was not the right leader for the mission and why it would be better for me to work with established ministries. At the time, we only shared monthly electronic messages to a few friends via Yahoogroups, and this was done chiefly in a bid to “quench” that constant yearning God had placed in my heart. By 2006, the “palliatives” weren’t working anymore as I began to get not only yearnings, but warnings. The particular warning that got me scared happened in Asaba, Delta State of Nigeria. In the bathroom of my hotel room, I heard God say - I gave you an assignment and you neglected it, yet you keep asking me to lead you to where you will be of service to the body of Christ. So out of frustration, I started to think about teamwork.

Who should I discuss the vision with? Who would understand the enormity of this task and be willing to work with God in this capacity? Who would not laugh at me or take me to be a joker (after all to some, I cracked more jokes than I quoted scriptures back then)? These were some of the questions I pondered on. The first person that came to mind was my fiancée (Busola) who is now my wife; the minimum I expected from her was to believe me. Then I thought of two pastors on campus that I believed were very good Christians and very unlike some other seeming “vainglorious” campus pastors. They are Ifelayo Ojo and Adeyiga Awomuti. I had separate meetings with them to share the vision of Christ Lifeline and also invited them to join me in the execution and it appeared that the best days of my life started then. There was this joy and fulfilment I experienced whenever I pondered on the way they believed in the vision and promised to work with God in executing it.

By January 2007, we had our first outreach program tagged “Mission Exhibition” and there were about 50 people in attendance. Surprisingly, 40 of them decided to partner with the Ministry and completed our Partner’s form. This was a critical turning point in the Ministry; we had a bigger and better team to do the work. Since then, we have had hundreds of Partners from 5 continents join this team of men and women that extend the help of Christ to nations and support platforms that attract others to Christ. We do not underestimate the work of God in putting the Christ Lifeline team together because like John Maxwell once said - “a great dream with a bad team is nothing more than a nightmare”.

LESSON #3

WHATEVER YOU EXCUSE TODAY IS LIKELY TO ACCUSE YOU
TOMORROW.

“Inaction can have a very devastating effect on our lives, as much as negative action would do” ~ Tope Aladenusi

Many believers talk about the consequences of their actions – both positive and negative. However, inaction can have a very devastating effect on our lives, as much as negative action would do. Imagine you are standing in the middle of an expressway on an election day when cars have been banned from moving. But suddenly, you see a car racing towards you. If you refuse to take off from that spot, your inaction may cost you as much as your life. Similarly, in ministry, we face several challenges where inaction could cripple our effectiveness. Surprisingly, such problems show up like tiny earthworms and we often overlook them due to their initial size, but overtime they grow up to become like pythons, and are able to give everyone sleepless nights.

Many leaders claim they are problem solvers, but the question is - what kinds of problems are we solving? Christian leaders often find it easier to solve secular, electrical, mechanical, educational or technical problems. But when confronted with people issues, we cringe. How do we handle it if the man who pays the fattest offerings in church goes about insulting the ushers? How do we handle that rebellious deacon who goes around spreading negative news about church members? How do we handle workers who know they are accountable to God but neglect their duty posts? What do you do when your assistant pastor starts preaching false doctrine in your new branch and tells the congregation that you are a false teacher?

For many leaders, we are quick to say – let sleeping dogs lie; after all, everyone will give account to God. Some will only preach against it on the pulpit. We rarely confront people issues and prefer to sweep them under the carpet but it seems as though those sleeping dogs usually wake up in future to hurt everyone. Snow and adolescence are the only problems that disappear if you ignore them long enough (Earl Wilson). Therefore, we must learn to crush the problems when there are still in the form of earthworms, because when they become like pythons, we have a more difficult job to do. 1Timothy 5:20 (CEV) says “*But if any of the leaders should keep on sinning, they must be corrected in front of the whole group, as a warning to everyone else.*” This verse forbids inaction on people issues.

In the last 10 years of Christ Lifeline’s existence, we have had people issues where we let sleeping dogs lie. But when we saw little dogs become monsters over the years, we began to learn to confront issues as they showed up. Some people are like Jonah; as long as they are in the boat, there will be no peace and progress. It’s not necessarily because they are bad people; it’s just because they have a different assignment. So you have to assist them into the belly of a whale so they can reach their own mission station in peace. John Maxwell once said - “a great dream with a bad team is nothing more than a nightmare”. Surprisingly, just one man can cause that nightmare. In Galatians 5:7,9 (GNB) – the bible says “*You were doing so well! Who made you stop obeying the truth? How did he persuade you? It takes only a little yeast to make the whole batch of dough rise*”. The Galatians were doing great with the gospel of redemption. When they had issues, Paul did not ask what was wrong; he asked - WHO did this to you?

So I say to you today - Who are your fellow workers in God’s vineyard? Who are your friends? What actions and inactions are you excusing today?

LESSON #4

A MAN OF GOD IS STILL A MAN; IF HE ACTS LIKE GOD 7
MILLION TIMES A YEAR, AND ACTS LIKE A MAN 7 TIMES A YEAR,
THOU SHALL NOT CRUCIFY HIM.

*“A man of God still faces temptations and challenges like all other believers do.
We are men of like passion” ~ Tope Aladenusi*

The phrase “man of God” (popularly referred to as M.O.G in our day) appears 73 times in the King James Version of the Bible, with just 2 occurrences in the New Testament. M.O.G seems to have different meaning in different quarters. In some Christian gatherings, M.O.G refers to the Pastors and church leaders while in other circles, it is used to eulogize anyone who is fervent in the service of God. As at the time I became born again over two decades ago, M.O.G was widely used to describe brethren that appear to be holy in deeds, without visible “spot or blemish”. Many believed this definition without knowing they did; which is why it was common to hear things like – “That brother did that wrong thing, yet he calls himself a man of God” or “No one can convince me that he is a man of God after that wrong he did”. Interestingly, many believers rate themselves and others, not based on the Spirit of God dwelling in them, but on the number of exceptions (or wrongdoings) in their lives. This “exception-based” rating is one of the devil’s traps to stop believers from manifesting the life of God.

Back then, I heard so much about this mode of rating believers to the point that I became a backslider from the faith. One day, I counted about 2 attitudes in my life that I felt were consistently wrong, and I concluded that this “man of God thing” did not seem to work for me. The next day, I stopped every effort towards living the Christian life and attempted to return to my old ways. I was restored in the faith after some years but that “exception-based rating” still had a strong hold in my heart. It manifested

strongly when we were to commence operations in Christ Lifeline. I recall one of the reasons I gave God to prove I wasn't fit for the job was that I was not perfect in my deeds. If I didn't overcome that mind-set, Christ Lifeline would have remained a dream at best because as I write this piece, I still travail daily to measure up to the standard of Christ in my lifestyle.

However, Romans 6:14 (KJV) says *"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* This means sin should not control you. When we rate our fellow believers based on a sin we find in them or when we decide we are not good enough to do God's work because of a shortcoming we haven't dealt with in our lives, then we let sin have dominion over us. Beloved, God sees differently. He sees you just the way he sees Christ (1 John 4:17) and He knows that as you continue to work with Him, you will eventually look exactly the way He wants you to. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) is one of the two places M.O.G appears in the New Testament and it reminds us that a man of God is still a man striving towards perfection. It reads – *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* The scriptures are meant to help the man of God to be perfect! A man of God still faces temptations and challenges like all other believers do. We are men of like passion.

Refusing to act on God's instructions because of "sin consciousness" has never worked. I saw a picture on Facebook of a woman who became a skeleton because she was waiting for the perfect man and I believe that picture also applies to ministry. When we in Christ Lifeline stepped out in faith and focused on doing God's work and fulfilling His will despite our imperfect state, we got so busy walking in the Spirit that we rarely had the time to even think of gratifying the desires of the flesh. We were unconsciously obeying Galatians 5:16. The devil must know how this works that is why he keeps pointing fingers (and using other believers to point fingers) at our wrongdoings.

I am not attempting to encourage the M.O.G to continue in sin by writing this. God forbid! I believe we know better - that those who are born of God do not make a practice of sin. In fact, if you feel encouraged to continue in sin by this write-up, then it may be a clear indication that you are not born again. I'm only trying to implore you not to join the devil in his ministry of accusing the brethren. As leaders, let's stop crucifying ourselves because of wrongdoings. Let's stop the exception-based rating of believers. See the God in men even as you support them to live wholesome lives. And "*...if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*" (Galatians 6:1 - KJV).

LESSON #5

SOW IN YOUR WIFE WHAT YOU WANT TO REAP IN YOUR LIFE.

“If thou shall succeed in life and ministry, never underestimate the importance of women, especially thy own” ~ Tope Aladenusi

We were wrapping up our Christ Lifeline May 2013 leaders meeting when I informed the team that I planned to write this series on “10 leadership lessons”. Pastor Gabriel Ajibade immediately said – “Sounds good. I hope one of the lessons will discuss the importance of having a very good and supportive wife like yours?” There were chimes of “yes” and some nods across the room. I took a surreptitious look at my wife and then I asked with a negative tone – what gives us the impression that I have a supportive wife? I could imagine her thinking – “do you mean I am not supportive?” Pastor Gabriel then said reassuringly – “well, I think from all I can see, she has been very supportive.” At this juncture, I had to come into agreement with Pastor Gabriel and also say a few words on how wonderful my wife has been – and still is! When I turned to look at my wife this time, she was beaming with smiles.

Before I got married, a man once told me that woman means “the woe of a man”, but I believe that is one of the greatest lies ever told. Contrary to this man’s statement, I dare say: if thou shall succeed in life and ministry, never underestimate the importance of women, especially thy own. The bible admonishes us in Ephesians 5:28 (CEV) that *“a husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A husband who loves his wife shows he loves himself.”* The reason is simple – in the mind of God, a man is one flesh with his wife. They are so joined together that whatever he does to her, he does to himself directly. Our wives can be likened to the stomach and digestive system in the body; the food you feed it doesn’t remain there but gets broken down and circulated to the entire body. In like manner, whatever

you sow in your wife (good or bad) will soon get 'circulated' to you. That is why I like The Message translation of Ephesians 5:28 which reads – *“And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They’re really doing themselves a favour—since they’re already “one” in marriage.”*

Beloved brothers, we are so connected to our wives such that "whatever we type on their keyboard appears on our own screen". If we make them unhappy, we end up unhappy. If we make them fulfilled and productive, we end up getting excellent results. Whatever we sow in our wives, we reap in our lives (Galatians 6:7, Ephesians 5:31). Sometimes I think that any man that downplays the importance of having and caring for a good wife is operating at a lower level of intelligence. The devil's trap is to make us see women as complicated and unimportant as possible, because he knows how pivotal they are to our destiny. I once saw a picture that tried to depict the Manual of Understanding Women - Volume 1 as containing millions of pages. But I see that as the devil's trap, and believe a 'one pager' manual would do for a man that has the mind of Christ. Stop listening to the devil's description of a woman; follow the Word!

I have heard many men complain that women seek too much attention. Some even ask how I am able to find time for my wife despite my very busy schedule. Well I don't know the exact estimate of time a woman needs daily, but I know that they begin to feel you are not there for them if they are unable to share that pressing issue on their minds or the latest "gist of the day" because they love to communicate. The conversation may seem to start with complaints, but over time they will glide into sharing ideas. Therefore, giving a regular listening ear and sharing your thoughts (if necessary) about what they have to say with a lot of encouragement where necessary, may be a very key aspect of satisfying their need. I cannot be prescriptive as to what amount of time to share on this but the importance of doing this daily (until it comes naturally) cannot be overemphasized. A man should also strive to meet his wife's need spiritually, emotionally, sexually and physically, or communicate effectively if (and why) you will be falling short in any aspect for some time.

I'm aware there are many women in leadership positions and I do encourage it, but I'm inspired to focus on men on this write-up. Men should do themselves a favour by providing leadership in the home and bringing out the best in their wives. I have also realised that intelligent wives also avoid provoking their husbands to sow the wrong seeds even when they are angry, because they know that if things don't augur well for him, it will definitely rub off on them directly or indirectly. As leaders, this is an area where we must daily strive to see that we are not found wanting. 1 Timothy 3:1-2 (MSG) says *"If anyone wants to provide leadership in the church, good! But there are preconditions: A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to his wife ..."*

LESSON #6

PEOPLE MAY INITIALLY SEEM TO EXPRESS THEIR TALENTS, GIFTS AND CALLING IN A NEGATIVE WAY, BUT LEADERS SHOULD HELP STEER THEM TOWARDS THE RIGHT COURSE.

I recently read the first mail we sent out to our subscribers on 13 April 2003 and could not believe the number of typos I found in it. I recall that in the first five years of Christ Lifeline operations, we sent many articles to our subscribers without properly editing them. In the subsequent years however, most of the weekly devotional messages we have sent out have been edited by Ijeoma Onyenobi (Ijay) – one of our Partners. Why did we make the switch?

The first time we pleaded with Ijay to review a weekly devotional write-up, I vowed never again to send out any more without passing them through a second or third level review. Ijay almost “tore that article apart”. She has a way of first understanding the message you want to pass across and then upgrading the articulation admirably. She reorganizes ideas into perfect sequence and sometimes, deletes the “rhymes” that you hold dear. By the time she is done with her review, you almost feel like doing a course in Linguistics. In fact, there are times she spins my articles into excellence that I feel guilty to consider myself the author. I’d like to share with fellow leaders a good lesson from our “discovery” of Ijay.

Ijay and I worked together in the same organization at one point. This company believed in displaying the highest standard of ethical values. One of the ways they constantly reminded us of these ethical principles was by sending out emails containing “ethical dilemmas” and requesting comments on how we would deal with the issues. One of such emails was sent on 23 July 2007 to all staff and comments started pouring in from left, right and centre. After a week of receiving several “off key” comments, Ijay sent a mail to the over 600 staff picking holes in both the question and responses. When I read her mail, it made a lot of sense, but I can tell you

that she had to attend some top management meetings after that mail. A few months later when Christ Lifeline executives started searching for an editor, that event kept recurring on my mind, and today, Ijay does not only pick holes in our articles, she helps us restructure syntax to develop more edifying messages that bless lives. Her talent was initially perceived as rude by some of our Directors, but God was steering her towards a right course.

As leaders, we must remember that some people are like Moses; his assignment was centred on stopping the injustice of the Egyptians to the Israelites. But the first time he attempted to give expression to his assignment, he killed an Egyptian for maltreating an Israelite. Such people usually give indication of their gift / calling by way of something they claim to hate, something they constantly complain about or wish they could put an end to. People may misunderstand their intentions and even criticize their actions but Christian leaders should see the real intentions of their heart and appreciate the connection to their assignment on earth and, the expansion of God's kingdom. Looking back, I recall several stories like the one described above; God has helped us discover many great people around us, even though the initial expression of their talents, gifts and callings may have been misconstrued by many.

Nevertheless, in assisting to provide guidance, we are learning to apply Jesus' teaching in Luke 16:10 (GNB) "*Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones*". In the past 10 years, we have violated this principle from time to time and have experienced similar situations like the story below, a pastor shared with me in 2004:

A brother came complaining bitterly to the pastor that their church had neglected evangelism – the heartbeat of God. He said he felt grieved to see much attention being paid to frivolous matters when God's original design was for all believers to be committed to the ministry of reconciliation. The pastor, determined to correct the situation, appointed this brother (the "complainant") as head of the evangelism unit. A few weeks after this brother was appointed, he absconded from the church and never returned.

May we always rely on God's wisdom to sieve the wheat from the chaff as we steer others towards maximizing their God-given gifts because not every "complaint" is an indication of a "calling".

LESSON #7

WALKING IN THE SUPERNATURAL SHOULD BE THE NORMAL LIFESTYLE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN, AND EVERY CHRISTIAN LEADER MUST BE FOUND CHAMPIONING THIS COURSE.

“How can we claim - “in Christ we move, live and have our being” when our lives are not constantly punctuated with the supernatural?”

~ Tope Aladenusi

Beloved in Christ, can you list 3 things that you have achieved in the last one year that cannot be explained using natural laws? What 3 things have you achieved that an unbeliever cannot achieve? If there is nothing supernatural about what you have achieved in the past year, it could be an indication that something is fundamentally wrong with your Christianity! The believer is a supernatural being and this should be reflected in his/ her daily walk. Take an inventory of the achievement(s) we celebrate in church today ... Increase in finances, success in examinations, weddings, birth of children, construction of houses, purchase of cars, vacations in beautiful cities, promotions at work, etc.? These are all good things, but people who never encountered Christ also have them. So how are we different? What are we achieving on the earth that is clearly above and beyond the natural, and cannot be explained by natural laws?

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he began to describe a new breed of people that would be called Christians, and here are some ways they are to be recognized:

“Believers will be given the power to perform miracles: they will drive out demons in my name; they will speak in strange tongues; if they pick up snakes or drink any poison, they will not be harmed; they will place their hands on sick people, and these will get well.” Mark 16:17-18 (GNB)

It is saddening that when anyone walks in the supernatural or performs miracles today as described in the verse above, he is regarded as God's General whereas all of God's Recruits should make walking in the supernatural a lifestyle, and our leaders should be championing this course.

James 5:14-15 (CEV) says *"If you are sick, ask the church leaders to come and pray for you ... If you have faith when you pray for sick people, they will get well..."*

Unfortunately, in this day, if you tell a Christian leader that you are sick, the first thing he/she is likely to ask is – "what have you used?" There is a dearth of the supernatural in our day. Our churches are full of experts and not elders; they possess great charisma but lack spiritual character; they display the outward form of Christianity, but reject its real power; many have replaced "the move of the Spirit" with the "jokes of the day". We give sinners our pulpits to teach us success and money making principles, indirectly teaching our followers to neglect the all-surpassing power of Christ (success personified) that is in them. We act like pendulums on social media, 'liking' the philosophies of those who are dead to Christ and 'sharing' the principles of Christ as well.

We visit the rich, political juggernaut to make special prayers for them, but we let the phone calls of the poor go to voice mail. We excuse our persistent 'lukewarm-ness' by reminding everyone that "Jesus could not do mighty works in his own town. . ." and attempt to excuse our drunkenness, with - "Jesus turned water to wine". Thou man of God, God expects more from thee!

I'm not implying that every church leader should focus on organizing healing crusades or saying it is wrong to use natural means to solve problems. No! This is just a reminder for us leaders - we must demonstrate basic faith in the finished work of Christ as instructed in the verses above, no matter the type of ministry we claim to have. How can we claim - "in Christ we move, live and have our being" when our lives are not constantly punctuated with the supernatural? Isn't that a paradox?

It is sad that we have replaced supernatural activities with carnal proclivities, and the fatal consequences are all around us. Many extreme groups are now springing up all over the world; they hold fellowships on Sunday; they also have camp meetings and hold vigils. Some have TV and radio programs and even have platforms that reach out to the needy in the society like we do. How are we different if we only have all these forms of godliness but deny the power thereof? How can we afford to make Christianity - a spiritual walk with God, look like Boys Scout or Girls Guide Associations?

Hebrews 13:7 (GW) says - *“Remember your leaders who have spoken God’s word to you. Think about how their lives turned out, and imitate their faith.”* The leader’s faith is meant to be imitated. It is not an option; we must all be examples of the faith in Christ.

I have also had my share of behaving like “experts”. But today, we strive to ensure that we are sensitive to the move of the Spirit in every meeting we hold and we constantly experience healings and miracles. We also strive to make the supernatural our daily lifestyle. I’m trusting God that in the following years in Christ Lifeline, we would be good examples of walking in the supernatural and many in this generation will be witnesses of the life of Christ. I see a revival in our day!

Do you feel you have derailed from this high calling in Christ? Make a drastic U-turn today! Like Pastor John Maxwell once wrote, “though you cannot go back and make a brand new start, my friend, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end.”

LESSON #8

WHEN GOD GIVES YOU THE PRIVILEGE TO LEAD A PROJECT,
YOU MUST ACCOUNT FOR EVERY PENNY AND PERSON HE
COMMITTS TO YOU TO EXECUTE THAT PROJECT.

Three words commonly used to describe Christian leaders in the New Testament are “servant”, “minister” and “steward”. These words are interrelated and, when I look at their definitions in a Bible concordance and dictionary, one role (in our day) to which I can liken them is that of a housemaid. A housemaid is someone (female) employed to do general domestic work. In large homes, there may be several housemaids with a “chief” housemaid to oversee them. A Christian leader can be likened to a chief housemaid that leads other housemaids in the management of projects and property for the owner of the house – Christ. It is striking how the early apostles described themselves; for instance:

- Romans 1:1 - *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle”*;
- James 1:1 - *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”*;
- 2Peter 1:1 - *“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ”*.

The repeated use of “servant” is not a coincidence! Do our leaders today truly see themselves as servants?

A chief housemaid does not own the house; she must follow her master’s (or mistress’) instructions to run effectively. Similarly, we must learn to obey God’s instructions to run His church and lead His people. We must never think or act like we “own” the ministry God has committed into our hands, because it truly does not belong to us. We must work out the implications of this ownership in every detail of our disposition even for “little things” – things like displaying our pictures on every corner of the

physical buildings we use to represent the mission, something a servant or housemaid would not dare to do. We must always draw attention to Christ alone - the head of the church. We should have the same mind-set regarding the finances of the ministry. In the early years of Christ Lifeline, I used to worry a lot about how to get funds to execute "our" projects because we do not collect tithes and offerings, we only receive freewill donations from Partners. Then it dawned on me that Christ Lifeline is God's project and He won't let it suffer, more so, a housemaid doesn't worry about funds. I started striving to take a cue from Apostle Paul where he said -*"Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us"* (2 Cor. 10:13 NLT). We should only worry about funds if we leave the boundaries of our assignment.

When you have the God-given privilege to lead a project, you must account for every penny and person he commits to you. Some ministers of God, especially in small ministries, fund ministry activities with personal finances but the flip side is, when they are in dire personal need they also "partake" of the ministry funds. They do this fearlessly claiming that they have given their "all" to the ministry and things will all "balance out". Does a servant dare spend his Master's funds without approval? Some years ago, an accountant assisted us to prepare the Ministry's financial statements for the year and he came to say when he was done but he could not account for about 2,000 Naira; he however told me not to worry about it because the amount was "not material". I looked at him sternly and informed him that ministry is different from other companies. We don't provide accounts on the basis of materiality; we are to account for every penny. I asked him to go do a proper reconciliation and look for that difference. I could see that he was stunned, but the standards are high in Christianity. Titus 1:7 says *"for a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God"*.

One of the most challenging aspects of accountability in the kingdom where I still struggle has to do with people. Hebrews 13:17 (GNB) says *"Obey your leaders and follow their orders. They watch over your souls without resting, since they must give to God an account of their service."* Many count the number of followers or members we have, but do we also account for

their lives? Some church pastors lobby to be posted to large branches, and the desire of every Christian leader I have met in life is to increase the number of people they influence.

Do we understand the gravity / implication of being “in charge” of God’s flock, that it goes beyond just counting the numbers to accounting for the lives of our members? As the chief “housemaid”, can we truly say we have assisted all the housemaids to properly execute the mandate for their lives as well as our collective mandate of reconciling men to God? 1Corinthians 4:1-2 (GNB) says *“You should think of us as Christ’s servants, who have been put in charge of God’s secret truths. The one thing required of such servants is that they be faithful to their master.”* Are we faithful Christ?

LESSON #9

GOD MAY PLACE A “SET MAN” IN EVERY ASSEMBLY OR MINISTRY, BUT IT DOESN’T MEAN THAT THE OTHERS ARE DEAD MEN. LEADERS OUGHT TO PUT STRUCTURES IN PLACE TO ENABLE THEIR FOLLOWERS DO GREATER WORKS THAN THEM.

“A success without many great successors is a failure and every leader must be committed to raising committed leaders. ~ Tope Aladenusi

At a recent Christ Lifeline’s executives’ meetings, we had a post-event evaluation of the Ilorin World Outreach Convention (WoC) that took place on 11 May 2013. Ilorin WoC 2013 was the first time I had deliberately decided not to attend a major event, so I was curious as to the outcome of the event. I asked the other executives how it went and if they missed me. Lanre Durowoju replied – “we didn’t miss you at all. Adeyiga Awomuti delivered a powerful message and the manifestation of the Spirit was awesome. Some people have called after the event to share testimonies of healings and transformation”. I muttered a delighted “thank you Jesus”. I informed the team that it was evident that we can function in the absence of the President and that was my intention for not attending this meeting. More so, one of the greatest tests of a leader is “reproduction”, and my desire, in the coming years, is to see our leaders and partners do what I do in ministry in greater dimensions.

It may sound like a tough call, but that is the example we see with Jesus Christ. Jesus spent about 3 years with His 12 disciples when He was physically present on earth, and when He left, almost all of them could do what He did, some did even greater works. I like the way Apostle John described their experience with Jesus in 1 John 1:1 (GW). He said - *“The Word of life existed from the beginning. We have heard it. We have seen it. We observed and touched it.”* They went beyond just seeing Jesus’ works and hearing Him; they touched Him; they experienced Him; they observed

His process and products. That is reproduction! Unfortunately, in our day, many followers just “see and hear”. That is why it is common to hear us start every “religious statement” with – “my mentor said” because we have not observed and experienced “what we see and hear”. Can followers today do 10% of what our leaders in the kingdom do, especially in the leader’s absence? Leaders in the Kingdom must consciously strive to develop better leaders. Many leaders in the world strive to ensure that their followers are not as knowledgeable or powerful as they are. In Christianity however, leaders ought to put structures in place to make their followers outperform them. The realm in which we operate is one where “a success” without many great successors is a failure and every leader must be committed to raising committed leaders.

In our early days in ministry, we used to long to stand before 10,000 people (or more) at a time to preach the gospel. But as we grow spiritually, our focus has shifted to – how can we raise 10,000 people to do what we do in God’s kingdom, in even greater dimensions? In 2 Timothy 2:2 (CEV), Paul told Timothy – *“You have often heard me teach. Now I want you to tell these same things to followers who can be trusted to tell others.”* This refers to reproduction – getting followers to start exhibiting leadership dispositions in the same measure as Paul. In Titus 1:5 (GW), Paul told Titus – *“I left you in Crete to do what still needed to be done-appointing spiritual leaders in every city as I directed you.”* This is our motivation in Christ Lifeline; we don’t want to lead “10,000 inactive people” who are spiritually weak, lethargic and content with being prayed over; we want to raise “10,000 foot soldiers” who will go to into the field of life, crush the adversary and get supernatural results everywhere they go. Some of the followers we bring up may end up attempting to sabotage the ministry however we should not be deterred from obeying the Word. Every ministry is likely to have a Judas Iscariot but we must trust God to deal with problematic situations or people we encounter in obeying his instructions. I am trusting God that in the next 10 years, we would have put in place stronger and better structures to enable others identify purpose, execute divine mandates, win many souls to God’s kingdom, and develop the next generation of leaders.

LESSON #10

MANY GREAT DOORS IN LIFE AND MINISTRY ARE OPENED ONLY WITH THE KEY OF CONSISTENCY, SO LEADERS OUGHT TO DEVELOP STAYING POWER.

“Thousands of people have talent. I might as well congratulate you for having eyes in your head. The one and only thing that counts is: Do you have staying power?” ~ Noel Coward

I believe that ministry is like running a marathon, but most times you are required to run it like a sprint. I liken ministry to running a marathon because if the Lord tarries in His second coming, it is going to be a very long journey and you must be found doing His work until the last day of your life. In other words, all believers should die in “active service” to the living God. I liken disposition to ministry to a sprint because the Bible commands us in Ephesians 5:16 to redeem the time. We should make every moment count and cover as much ground as we can every hour. If you watch marathons, you will observe that a key ingredient required is consistency. Now imagine running a marathon with the speed of a sprint, that would require massive consistency, and leaders in God’s kingdom must always exhibit this quality.

I love the words of Noel Coward - “Thousands of people have talent. I might as well congratulate you for having eyes in your head. The one and only thing that counts is: Do you have staying power?” Leaders ought to develop staying power. Even if you seem to be moving at snail’s pace, with consistency, you may end up in the Promised Land just like the snail made it to Noah’s ark. Consistency is the ingredient that separates leaders in God’s kingdom; many leaders are exposed to the same information, some put such information to practice only once in a while but others practise them almost all the time. As a leader, you have to keep ‘pushing

the ministry' to contact those who will transform it (spiritually, financially, etc.) and, those whom it will transform.

We see several emphases on consistency in the Bible. For instance, Philippians 4:4 (KJV) - *"Rejoice in the Lord always"* 1Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV) - *"Pray without ceasing"*; I Corinthians 15:58 (GW) - *"... Always excel in the work you do for the Lord..."* This is because **the effect of doing a good thing all the time is usually different from doing it once in a while**. We say - God is good, all the time; therefore as His extension on earth, we ought to do good, all the time. It is commonly said that the secret to success is to start from scratch and keep on scratching. As leaders, our lives should not be branded with abandoned projects. Although we may encounter many challenges along the way, once we are sure we are on the right lane, we should never give up until we have made the last attempt that will consolidate all our past efforts.

If you are a leader doing the work of the ministry genuinely and not cutting corners, you may find it one of the most challenging things you will ever do especially because you are dealing with lives. But you must always encourage yourself to move on, because many people will mistakenly see you as a 'super person' that has outgrown encouragement. You will encounter 'traffic lights' on your way but you must not let them deter you. I recall when we started publishing Today's Lifeline magazine; we encountered so many challenges in production and distribution to the point that we got suggestions from some pastors to stop production. But because we remained consistent; we now receive regular requests from people asking us to name our price to put them on the cover of the magazine; to this we are swift to respond that the price tag is "lifestyle".

The only time we should give up as leaders is when we are on a wrong road. You may have heard that winners never quit, but winners are the best quitters in life. They always quit wrong and unprofitable things that cannot take them to the place of purpose. Great leaders quit complacency and embrace consistency. They have staying power. They move beyond yesterday's achievements and are always reaching out for what is ahead. We can learn from Apostle Paul when he said in Philippians 3:13 (GNB)

– *“I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead.”* I trust God that we will all finish strong in the Christian race.

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