

INTRODUCTION – 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter is apportioned with three (3) sections in the bible that reveal Paul's messages to the Corinthians for our study, understanding, obedience, blessings and edification.

1. Stewards of the Mysteries of God: **1 Corinthians 4:1 – 5**
2. Fools for Christ's Sake: **1 Corinthians 4:6 – 13**
3. Paul's Paternal Care: **1 Corinthians 4:14 – 21**

Clearly it portrays Paul as the spiritual father to the Church of Corinth with interest and passion to the faith of the Corinthian Believers, Christian teachings and doctrines, spiritual growth and maturity.

The fourth chapter of his first epistle focused first on being stewards of the mysteries of God as Ministers of Christ. His message was tailored to change the wrong perception of the Corinthians Believers. He was not willing to be judged by any human court of his apostolic ministry with composition of unbelieving sinners. He charged the Corinthians Believers not to judge anything before its time but commit all judgment to God who will bring out the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of human hearts. Why because every praise of the obedient comes from God and not subject to the whims and caprices of people.

Second, Paul's second chapter of his first epistle focused on the unpopular ministry of the Apostles to be fools for Christ. He revealed the paradoxical nature of the apostolic ministry to rather produce comfortable Believing Christians through societal rejection, pain and suffering at all fronts. It was like working and labouring for others to benefit and enjoy their fruits when recognition and respect misses them. Yet this was God's chosen way of righteousness to make the gospel of salvation real and believable to the people and the Churches.

Thirdly, Paul emphasized on his paternal care for the Church of Corinth. For they were the fruits of his ministry. He was concerned by their spiritual and physical wellbeing to make their hope of eternal life a reality and achievable through obedience and righteous living. He sent his beloved son and trusted ministry partner Timothy to remind the Church of all his ways in Christ. Besides, he dealt with the group in the Church that opposed him in ministry. For they had taken advantage of his absence to accuse him of abandonment.

Yet Paul's response revealed his fatherly concern to restore the Church to her dignity and glory either through the rod of rebuke or love or spirit of meekness. For his return had been decided and inevitable but in the will of God and not subject to the whims and caprices of those who opposed him. With this message Paul ended chapter four by revealing his desire not to use his God given authority in using the rod of rebuke and punishment but love and spirit of meekness.

To enable readers and the Churches and Body of Christ as a whole understand the fourth chapter of Paul's epistle, I have done my best with the grace of God upon my life and ministry to explain verse by verse or combination of verses in bringing out the quality of Paul's messages to the Corinthians.

Like a weaned child just weaned from milk and drawn from the breasts, the word of God is taught precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little **(Isaiah 28:9 & 10)**. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, He shall guide us unto all truths **(John 16:13)**.

Connect to other writings of the Church and bible commentaries as the Holy Spirit enlightens your understanding because grace and truth emanated from our Lord Jesus Christ **(John 1:17)**. For this study, additional biblical information from the New King James Bible Commentary added fresh revelations to enhance understanding.

Study and know its relevance to your life first as a Christian before you apply it to other Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders. I trust God that you will be equipped with His knowledge and continuous belief in Christ's salvation work on the cross as tied to obedience, knowledge, spiritual wisdom, humility, spiritual growth and maturity. You are not alone because the Holy Spirit is Your Helper.

The focus here is your obedience to gain insight and understanding of Paul's messages unto spiritual growth and maturity in the Church. It is my prayer and hope that you shall be an instrument in the Lord's service to bring sound Christian teachings and practices to your local Church and Body of Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah!

INTERESTED IN GOD'S JUDGMENT OF MY MINISTRY, NOT PERSONAL OR HUMAN COURT JUDGMENT

INSPIRATION

Every servant had a master or mistress and every steward has specific responsibilities to do and account for them. For every servant with a master has limited rights and freedoms because of strict management.

The bible says that just as the eyes of servants look to their master and the eyes of a maid look to the mistress, so also our eyes look to the Lord Our God till He shows mercy on us **(Psalms 123:2)**. In other words, no servant or maid takes off his or her eyes from the master and mistress respectively. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:1 – Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in Chapter four (4) beginning with his defense of their call as Ministers of Jesus Christ and Stewards of the mysteries of God. In other words, they were anointed for this special roles in the Church. It means to say that the Corinthians Believers were to see and perceive them as people entrusted with the divine mandate and responsibility to make speak for Christ to His Church and all people. It means to say that they were loaded with revelations and gospel truths by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel and teach and equip the Church. By this truth, Paul meant to change the perception of the Corinthians about them considering the divisions recorded in their midst.

Now that the Church in Corinth understood that their sense of belonging was Christ and Christ is God's **(1 Corinthians 1:23, 3:5)**, they needed to be reminded that they were servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. The main reason God called them in Christ to be apostles was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and save people eternally **(1 Corinthians 1:17)**.

In other words, they worked for the Lord Jesus Christ in obedience to fulfilling the Great Commission just like the early Apostles **(Matthew 28:18 – 20)**. They were workers in the Lord's Vineyard. They laboured in the Lord's vineyard as servants of Christ and as apostles praying, preaching, teaching, establishing Churches and grooming people for leadership positions for spiritual growth unto maturity.

Again Paul reminded the Church in Corinth about the truth that they were stewards of the mysteries of God. He awakened their consciences and increased their understanding to the truth that God had entrusted the mysteries of His kingdom to them as Ministers **(1 Corinthians 2:7 & 8)**. It is very important to note that the mysteries of God here refers to the revealed salvation message with faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to receive the gift of eternal. This was hitherto kept from the understanding of the people of old in past generations until revealed. For this purpose, they called and anointed and

sent as Apostles to preach and reveal this divine blessing to the Gentiles too besides the Jews.

In other words, the Corinthians Believers were to perceive and see them as having the keys to unlock the mysteries of the kingdom of God. That is why they received revelations of the Holy Spirit and declared the gospel truths to them **(1 Corinthians 2:10)**. That is why by the Holy Spirit, they revealed and spoke the wisdom of God other than the wisdom of the world **(1 Corinthians 2:12)**.

It means to say that they were not subject to human interpretation and court interpretation of their position in ministry and the Church as servant Ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God hidden in time past but revealed now in Christ **(1 Corinthians 2:7)**. By this gospel truth, Paul meant also that there were gospel truths and revelations that was to be spoken and shared to the Corinthians as revealed by the Holy Spirit **(1 Corinthians 2:9 – 11)**.

Indeed the perception and value of your Ministers and Church leaders determines level of obedience, respect, recognition and support to them. If you value them high as ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God, you will pray, help and support them in ministry. If you have low esteem of them, you will not pray, help and support them but find fault with them always and even join unbelievers to insult and destroy their reputations.

Even Jesus asked the disciples what people thought of Him. Also He asked the opinion of the twelve disciples which made Peter confessed Him as the Messiah and the Christ **(Matthew 16:16 – 18)**. In the same way when Ministers and Church leaders are loved and appreciated sincerely, they are motivated to fulfill their ministries as God called them. For when your ministers have the assurance of Church belief and support of them as called by God, they are motivated to labour in Christ and fulfill their ministries.

Indeed having like – minded people as ministry partners and ministry friends helps you to achieve God's purposes for your life and ministry and the Church. In the bible and in Paul's ministry, all the people he identified as beloved **(Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 4:17, Colossians 4:7, 9)**, brother **(1 Corinthians 1:1)**, son **(1 Timothy 1:2)**, co – labourer **(Philemon 1:1, 24)**, companions **(Philippians 4:2 & 3)**, fellow soldiers **(Philippians 2:25, Philemon 1:2)** such as Epaphroditus, Apphia, Archippus, as well as his epistles to the Churches and saints **(1 Corinthians 1:2)** were all ministry partners. For all workers and stewards who labour in the Lord's Vineyard are to be accorded love, respect and honour.

Let your prayers, giving, helps and support show that you love, care, and respect and value your Ministers and Christian leaders such as Deacons, Deaconesses and Elders, various group leaders, who shepherd you in Christ. For you are what you think in your heart **(Proverbs 23:7)**. For these are led by the Holy Spirit **(Romans 8:14)**. Be wise.

New King James Bible Commentary: Servants had no unique position but stewards did. A steward was a slave who administered at the affairs of his master's household, though he himself owned nothing (compare the testimony of the early Church with **Acts 4:32**). Joseph held the same position in Potiphar's house (**Genesis 39:2 – 19**). As stewards, believers manage the message and the ministry God had entrusted to them.

THE MESSAGE OF APOSTLE PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT THEIR PERCEPTION OF THEM SHOULD BE SERVANT MINISTERS OF CHRIST ENTRUSTED, WITH THE MYSTERIES OF GOD AS STEWARDS, TO SHARE WITH THEM. FOR THIS PURPOSE THEY WERE CALLED AND ANOINTED AS MINISTERS TO PREACH AND TEACH GOSPEL TRUTHS AND REVELATIONS. HENCE THEY NEEDED THEIR SUPPORT AND NOT COMPLAINTS AND RESISTANCE.

PRAYER

What a mighty God you are in thy works such as the Church and the lives and ministries of Your servants and stewards.

We pray that You help us by Your Holy Spirit to accept our leaders and Ministers and all Church workers in the spirit of love, care, giving, protection and preservation.

May they have our support always in the name of Jesus. Amen

HAVE A HIGH VALUE AND PREMIUM FOR YOUR MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND WORKERS IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD AND IT WILL BE EASY TO PRAY, HELP AND SUPPORT THEM. NANA KWAKU DUODU

A FAITHFUL STEWARD; GOD'S WILL FOR US IN CHRIST

INSPIRATION

A steward is a person entrusted with a responsibility to manage wisely and account for it. It means to say that there is no position and responsibility without management and accountability. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:2 – Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

It was on this premise that Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that a steward is required to remain faithful in any entrusted responsibility, assignment and mission. By this truth, he referred to himself and all Ministers and Church leaders and Believers entrusted with the message of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Paul's message revealed that their apostolic authority and mandate was to be used on God's terms in Christ by the Holy Spirit to change and bless the Church and people. This is confirmed by his salutation and introduction in the beginning of his first epistle to the Corinthians as an Apostle of Jesus Christ in the will of God **(1 Corinthians 1:1)**. By this truth, he set the pace for his apostolic ministry to the Church in Corinth and to the Corinthians as a people and nation.

Also he had in mind that one day he shall account for his works as a Minister evident in his message to the Corinthians about building only on the foundation of Jesus Christ and using the right building materials that would endure the purity of God's fire in Judgment **(1 Corinthians 3:11 – 15)**.

The Church needs faithful stewards and not unfaithful stewards because God means business and profit making in the Church and the Great Commission. Either you are on the side of God as Believing Christian or not. It is important to note that faithfulness is easily achievable if loyalty is complete and not partial. Here is the bible story of David's fight and capture of the royal city of Rabbah of the Ammonites. David's army commander, Joash, conquered the royal city and its water supply. Instead of making a name for himself and be the toast of the Israelites and even gain same or more popularity over David, he sent a message to him asking him to bring his forces against the cities of the Ammonites so that his victory would cause the name of the city to be named after him. The bible says that David obeyed the word of Joash and led his forces to conquer the city and the people praised him for it **(2 Samuel 12:26 – 31)**.

It means to say that the victory over the whole of the Ammonites was in the account of David. Indeed, Joab was a loyal army commander to his king, David. Hence his faithfulness displayed in his military service and loyalty to David. It means to say then that loyalty makes faithfulness achievable in ministry as a servant minister and a steward minister, Church worker, and in Christian

service. Hence the charge to be loyal and faithful if you believe in a ministry and you play your supporting role as a ministry partner and ministry helper.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is God's seal of authority and approval to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and save people eternally and physically. With this spiritual experience, a steward cannot and must not be unfaithful. For cursed is the one who does the work of God deceitfully and keeps his sword from the blood; call to duty **(Jeremiah 48:10)** and handles the word of God deceitfully **(2 Corinthians 4:2)** as in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians.

Our Christian duty is to be faithful to God who has made us stewards of His revealed mysteries once upon a time hidden from the foundation of this world **(Romans 16:25, 1 Corinthians 2:7)**. Be led by the Holy Spirit and you will not be subjected to the whims and caprices of people. Resist the devil and he will flee from you and hold tight to your faith **(1 John 5:8 & 9)**. Overcome attempted manipulations through prayer, scriptures, faith, confidence and boldness in the power of the Holy Spirit. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world, even our faith **(1 John 5:4 & 5)**.

We need the likes of Joseph in Potiphar's house in Egypt, **(Genesis 39:2 – 19)**, Joshua with Moses **(Numbers 27:18)** and Elisha with Elijah **(2 Kings 2:1 – 15)**, the good attitude and faithfulness of the workers who repaired the damaged temple under the reign of king Joash of Judah **(2 Chronicles 24:14)**, workers of the temple under the kingship reign of Jehoash **(2 Kings 12:15)**, the disciples with Jesus **(Luke 6:13 – 19)**, Timothy with Paul **(Acts 17:15, 1 Timothy 1:2, Philippians 2:19 – 23)**, works of Epaphroditus **(Philippians 2:24 & 25, 4:18)**, and Epaphras with Paul **(Colossians 1:7, 4:12, Philemon 1:23)**.

The bible commends also Jesus and Moses as being faithful to God. For they were stewards of the manifold wisdom of God. We are all like Moses to be faithful as stewards over God's house looking unto our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was faithful over His own house **(Hebrews 3:1 – 6)**.

All these people were faithful in the things and works of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ as entrusted to them by their masters and superiors. If all Ministers, Church leaders and Believing Christians would be faithful, the Church and works of God would be results oriented and profitable. Yes bear the fruit of faithfulness by the Holy Spirit though it is rare in these evil days **(Proverbs 20:6, Galatians 5:22g)**.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT FAITHFULNESS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH WAS IS CHERISHED AS A MINISTER OF CHRIST AND STEWARD OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD.

BESIDES, LOYALTY IS SYNONYMOUS WITH FAITHFULNESS TO COMPLETE THE WORKS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PRAYER

Our faithful God, we thank You that Your Holy Spirit helps us to show forth our Christlike nature in and outside the Church.

Our stewardship requires faithfulness. Help us to bear the fruit of faithfulness as Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Ministers in order to achieve Your mission and vision.

For this we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS WE CAN NEVER RUN AWAY FROM IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. ONE OF THEM IS FAITHFULNESS WHICH HAS A GOOD BEGINNING WITH COMMITMENT AND RAYS OF HOPE INTO THE MIDDLE AND A BEAUTIFUL AND REWARDING END. BE FAITHFUL. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD AND HIS CHRIST AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH WORKER, CHURCH LEADER, MINISTER AND CHRISTIAN LEADER IS NOT AUTOMATIC. YOU HAVE TO EARN IT BY BEARING THE FRUIT OF FAITHFULNESS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. LOYALTY THEN BECOMES A CATALYTIC MECHANISM TO ACHIEVE FAITHFULNESS UNDER GOD'S GRACE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IF YOU HAVE THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO DO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS WOULD BE NOTICEABLE IN YOU. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD; THE LORD'S JUDGMENT AND NOT THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

INSPIRATION

Every stewardship is subjected to the scrutiny of stakeholders such as the people. In governance, the stewardship of the government is assessed every election year by the electorate; the voters.

However stakeholders who are scripturally mandated to judge the Church are Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders. For they have the Holy Spirit to make righteous judgments to instruct, correct, rebuke and establish righteousness like the Lord (**Psalms 9:8, Ecclesiastes 3:17, 2 Timothy 4:8**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:3 – 5 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Having stated clearly as being faithful ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, Apostle Paul commented on people and societal opinions, perceptions and judgments of their ministries and the Church.

He made the Corinthians aware that his apostolic ministry was above personal opinions, perceptions and judgment of people; hence a small thing in his eyes.

Secondly, Paul told the Corinthians of no need to put confidence in oneself for justification purpose. This means that Paul did not even justify himself as a good and faithful steward despite his achievements. Rather, he emphasized on the Lord's judgment because of His righteousness, and accountability to Him for calling Him into ministry.

Thirdly Paul cautioned the Corinthians not to rush and judge nothing before the time. For the Corinthians had their own way of judging people. Besides the second coming of the Lord will reveal the hidden things in the hearts and minds of people through the light of His word and Holy Spirit. By this truth, the counsels of the hearts of the people would be revealed. Thus everyone whose work meets God's standard would receive his or due praise from Him.

Clearly, Paul's position on the matter of evaluations and judgments of ministry works and the Church as well as Christian lives were squarely in the hands of God and not human. For God knows all things even the state of the hearts and minds. It revealed his confidence of being led by the Holy Spirit and dependence on the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of this world.

Again Paul realized that the carnality of the Corinthians with divisions recorded in their midst were signs of immaturity to make good judgments of ministry works and Church work. Rather Paul cautioned them to trust in the judgment of the Lord in due time rather becoming judges in their own courts or sending them to human courts to decide spiritual matters **(1 Corinthians 6:1 – 7)**.

This is a reminder of the words of Jesus not to judge people because the same measure of judgment will be meted to them especially in sin **(Matthew 7:1 – 5)**. It means to say that one cannot judge rightly and fairly if caught up in the same sins.

Later in chapter 6 of Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, he mentioned that the saints (Church) will judge the world and this includes all Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Ministers who are filled and led by the Holy Spirit **(1 Corinthians 6:1 – 7)**. It is therefore unscriptural to judge one another in the Church when we are in God's perfect will in Christ. It is therefore unrighteous to wrong one another in the Church because we must be above reproach as a changed and transformed people to inherit the kingdom of God **(1 Corinthians 6:8 & 9)**.

Therefore don't judge my prayer life, bible studies, evangelism, and other Christian duties and obligations when you lack revelation and you are immature because of sin and disobedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Be wise to instruct, correct and rebuke where necessary using scripture by the Holy Spirit as a practicing Believing Christian **(2 Timothy 2:25, 3:16, Hebrews 12:9)**. The Church must be full of people who have a sense of unity of faith, purpose and unity, and not divisions from wronging one another and infightings.

The New King James Bible Commentary: A steward was not to worry about the evaluations of those around him or even his own self – assessment; he needed only to please his master. Similarly, while believers can benefit from the constructive evaluations of fellow believers, their ultimate Judge is the Lord Himself. Since God is the Judge, we should be careful not to make premature evaluations of others.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS WAS THAT HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD SHOULD NOT BE TIED TO HUMAN PERCEPTIONS AND HUMAN COURTS. RATHER, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE IS THE LORD HIMSELF WHO JUDGES HIS CHURCH AND HAS GIVEN HIS SPIRIT TO HIS CHURCH TO ALSO MAKE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS.

HENCE ALL MATTERS OF CONTROVERSIES AND CONCERN SHOULD BE JUDGED IN THE CHURCH BY QUALIFIED PEOPLE AND NOT OUTSIDE THE CHURCH BY UNQUALIFIED PEOPLE WHO DO NOT SHARE THE SAME FAITH IN CHRIST WITH US.

PRAYER

Our Righteous Judge who knows the hearts and minds of people, we pray that You help us not to be judges in our own courts, or go to human courts with different set of laws that contradict the Christian faith.

We pray that we shall leave all judgments to You as the Righteous Judge who knows the intents of the hearts and minds of all people.

Help us to fulfill our divine mandate to instruct in righteousness, correct all errors and rebuke for sanity to prevail in the Church.

We pray also for sense of unity and purpose in the Christian faith and ministry and the Church in Jesus' name. Amen.

THOSE WHO HAVE PERSONAL AGENDA RUSH TO MAKE QUICK JUDGMENTS AGAINST BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS. BUT THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT CORRECT WRONG DOINGS AND LEAVE JUDGMENT TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WHOSE SECOND COMING WILL EXPOSE ALL FORMS OF SIN, EVIL AND WICKEDNESS. FOR IT WOULD REVEAL THE PURITY OF HEARTS AND MINDS OF PEOPLE AS THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

DON'T BE A FALSE JUDGE WHEN THE TRUE JUDGE IS THERE AND IS AT WORK CONCERNING THE STATE OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES, MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH. FOR THE ACCUSER OF THE SAINTS IN THE CHURCH DAY AND NIGHT IS THE DEVIL. FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT FILLED CHURCH MUST NOT AND CANNOT BE A PARTNER IN CRIME. BE WISE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**NO ONE IS ABOVE SCRIPTURE;
BE MINDFUL AND HUMBLE AS PAUL AND APOLLOS**

INSPIRATION

In life, the elderly in their retirement and old ages are said to be examples of hard work, prosperity, righteousness integrity and counsel to the youth. The bible says that the silver haired head is a crown of glory and it is found in the way of righteousness **(Proverbs 16:31)**. It is not found in the way of the wicked or just growing old because good healthy practices but living a righteous life in Christ by the Holy Spirit unto God. Such was the righteous and exemplary lives and ministries of Paul and Apollos to the Church in Corinth. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:6 – And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

The message of Paul was that the Corinthians were to know that nobody was above the word of God; scripture. In this truth, he used himself and Apollos as righteous examples of role model. They were to see them as models of humility and learn from them; not to think and rate men above what is written as scripture. This was purposed driven as a preventive measure against pride, in – fighting and sectarianism which Paul had noticed in the Church of Corinth. They were to emulate them because of the opportunity of learning to improve on their understanding in the complete gospel of Jesus Christ, and perception of Ministers and Church leaders as the Lord's appointed.

To buttress this truth, Paul equated himself with Apollos as Ministers of Christ even though he formed the Church of Corinth as a planter and Apollos as a waterer. He charged them to focus on God and not the ministers. For God gives the increase. Truly, he considered Apollos as a ministry partner to be rewarded individually and not as a competitor. For he wrote that they were God's fellow workers in the environment of the Church and world as God's field, and in the lives of the Corinthians Believers as God's building **(1 Corinthians 3:6 – 9)**.

This contrasted the perception of some members of the Church of Corinth who were puffed up against one another in the rating of one minister above the other. As Paul revealed, they had set aside the word of God to introduce their own teaching in the Church. This was a form of carnality in the Church.

Earlier Paul had reminded the Corinthians that they were servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Besides, he had communicated to them that a steward is to be faithful **(1 Corinthians 4:2)**. On this truth, Paul reminded them that no one was above scripture even as Ministers and Church leaders. The Corinthians Believers were, therefore, advantaged to learn humility and have a sense of unity for a better tomorrow; a healthy Church.

Obedience to the word of God was enforced in a direct manner using scripture as the standard of measurement. It is a reminder of the words of Jesus that people who reject Him and does not receive His words would be judged by the very words spoken to them on the Judgment Day **(John 12:48)**.

We must remember that humility precedes favour just as pride precedes a fall **(Proverbs 18:12)**. Indeed we build the Lord's Church with humility and not pride. If our Ministers and Church leaders practically demonstrate humility, it is a righteous sign to join and support them for Christ to be exalted in the Church.

Do you know that before the coming of Jesus and His messianic ministry, Moses was described as the humblest man that ever lived on earth **(Numbers 12:3)**? Learn from him as much as you learn from Christ.

Like the Corinthians, humility teaches and instructs us in righteousness and also corrects us of wrongdoings and distortions in life, ministry and the Church. It promotes a healthy and sound Church devoid of pride and divisions. Yes humility reminds us that no one is above obedience to the complete gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God to humanity and His Church.

The bible teaches us to have the mind of Christ and humble ourselves in this life if we are to be blessed **(Philippians 2:5 – 8)**. Know that if we are blessed to have humble Ministers, Church leaders, we must encourage them with submission, obedience, support, and Christ's interest unlike self – interests. For they will teach members of the Churches to consider and perceive them as Christ's ministers and align to them for selfish interests.

Blessed is the Church whose Ministers and Church leaders wear the cloak of humility and sets righteous examples for all Believing Christians to emulate. It's part of our fellowship and relationship **(Hebrews 1:1 – 4)**. Keep believing and pray always because it is always by grace beyond human strength.

New King James Bible Commentary: The Greek term translated learn is related to the word translated disciple in Matthew 28:19. It implies the use of a skill and not just knowledge.

New King James Bible Commentary: The Corinthians knew about humility and so Paul called on them to become humble. Greeks considered humility to be a fault, a characteristic of slaves. To the Christian, however, it exemplifies the attitude of Christ (See Philippians 2:5 – 8).

The phrase, in us: Paul presented himself and Apollos as models to follow (verse 16, 11:1).

The phrase, what is written: The word is often used to introduce a quotation in the Old Testament (see Romans 14:11). Paul was exhorting the Corinthians not to go beyond the teaching of the scripture. Then they would avoid the pride and divisions that were fracturing their Church. A

true Minister of God's word will use scripture to unify and strengthen the Church.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT IT WAS TIME TO PUT A STOP TO THE WRONG PERCEPTION OF EXALTING ONE MINISTER OVER THE OTHER ABOVE WHAT SCRIPTURE TAUGHT THEM. FOR THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST EMPHASIZES ON OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY BUT FROWNS ON PRIDE AND SECTARIANISM.

IT WAS A MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH MUST HAVE ONE VOICE, FAITH AND SENSE OF UNITY AND PURPOSE THE MINISTERS THAT GOD HAD GIVEN THEM.

PRAYER

Dear God, we thank You for teaching us obedience and humility through the gospel of Jesus Christ and ministries of Your servants.

We pray that Your Holy Spirit will convict and remind us not to compare and rate one Minister over the other above scripture.

Help us with scriptures and the Holy Spirit to make us humble and obey Your word beyond our ego and self – pride. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WHEN WE WEAR THE CLOAK OF HUMILITY AS A CHURCH, WE BECOME EMPTY OF SELF, PRIDE AND SELF – EGO TO MAKE IT EASIER OBEY THE COMPLETE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEREFORE MINISTERS OF CHRIST HAS THE SAME GIVEN MINISTRIES AND ASSIGNMENTS TO FULFILL, AND ARE NOT TO BE RATED OVER THE OTHERS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

NO ONE IS ABOVE SCRIPTURE IS A RIGHTEOUS CHECK AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE, PRIDE AND SECTARIANISM IN THE CHURCH. FOR WE ARE TO PERCEIVE THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST AS GOD'S SERVANTS AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. FOR ALL ARE CALLED AND ANOINTED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

NO ONE IS ABOVE SCRIPTURE; THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. GOD DOES NOT HAVE FAVOURITES WHEN IT COMES TO HUMILITY, BELIEF, ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AS SALVATION, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND BUILDING OF HIS CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS. FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO OBEY AND BLESSED AS A CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

GOD'S COMMANDS ARE DESIGNED TO GUIDE YOU TO LIFE'S VERY BEST. YOU WILL NOT OBEY HIM, IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE HIM AND TRUST HIM. YOU CANNOT BELIEVE HIM IF YOU DO NOT LOVE HIM. YOU CANNOT LOVE HIM UNLESS YOU KNOW HIM. **HENRY BLACKABY**

DON'T BE PROUD; ALL WE HAVE AS A CHURCH IS BY GRACE

INSPIRATION

Life has a nice way of making you proud about the receipt of blessings, riches and power, certificates, positions and titles. But the bible says that Paul emphasized on God's given grace to him and everyone among them. This was purposed driven to prevent the overrated perception of one's self against others. But grace is given to be sober because God has dealt with each one according to measure of faith **(Romans 12:3)**. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4: 7 – For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Paul continued his teaching of the Corinthians Believers to avert the sin of pride where obedience and humility were absent in the Church and doing the Lord's work. Now he focused on giving and receiving from God and acknowledging the grace of God in their lives, ministries and the Church.

Either it was God's grace at work that distinguished themselves from one another or the pride of life. But the import of Paul's message seem to awake their minds and consciences to the truth that the lives of Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Ministers as the Church was a result of God's grace.

Anything short of their spirituality was pride of life. For this was an enemy to the cross of Jesus Christ. It meant that failure to recognize the truth as the blessings of God in Christ was the resultant differences among them. Hence the possibility of favouritism, partiality and looking down on other people.

The bible says that Apostle Paul emphasized on the question of received blessings and things beyond the physical to the spiritual. For he saw their blessings as acts of God. It suggests that Paul wanted the Church in Corinth to believe and accept the God's abundant blessings and grace among them to ensure obedience, humility and service to God and to one another. For one of the gifted Churches planted by Paul was the Church in Corinth.

Thirdly Paul hit the nail right on the head when he rebuked and convicted the Church in Corinth about their pride of life. For they did not give glory to God who had blessed them with abundant spiritual gifts as well as physical gifts and riches and wealth. Their boasts reflected in their words. Paul realized that their behaviour and conduct was worldly and not spiritual. This was gradual corruption that ate into the Church in Corinth with similar traits in the Corinthian society.

But Paul blessed them with grace as part of his salutation **(1 Corinthians 1:3)**. He thanked God always for the Corinthians for the grace of God shown them through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ **(1 Corinthians 1:4)**. And he expressed

God's grace to the Church in Corinth as a wise master builder **(1 Corinthians 3:10)**.

Learning from Paul's message to the Church in Corinth, we must be mindful of the way we behave and conduct ourselves towards one another as Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Ministers. We may have varied gifts with some popular and others unpopular; some ministries more popular than others. But this does not mean that we should look down on others and disrespect them. Don't belittle anybody in the Church because of the anointing or because of special skills like oratory or talent with the hands or mind or gift of the Holy Spirit or ministry grace or riches and wealth. For every good and perfect gift is from above and is received from the Father of lights in whom there is no variation or turning **(James 1:17)**. Know also that the Father works with the Son and Holy Spirit and Angels in His Church.

The summary of Paul's message is that all that is in the Church and received by Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Ministers are the result of God's grace and not human effort. In truth if a heathen king like Nebuchadnezzar was brought up and exalted by God, how much more when one is saved by the Lord Jesus Christ through faith **(Daniel 4:30 – 37, Romans 5:10)**.

The bible talks about the grace of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for the blessing of the Church **(Romans 16:20 & 24, Revelations 12:21)**. If we acknowledge and rely on God's grace abundant on everybody in the Church, we will be better Christians filled and led by the Holy Spirit **(John 1:16 & 17, Acts 4:33, Romans 5:2, Galatians 2:21)**.

Like Paul, let us keep praying for the Churches with Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Ministers because the grace of God is spirituality beyond the physical and requires absolute obedience to His word.

Let us always remember that we are all one in Christ whether you believe it or not or anointing level or ministry area or position in the Church or blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit **(Galatians 3:28)**.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT THEY WERE NOT TO RATE SOME MINISTERS ABOVE OTHER MINISTERS AS IF THEY DID NOT RECEIVE GRACE TO DO THE LORD'S WORK.

HENCE THE CAUTION AGAINST SELF – BOASTS AND PRIDE WHICH SETS ASIDE THE GRACE OF GOD. FOR ALL MINISTERS OF CHRIST RECEIVE GRACE IN VARIOUS FORMS TO DO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY AND MANAGE HIS CHURCH.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for the grace you have given us in Jesus Christ to obey your word and relate with one another in the spirit of love, humility, and respect.

Help us by Your Holy Spirit not to frustrate the grace of God and Your Son Jesus Christ but to build a strong, powerful, Holy Spirit filled and Church with eternal works and testimonies.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

EVERY MINISTRY AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN USE AT THE CHURCH IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE GRACE OF GOD. HENCE THERE IS NO NEED TO BOAST IN THEM AS IF WE DID NOT RECEIVE THEM FROM GOD. THERE IS NO NEED TO RATE OTHER MINISTERS ABOVE COLLEAGUE MINISTERS IN THE CHURCHES. LEARN TO VALUE AND APPRECIATE THE GRACE OF GOD AT WORK IN INDIVIDUAL MINISTERS FOR THE COMMON GOOD AND BLESSING OF THE CHURCH.
NANA KWAKU DUODU

WHEN WE SEE ALL BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS AS CHILDREN OF GOD AND FILLED AND LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THERE WILL BE LOVE, HUMILITY AND RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER. WHEN WE EXALT OURSELVES ABOVE ONE ANOTHER, THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL CONVICT US. FOR WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT WE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST; EVEN MALE OR FEMALE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

LIFE OF SACRIFICE IN CHRIST; ENRICHMENT OF THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

Life is meaningful and satisfying when the giver and recipient become blessed together. Sometimes the challenges of life does not make us appreciate the goodness of God until another person makes us aware. But it is always good and beneficial to know the grace of God with eternal blessings given to you and the Church to encourage obedience and humility. The bible says that the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord (**Psalms 35:5**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:8 – You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

Paul seemed to have an ironic tone in his message to the Corinthians. His apostolic ministry showed that the Corinthians profited from his hard work and labour. They seemed to have everything in Christ through his preaching and teachings. They were blessed because Paul fed them as a father feeds and takes care of his children. This is why he told them that through his epistle, they were already rich and full.

Paul went further to say that they seem to reign as kings without them creating a servant king scenario. It meant that the Corinthians seemed to have been blessed with a kingly glory without them. It means to say that the labours of Paul made them blessed to have a royal status. It was his prayers, preaching, teachings, counsels, rebukes and instruction in righteousness and epistles that granted them a high status.

Yet Paul realized that they did not possess spiritual authority to reign as kings. This was his desire for them because he wanted to reign with the Church. It reveals that Paul was not selfish like our Lord Jesus Christ hence his righteous concern to awake the Church of Corinthians to righteousness. Just as Jesus told the twelve disciples that they will do the same works He did and even greater works they would do because He was going back to the Father (**John 14:12**), so also Paul wanted to reign with the Corinthians Believers and not alone as an apostle and spiritual father to them.

It means to say that Paul expected them to behave maturely with the Holy Spirit in them; spiritual growth in the knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ. That is why he spoke and wrote against envying, strife and divisions as a result of pride and self – trust contrary to dependence and unity on God's grace and His Son Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 3:1 – 4**). For they were babes who could not contain spiritual words and works. They could not be fed with meat but milk.

As a Church today, let our many prayers, fastings, bible teachings, counsel sessions, deliverance sessions, prophetic sessions and instruction in righteousness, besides many sacrifices in Christ, make us attain spiritual growth unto maturity just as Apostle Peter told the scattered Jews in Asia

Minor **(2 Peter 3:18)**. For it is necessary that Ministers of Christ reign together with their matured congregations.

Like Jesus told the disciples and many followers, He is also telling the Church now that we should seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all the things we need will be added unto us. For it is the Fathers pleasure to give us the kingdom **(Luke 12:31 & 32)**.

The Hebrew writer shared the same concern when he expected the Hebrew Believers to be matured as teachers and discerning but found them as babes in Christ being taught and reminded the basic principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ such as sin and salvation **(Hebrews 5:12 – 14)**.

Indeed how beautiful it is when the brethren, the Church, dwell together in unity? Yes God wants all the Churches to be spiritually grown and matured so that we can reign with Christ as heirs **(Galatians 3:29)** and joint heirs with Christ as children of God **(Romans 8:17)**. You are blessed.

PAUL'S IRONIC MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS EXPOSED THEIR WEAKNESSES DUE TO THE EXPECTED LACK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH UNTO MATURITY. FOR THEY WERE STILL CARNAL. HAVING FED THEM WITH GOOD CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS AS A CHURCH, HE EXPECTED THEM TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AND BE POSITIONED STRATEGICALLY TO REIGN WITH HIM IN LOVE AND UNITY.

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray for the working of the Holy Spirit to grow spiritually and be matured in the Christian faith.

Help us to understand Your perfect will for the purposes of obedience and submissiveness. Help us with Your word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, to overcome all obstacles to our Christian faith.

For reigning with Your Son Jesus Christ and Ministers and Christian leaders as a Church is a greater blessing and profitable to the kingdom of God than the reign of the few. In Jesus' name. Amen.

IN TRUTH, LACK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND IMMATURITY CREATES A VACUUM BETWEEN MINISTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS, AND THEIR CONGREGATIONS. ON A MORE SPIRITUAL PLANE, IT DOES NOT FULFILL GOD'S PERFECT WILL TO BE JOINT HEIRS WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AS CHILDREN OF GOD. THEREFORE GROW SPIRITUALLY UNTO MATURITY AND FULFILL GOD'S DESIRE IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR WE MUST REIGN TOGETHER AS A THE WHOLE CHURCH IN CHRIST IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
NANA KWAKU DUODU

LIFE OF SACRIFICE IN CHRIST; ENRICHMENT OF THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

Life is meaningful and satisfying when the giver and recipient become blessed together. Sometimes the challenges of life does not make us appreciate the goodness of God until another person makes us aware. But it is always good and beneficial to know the grace of God with eternal blessings given to you and the Church to encourage obedience and humility. The bible says that the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord (**Psalms 35:5**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:8 – You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

Paul seemed to have an ironic tone in his message to the Corinthians. His apostolic ministry showed that the Corinthians profited from his hard work and labour. They seemed to have everything in Christ through his preaching and teachings. They were blessed because Paul fed them as a father feeds and takes care of his children. This is why he told them that through his epistle, they were already rich and full.

Paul went further to say that they seem to reign as kings without them creating a servant king scenario. It meant that the Corinthians seemed to have been blessed with a kingly glory without them. It means to say that the labours of Paul made them blessed to have a royal status. It was his prayers, preaching, teachings, counsels, rebukes and instruction in righteousness and epistles that granted them a high status.

Yet Paul realized that they did not possess spiritual authority to reign as kings. This was his desire for them because he wanted to reign with the Church. It reveals that Paul was not selfish like our Lord Jesus Christ hence his righteous concern to awake the Church of Corinthians to righteousness. Just as Jesus told the twelve disciples that they will do the same works He did and even greater works they would do because He was going back to the Father (**John 14:12**), so also Paul wanted to reign with the Corinthians Believers and not alone as an apostle and spiritual father to them.

It means to say that Paul expected them to behave maturely with the Holy Spirit in them; spiritual growth in the knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ. That is why he spoke and wrote against envying, strife and divisions as a result of pride and self – trust contrary to dependence and unity on God's grace and His Son Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 3:1 – 4**). For they were babes who could not contain spiritual words and works. They could not be fed with meat but milk.

As a Church today, let our many prayers, fastings, bible teachings, counsel sessions, deliverance sessions, prophetic sessions and instruction in righteousness, besides many sacrifices in Christ, make us attain spiritual growth unto maturity just as Apostle Peter told the scattered Jews in Asia

Minor **(2 Peter 3:18)**. For it is necessary that Ministers of Christ reign together with their matured congregations.

Like Jesus told the disciples and many followers, He is also telling the Church now that we should seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all the things we need will be added unto us. For it is the Fathers pleasure to give us the kingdom **(Luke 12:31 & 32)**.

The Hebrew writer shared the same concern when he expected the Hebrew Believers to be matured as teachers and discerning but found them as babes in Christ being taught and reminded the basic principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ such as sin and salvation **(Hebrews 5:12 – 14)**.

Indeed how beautiful it is when the brethren, the Church, dwell together in unity? Yes God wants all the Churches to be spiritually grown and matured so that we can reign with Christ as heirs **(Galatians 3:29)** and joint heirs with Christ as children of God **(Romans 8:17)**. You are blessed.

PAUL'S IRONIC MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS EXPOSED THEIR WEAKNESSES DUE TO THE EXPECTED LACK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH UNTO MATURITY. FOR THEY WERE STILL CARNAL. HAVING FED THEM WITH GOOD CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS AS A CHURCH, HE EXPECTED THEM TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AND BE POSITIONED STRATEGICALLY TO REIGN WITH HIM IN LOVE AND UNITY.

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray for the working of the Holy Spirit to grow spiritually and be matured in the Christian faith.

Help us to understand Your perfect will for obedience and submissiveness. Help us with Your word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, to overcome all obstacles to our Christian faith.

For reigning with Your Son Jesus Christ and Ministers and Christian leaders as a Church is a greater blessing and profitable to the kingdom of God than the reign of the few. In Jesus' name. Amen.

IN TRUTH, LACK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND IMMATURITY CREATES A VACUUM BETWEEN MINISTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS, AND THEIR CONGREGATIONS. ON A MORE SPIRITUAL PLANE, IT DOES NOT FULFILL GOD'S PERFECT WILL TO BE JOINT HEIRS WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AS CHILDREN OF GOD. THEREFORE GROW SPIRITUALLY UNTO MATURITY AND FULFILL GOD'S DESIRE IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR WE MUST REIGN TOGETHER AS THE WHOLE CHURCH IN CHRIST IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
NANA KWAKU DUODU

UNPOPULAR MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES; GAME OF PUBLIC SPECTACLE

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players are fully aware of the presence of the cheering crowd to win matches. The bible says that there is time for everything **(Ecclesiastes 3:1)**.

The bible says also that Solomon considered all the oppressions under the sun: both the oppressed and the oppressor recorded tears and power respectively but they had a common thing of no comforter on their side **(Ecclesiastes 4:1)**. The absence of a comforter suggests an increase of pain and frustration according to the New King James Bible Commentary. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:9 – For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats, pain and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum. In Corinth, Paul's testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ was opposed and blasphemed, he turned his ministry focus to the Gentiles **(Acts 18:4 – 6)**. Later the Jews rose up against Paul and brought him before the Deputy of Achaia but was vindicated **(Acts 18:12 – 16)**. Also the Jews openly beat the chief ruler of the synagogue, Sosthenes, before the judgment seat and Gallio cared less about it **(Acts 18:17)**.

The psychological and physical torture on the waiting period can be more devastating than experiencing death itself. For death ends all the torture, pain and suffering on earth for the Believing Christian but continues with the unbelieving sinners.

In missions, Paul foresaw the inevitable confrontations with people whose backgrounds and ideologies differed totally from the Christian faith. That is the dangers of the ministry would be evident with religious, political and legal oppositions and resistances that is similar to a judicial decision of death penalty against a criminal. He termed it as having appointment with death with clear cut intentions.

He emphasized on the dangers of the apostolic ministry as cruel in nature unlike today's judicial sentence with some form of probation and pardon occasionally or now frequently by law. In Paul's days under Roman law, there was persecution and torture for people whose faith was in the Lord Jesus Christ. For the Roman political system and Jewish religious system was

antagonistic and hostile to professing Believing Christians and destabilization of national, regional, sectional and community security.

This explains why he likened the sufferings of Apostles of Jesus Christ as equivalent to a Roman sport of the colosseum where criminals and enemies of the state were brought there to battle and in most cases eaten alive by wild animals such as lions. The sentence of appointment with death was so severe that even those who survived the battle of torture were killed by the sword of the Romans. Indeed being in the colosseum was a journey of no return unless being pardoned by the Roman Governor or the plea of the guest of the Roman Governor.

To add salt to injury was the fact that the game of no return was cheered by a large crowd intoxicated in seeing blood in the colosseum. It meant that the voice of the cheering crowd sounded higher when justice was meted to an offender with blood shedding, and only subsided when all was over. This was the unpopular ministry of the Apostles as stated in Paul's message to the Church in Corinth. As he described it, the world of both angels and people were witnesses to ministry works and sufferings.

Another perspective is that the public spectacle described in the above scripture is referenced to the Roman Empire where enemies were publicly punished to death either by fellow human beings or animals. It was also symbolic of victory in battle when enemy kings and forces were publicly paraded before people. However, the Christian perspective was that Christians are punished for their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and His life of righteousness, and whipped by many lashes before angels and people.

It is also a reflection of the public spectacle of Jesus Christ when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, treated like a criminal and paraded before the Sanhedrin and the high priest Caiaphas, governors and kings like Herod and Pilate. He was slapped and spat upon like a criminal and was crucified by the Roman soldiers with two thieves before angels, disciples, biological family, religious leaders, Jews, and watching crowd in fulfillment of scripture. The seven words of Jesus on the cross signify His divinity as the Son of God, and also humanity where nakedness, painful and horrifying death on the cross to save the world of sin was in God's perfect will **(Matthew 27:1 – 56, 57 – 66)**.

In God's own sovereignty, He hides His plan of salvation from the devil and our enemies who persecute us. Apostle Paul confirmed this revelation as recorded in

1 Corinthians 2:6 – 8 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

This is the mystery hidden from many generations. If the devil knew that the humiliation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ would bring eternal salvation to the world, he would not have instigated kings, religious leaders and the Jews. In the same way, God's master plan is at work in our lives and ministries when we are made a public ridicule and public spectacle. In the physical realm, people are watching and laughing but in the spiritual realm the heavenly host is watching, clapping and saluting us for our faithfulness in completing our missions.

Remember that angels are partners and helpers as well as the Church **(Hebrews 1:14)** unlike enemies of the cross of Jesus being manipulated by the spirit of the antichrist. Paul pointed out that the whole world and the angels were witnesses to the humiliation of God's servants. With biting sarcasm, Paul contrasted himself with the Corinthians lofty evaluation of themselves world's. He knew that true strength is found in understanding our weaknesses and Christ's sufficiency **(see 2 Corinthians 12:7 – 10, Philippians 4:11 – 13)**.

It is important to note that the Prophet Jeremiah suffered a similar fate from the political system headed by King Zedekiah and King Jehoiakin. In today's Church, democracy has produced a three faceted approach to the Christian faith where constitutions of countries have ensured freedom of religion, proliferation of other religions, and proliferation of Churches with Ministers and Christian leaders **(Ephesians 4:11)**. However, the order of the Apostles have suffered punishments because of perceived interferences in other religious beliefs and practices. And angels and people will always be witnesses to our ministry works and sufferings.

Be it as it may, the Holy Spirit is our Helper in ministry just as it was with Apostle Paul and his ministry partners. For the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission and Church leadership and all ministry works. This explains why the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a necessity to a Church of Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders to be successful in ministry **(Acts 2:1 – 4)**.

If it helped Paul and all other Apostles and Churches, it is also good for us. For we can endure all such sufferings **(1 Peter 5:9)** like Jesus in ministry, arrest, trial and crucifixion on the cross in God's perfect will.

Do not be discouraged buddy Christian for we have the Holy Spirit in us as a guarantee of our Christian faith and Jesus Christ as the Ever Present God (Jehovah Shammah) in this life and eternal life. Know this: People and Angels are witnesses.

New King James Bible Commentary: Spectacle alludes to the public executions carried out by the Romans. In these executions, condemned men were brought into the colosseum where they were tormented and killed by wild animals as cheering crowds looked on.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS TO BRING OUT THE MANY SACRIFICES OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY TO MAKE THEM ENRICHED AND ESTABLISHED IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. FOR THEM TO PAY THE PRICE OF BEING A PUBLIC SPECTACLE BEFORE THE WORLD WHERE GOD, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ANGELS AND THE CHURCH ARE ON ONE SIDE AGAINST THE UNBELIEVING SINNERS AND THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS ON THE OTHER SIDE WAS NO JOKE AT ALL.

IF THEY COULD GO THROUGH SUCH TORTURE, PAIN AND SUFFERING AND ENDURE FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHURCH AND FULFILLING THEIR MINISTRIES, THEN THEY WERE TO BELIEVE IN THE CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS, GROW SPIRITUALLY AND MATURE AND REIGN TOGETHER IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTO GOD.

PRAYER

Our All Powerful God, we stand in the truth of Your word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and declare our unflinching faith and loyalty to You.

Help all Ministers, Church and Christian leaders and Believing Christians who are in service unto You to overcome the harsh and hostile conditions in their environment of operation.

Protect and preserve them from antagonistic political and religious systems that sentences them to torture and cruelty.

I join Your many saints and add my prayers to their many prayers for their salvation in the name of Jesus. And may Your Holy Spirit be our Guide and Helper in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LEAST YOU CAN DO TO HELP MINISTERS, CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND BELIEVING CHRISTIANS GOING THROUGH TORTURE AND CRUELTY FOR THEIR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND OBEDIENCE IN MINISTRY IS TO PRAY FOR THEM WITHOUT CEASING. IF THE LORD MAKES YOU A CHANNEL FOR THEIR DELIVERANCE, BE OBEDIENT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

DON'T BE A PARTNER TO UNBELIEVING SINNERS AGAINST THE CHURCH WHICH THE LORD HAS CHOSEN TO BE LIGHT TO THE WORLD AND WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. SUPPORT THE FRONTLINE MINISTRIES LIKE THE APOSTLES WHO VENTURE INTO DANGEROUS TERRITORIES TO PREACH CHRIST. ABOVE ALL BELIEVING IN THE TEACHINGS OF MINISTERS OF CHRIST AND PRACTICING THEM KEEPS YOU IN PACE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR YOUR OBEDIENCE AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS AND MATURITY BECOMES THEIR COMFORT AND JOY. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE; WISE IN CHRIST

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. The bible says that the heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge but the mouth of fools feed on foolishness **(Proverbs 15:14)**. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:10a – We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

He began to provide details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry. He declared that they were fools for Christ sake but the Corinthians Believers were wise in Christ. Being fools for Christ's sake meant that their obedience to leave everything and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in all manner of places even at their discomfort. In other words, they could have maintained their noble professions like fishing and trading but they gave up all for the sake of Christ and calling as Apostles.

A clear example is of Peter who was married, owned a fishing boat and had his own apartment but left everything to follow Jesus as a disciple and later became His Apostle and leader of the Jerusalem Church. Likewise the other disciples of Jesus **(Matthew 19:27, Mark 10:28, Luke 18:28)**. So it was with Apostle Paul and other ministry partners like Apollos and Timothy who left their families and professions to preach Christ to people. They were considered fools for Christ sake in the eyes of the world.

Yet the Church in Corinth was perceived to be wise in Christ. As recipients of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the ministries of Paul and others worked for their good and blessing. Paul's ministry of preaching and teaching, instruction in righteousness, counsels, rebuke and correction was gradually making them wise in Christ.

In other words, the sacrificial lives of the Apostles in ministry had a positive change and impact on their lives and the Church as confirmed in his second epistle to the Corinthians **(2 Corinthians 11:23)**. Whilst they suffered in their unpopular ministry and having become the spectacle of the world, their commitment and faithfulness worked for their enrichment, blessings and prosperity. O what a paradoxical ministry work; fools for Christ for the Apostles but wise in Christ for the Corinthians Believers.

The comparison was done to awaken the consciences of the Corinthians to true spirituality in Christ as well as appreciate the hard work and sacrifices of the Apostles and Church workers. Clearly in his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul was thankful of the grace of God in Christ and did emphasize on the truth that had enriched them in everything; all utterance and knowledge as they waited for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ **(1 Corinthians 1:4 – 8)**.

Just like Paul, our prayers, preaching, teaching, counsels, evangelism, writings, rebuke, correction and instruction in righteousness is making disciples of all nations and enforcing Christ's righteousness in the power of the Holy Spirit. Later in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, he stated that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was manifested in poverty for their sakes, though rich, as an opportunity for them to become rich in Him **(2 Corinthians 8:9)**.

Hey don't be a fool like Nabal who insulted David and the will of God for his life and generally believed in the works of the flesh unlike spiritual things. For his name Nabal meant fool and known for being harsh and evil in his doings **(1 Samuel 25:3)**. Noah was considered a fool because he obeyed God to build the ark which saved eight persons during the Lord's judgment in the Great flood but the so called wise people who laughed and mocked at him all perished **(Genesis 6:1 – 8. 9 – 12, 13 – 22, 7:1 – 24)**. Rather become like Abigail who was beautiful in appearance and character, and had good understanding of issues **(1 Samuel 25:1)**.

Let us continue to use the term in a positive sense to portray hard work and commitment in ministry, and not in a negative sense like unbelieving sinners who perceive the gospel of Jesus Christ as foolishness **(1 Corinthians 1:18)**.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT BEING FOOL'S FOR CHRIST SAKE AS PERCEIVED BY PEOPLE IS NOT ALL THAT BAD BECAUSE THERE ARE PROFITS AND BLESSINGS IN IT.

IF THEIR LABOURS IN CHRIST WHICH MAKES THEM LOOK LIKE FOOLS IS THE BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH, THEN BELIEVING AND REJOICING IN THEIR ENRICHMENT IN CHRIST IS THEIR COMFORT AND JOY AS APOSTLES.

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray that You shall maintain in us the grace to work hard and show commitment in ministry.

We pray that when we become public spectacle and fools for Christ's sake, give us the grace to reveal Christ to the Church of believers and make them wise, also to the world of unbelievers.

Let Your Holy Spirit help us in our sufferings for Christ's sake. Amen.

WHEN WE BECOME FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE LEAVING ALL BEHIND,
WE REVEAL CHRIST TO THE CHURCH OF BELIEVERS TO ENRICH
THEM AS WELL AS THE WORLD OF UNBELIEVERS AS WITNESSES.
FOR THIS IS ONE OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

WHEN WE BECOME FOOLS FOR CHRIST AS MINISTERS, LET IT ENRICH
THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH TO MAKE THEM WISE PEOPLE. **NANA
KWAKU DUODU**

WEAK IN MINISTRY; STRONG THROUGH OUR MINISTRY

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. The bible says that the heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge but the mouth of fools feed on foolishness **(Proverbs 15:14)**. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:10b – We are weak, but ye are strong

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

He began to provide details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry. He declared that through their weakness in ministry, they were strong in Christ. Paul's weakness in ministry was his approach and style and not bodily weakness.

The unpopular ministry of the Apostles put them also in awkward situations that made them fools and therefore weak for Christ's sake but portrayed the Corinthians wise **(1 Corinthians 4:10a)**.

It was show of appealing to the consciences of the Corinthians to have a non – negotiable faith in the Lord Jesus Christ instead of adopting a forceful and coercive approach. For he believed and advocated for acceptance of Christ's sufficiency other than self – trusts.

By this Paul meant humility, fear and trembling in ministry to ensure that the Corinthians faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was strong **(1 Corinthians 2:3)** which reflected in trust of the Holy Spirit to preach the Lord Jesus Christ and act in faith and power unlike trust in oratorical skills which was the notable thing and strength in the Corinthians society **(1 Corinthians 2:4)**. For from the beginning, his righteous intent was to help the Corinthians put their faith in God and not in the wisdom of men **(1 Corinthians 2:5)**.

New King James Bible Commentary: With biting sarcasm, Paul contrasted the Corinthians lofty evaluation of themselves with the world's evaluation of him. Paul knew that true strength is found in understanding our weaknesses and understanding Christ's sufficiency (see 2 Corinthians 12:7 – 10, Philippians 4:11 – 13).

This teaches us that the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ makes us take a weakness position to ensure that unbelievers come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and believers in the Church are established strongly in Christ.

As preachers and teachers, we don't depend on our natural abilities but the grace of God in the scriptures, empowerment by the Holy Spirit and in prayers. For we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us **(Philippians 4:13)**.

Even when the world frowns on us, we humble ourselves for the sake of Christ. That is why insults, labels and antagonistic elements used against our Christian lives and ministries and the Church should not influence us negatively. You don't retaliate or revenge with physical force and power to pay enemies back in their own coin when they fight you but you go down on your knees and pray and ask God for His wisdom to guide and make wise decisions. You pray and ask God to lead you with His Holy Spirit and receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to overcome all challenges and sufferings. Why won't people perceive you as weak and timid when you obey the Lord Jesus Christ to bless those who curse you, pray for your enemies who spitefully use and persecute you to achieve their selfish interests **(Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28)**? But through these righteous areas, God is saving people in Christ and establishing His Church in righteousness.

The bible says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses to pray effectively and receive answered prayers when the body is weak or we are overwhelmed with life's challenges and ministry and Church problems **(Romans 8:26)**. That is when we experience answered prayers and righteous results that become miracles and testimonies to us.

As Paul revealed, the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men **(1 Corinthians 1:25)**. Indeed what people see as the weakness of God is the power of God that is changing lives and situations through the Church. For God's superior wisdom is far more beneficial to His Church than the wisdom and philosophies of men. The bible says that the time is now where the Church reveals and manifests the supreme wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purposes accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him **(Ephesians 3:10 – 12)**.

It means to say that we must understand well Paul's definition of weakness in ministry that promotes belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And this involves humility, prayers and fasting, Holy Spirit leading, using scripture in general and the gospel of Jesus Christ always to save hearers. It means also to depend on God's wisdom and not in the wisdom of this world in preaching and teaching, and even in provocative situations. For in this revelation and truth, the Church is strengthened from one level of grace to the other.

Later in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, he revealed another type of weakness that schools of thought interpret it as sickness in the body that tormented him. Though he prayed for God to take away that thorn from him, God answered his prayer saying that His grace was sufficient for him; for in

weakness His strength is made perfect. That is God's power brings righteous results to honour and glorify His holy name and reveals Christ to people and the Church when we surrender to Him fully **(2 Corinthians 12:9)**.

From today, let not the world's description of your life, ministry and Church as weakness bother you if you are led by the Holy Spirit. Use righteous approaches and strategies in humility, fear and trembling to save souls and establish the Church. Keep praying because it is a righteous sign of total dependence on God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And remember that God is working to confirm His word in your life, ministry and the Church.

When we make this observation, let us not label the Ministers, Christian and Church leaders and Believing Christians led by the Holy Spirit as weak like the way Aaron compromised with the molding of the golden calf to replace Moses and God. Rather let us support them with prayers, help and support them, and defend them to attain righteous results in the power of the Holy Spirit.

PAUL'S PARADOXICAL STATEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS WAS THAT IN WEAKNESS OF MINISTRY WORKS, THEY WERE MADE STRONG IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH TO BE CONFIDENT AND BOLD. FOR THEIR DEPENDENCE ON GOD AND SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST IS WHAT IS MAKING THEM ACHIEVE RIGHTEOUS RESULTS, AND NOT THE KNOWN STRENGTH OF THE CULTURE OF THE CORINTHIANS.

PRAYER

Our wise God, we pray that You guide us with Your wisdom and power to do the work of the ministry. We pray that You establish Your Church in Christ and not by the dictates of this world.

For your wisdom is better than man. And in our weaknesses, we experience your power and authority in scripture and Holy Spirit to achieve and record righteous results in the Church. In Jesus name. Amen.

ANOTHER MYSTERY OF GOD IS REVEALED IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. HE MAKES US WEAK TO THE WORLD AND OUR ENEMIES TO REVEAL HIS POWER AND AUTHORITY IN CHANGING PEOPLE AND ESTABLISHING HIS CHURCH WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. HE IS ALWAYS VICTORIOUS BECAUSE HIS SUPERIOR WISDOM OUTWEIGHS THE WORLD'S PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATION TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE POSITIVELY. NANA KWAKU DUODU

HONOURABLE THROUGH OUR MINISTRY; DESPISED IN MINISTRY

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. The bible says that the heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge but the mouth of fools feed on foolishness **(Proverbs 15:14)**. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:10c – ye are honourable, but we are despised.

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

He began to provide details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry. He declared that through the Corinthians believers had received the status of honourable but they, as Apostles, had been despised by people.

In other words, there was clear evidence that their lives had been changed and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ through their ministries but at the cost of being despised and rejected by people in ministry. The more they preached and taught the Church, the more they became changed and transformed, recognized and accepted and respected. In contrast, the Apostles as Ministers of the New Covenant suffered hatred, intolerance, attacks, shame and disgrace, rejection and disrespect in the world of unbelieving sinners as a result of their eternal words in Christ.

This was the difference and distinction between the preaching Apostles and the Church of Corinth. Clearly, Paul's message is rooted in the truth that they were fools for Christ's sake and even ministered in weakness to save and establish the Church **(1 Corinthians 4:9 & 10a,b)**.

Know that your words in ministry can be despised and rejected making you unrecognized and unacceptable in society. When people conspire against you and make you the semblance of the devil instead of semblance Christ, even your righteousness would be misconstrued as evil. But be encouraged and strengthened in the Lord like David **(1 Samuel 30:6)**. That is why Paul said that the spiritual man judges all things and must not be judged by another person because you cannot instruct the Lord; only obey **(1 Corinthians 2:15 & 16)**. We cannot be judged by people of our Christian faith but we can judge the world; even angels **(1 Corinthians 6:2 & 3)**.

Truly, your ministry by the Holy Spirit that preaches Christ and gospel teachings can be rejected and hated by people **(Proverbs 1:30)**. Even Jesus

the Son of God, the Messiah and the Christ was despised by the religious leaders of His days on earth. Yes the religious sects of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes tried to trap Jesus with words and questions because they despised Him **(Matthew 16:1, 18:1, 19:3, Luke 11:15, 16 – 23)**.

But the good news is that God has chosen Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders to be filled and led by the Holy Spirit and be instruments of His glory. For as Paul told the Corinthians, God has chosen the base things and despised things of this world to shame people **(1 Corinthians 1:28)**.

It means to be discerning as a Church and prayerfully help and support the ministries God has given to us in Christ. Don't despise and reject your Ministers, Christian and Church leaders because they are the anointed of the Lord to instruct us in righteousness **(Proverbs 13:13, 14:2, 21, 15:5, 15:32)**. Like Timothy, let no one despise your youth but be a righteous example **(1 Timothy 4:12)**.

When the world of unbelievers and sinners reject Ministers, Church and Christian leaders and Believing Christians **(2 Chronicles 36:16, Nehemiah 2:19)**, we as a Church must embrace them. When they revile and insult them, we as a Church must pray and stand with them **(Nehemiah 6:4)**. Remember Jesus' prayer for all His disciples to be one in their faith and ministries, and to love one another because the world would hate them just as they hated Him **(John 17)**. Unity of faith and purpose as His disciples was a necessity.

We believe that the ministries of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers will continually be a blessing to people. For the gospel of Jesus Christ is changing, transforming and blessing lives. Once the nature of a person is honourable like Jabesh, it is easy for God to change His situation **(1 Chronicles 4:9 & 10)**. Once the desire of the Church is to live honourably, it is easy to pray for God's grace on them **(2 Peter 3:18)**. Once our suffering of being despised is God's way of making the Church established and honourable through righteous living and righteous works, it is our comfort and joy.

PAUL'S PARADOXICAL STATEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT BEING DESPISED AND HATED FOR PREACHING CHRIST AND TEACHING HIS WORD TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH WAS A BLESSING OF MAKING THEM HONOURABLE THROUGH OBEDIENCE.

ONCE THEY HAD EMBRACED AND ACCEPTED THIS CHALLENGE IN MINISTRY WORKS, IT WAS ALSO NECESSARY FOR THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS TO OBEY FULLY THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST AND BE WORTHY AND COMMENDABLE IN GOD'S SIGHT.

PRAYER

Dear God, you have shown us by the righteous example of Paul that our ministries attract enemies who despise our words, though they make the Church honourable to gain recognition and respect.

Help us with Your Holy Spirit to endure and overcome all people who despise us for the sake of Christ so that the beauty and glory of the Church will be achievable and evident. In Jesus' name. Amen.

GOD IS TELLING US THAT THERE IS A BLESSING IN REJECTION. FOR OUT OF IT IN MINISTRY AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS THE BEAUTY AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH. KEEP YOUR HEADS UP AND OVERCOME. FOR JESUS IS SAVIOUR AND LORD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TRUE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

KNOWING THAT HATRED AND REJECTION OF PEOPLE IN MINISTRY IS THE MEANS TO AN END ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM OF GOD, WE ENDURE ALL FORMS OF SUFFERING IN ORDER TO REVEAL CHRIST AND ESTABLISH HIS CHURCH FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY PURPOSES. TRULY BEING DESPISED IN MINISTRY WORKS AND CHURCH WORKS IS THE MEANS TO THE BLESSING OF CHANGED AND TRANSFORMED LIVES OF PEOPLE AS HONOURABLE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

HARDSHIPS IN MINISTRY; LACKS OF THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. Even when you lack the basic necessities of life like food, water, clothing and shelter, the heavenly and earthly witnesses are watching to see your actions and inactions, hear your words of faith or no faith, confidence in God or complaints.

Therefore know that it is God who provides food for the raven when its young ones cry to Him and wander about for lack of food (**Job 38:41**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:11a – Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

Giving details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry, Paul focused on physical necessities or what is generally termed as basic necessities of life; food, water, clothing and shelter.

HUNGER AND THIRST IN MINISTRY

He declared here that they suffered hunger and thirst in ministry. That is their physical needs sometimes was lacking because there was no one to help in the provision of the basic necessities of life. This means that they traveled and moved from one place to the other on empty stomachs for the sake of Christ and obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This can make some ministers fast compulsorily just because there is no food or little food to eat in a day especially in remote places.

As Paul stated, hunger for food and thirst for water in their physical bodies was a common experience in his missionary journeys and works (**Acts 16:34, 27:21, 33, 36**). This means to say that Paul suffered bodily weaknesses sometimes not because of ill health or beatings, whippings and stoning by enemies but because of no food to eat and water to drink. But he endured them for the sake of Christ and the Church.

It is also important to note that water in Jesus' and the early Apostles like Peter and Paul's days on earth did not have abundance of water resources as we find today but restricted to nearby wells of water and rivers and pools like the

pool of Siloam and the pool by the sheep gate, the pool of Bethesda (**John 5:2, 9:7, 11**). Therefore water was a priceless commodity that the rich and powerful owned unlike the poor and needy. Even the patriarch Isaac battled with the Philistines over the well of Abraham (**Genesis 26:15 – 22**).

But the import of this message is that when Jesus was on the cross crucified with nails in his hands and legs and crown of thorns on His head, he became very thirsty of water (**Matthew 27:33 & 34, John 19:28 – 30**). For He had been without food and water after the institution of the Holy Communion during the Passover and His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and trials before the Sanhedrin, Pilate and Herod (**Matthew 26:17 – 30, 31 – 75**). Know that once you are flesh and blood, you will thirst of water physically.

Know also that the excruciating pain of high level thirst of water is also because the human body is made up of 70% water. According to Mitchel and others in 1945, the adult human body is made up of 60% water averagely. Modern medical science does not differ from the above but has many components of water levels in babies, children, adolescents, adults and the aged; age variations. It is also important to note that dehydration from sweat and extreme heat conditions are also causes of low water levels in the human body. This latter assertion connects to Jesus' thirst for water on the cross because of abstinence and sweat from beatings, trials and carrying of His cross up to Golgotha.

The good news was that whether availability of food and water or not, Paul was determined to fulfill his call and ministry (**1 Corinthians 1:1**). It was a revelation of their humanity though anointed with the Holy Spirit. For the work of the ministry was so much about sharing that even the little blessings that came into the hands of the Apostles were shared with those in need.

This usual practice began with the Lord Jesus Christ when a young boy brought five loaves and two fishes to the Apostles. When they gave them to Jesus, He did not eat them because He was their leader but He prayed and blessed them for multiplication and increase. This miracle fed more than five thousand men and women and children with even a reserve (**Matthew 14:15 – 21**). Truly Christ was concerned about the hunger of the people who had followed Him the whole day listening to His words of salvation and eternal life.

Also the early Church believed in sharing the basic necessities of life such as food and water and other blessings; broke bread from house to house and ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart (**Acts 2:42, 46**). That is both the Apostles and the disciples had a sharing spirit where all things even food had a collective belonging and not individual belonging. This helped the early Church to remain strong and united because the sharing policy accommodated the poor and needy who formed the majority among them.

Later in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, he listed also hunger and thirst as one of the often experiences in his missionary journeys (**2 Corinthians 11:27**).

Clearly, Paul's message was not to condemn the Corinthians because he identified with their needs and poverty of the poor group among them. I believe also that God used physical hunger and thirst to portray spiritual hunger and thirst for Him and Son Jesus Christ. For blessed are those who hungry and thirst for righteousness and they will be filled **(Matthew 5:6)**.

This teaches us to appreciate the fivefold ministry of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers that equip the Church **(Ephesians 4:11 – 16)**. The Church is to cater for the needs of the Ministers, Church leaders and Church workers who have devoted their lives fully to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. At least the prayer of Agur the son of Jakeh for the Lord to bless him with food and water in moderation is preferred to experiencing poverty and riches. For the former preserves righteousness unlike the latter **(Proverbs 30:8)**. In his confessional prayer to God, he asked for neither poverty nor riches to avert stealing and deny God in fullness respectively.

It teaches us to pay our tithes and give offerings at Church so that they will be food and meat and water on the tables of the Ministers, Church leaders and Church workers in full time service to the Lord **(Malachi 3:10 – 12)**.

Like Paul's assurance to the Church in Philippi about God's supply of their needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus **(Philippians 4:19)**, we must pray, work hard and help in the provision of the needs of God's saints. This is necessary to fulfill God's word and alleviate the hunger and thirst of the Ministers, Church leaders and Church workers fully in ministry.

If we know the challenges of Ministers, Church leaders and Church workers in ministry, we will respond in the fear of the Lord. Truly they lack sometimes because God wants to teach them lessons or because of economic insecurity and food shortages or because of unpopular ministry. But God is faithful and remains as Jehovah Jireh; the LORD who provides **(Genesis 22:14)**.

Be it as it may, let us share our food and water with those in need and help them overcome their needs. For who is generous to the poor is of God **(2 Corinthians 9:5, Galatians 6:5)**. They need to concentrate in the work of the ministry and not be distracted because of hunger and thirst. Be Christ like.

New King James Bible Commentary: **verses 11 – 13** Paul lists the hardships he had suffered in Christ's ministry, both physical challenges and verbal abuse **(see 2 Corinthians 11:22 – 30)**.

PAUL RECOUNTED TO THE CORINTHIANS THE HARDSHIPS HE UNDERWENT IN MINISTRY JUST FOR HIS OBEDIENCE TO THE CALL AND MINISTRY WORK. LACK OF FOOD AND WATER SOMETIMES WAS HIS CHALLENGE BUT THESE COULD NOT DETER HIM FROM DOING THE LORD'S WORK SUCH AS MINISTERING TO THE CORINTHIANS.

IT TEACHES US THAT DESPITE THE ANOINTING IN YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, THERE CAN BE TIMES OF NO FOOD ON YOUR TABLE BECAUSE OF SHARING OR NO MONEY TO BUY FOOD

AND WATER OR OTHER REASONS. BUT GOD REMAINS FAITHFUL AS JEHOVAH JIREH.

PRAYER

In these difficult and challenging times, we can only trust in Your provisions as children of God.

We pray O God that You shall satisfy the physical needs of Ministers, Church leaders and Church workers and Believing Christians so as to avert the distraction of searching for food and water to survive.

Make the Church their support base by the Holy Spirit so that the glory shall be thine in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE FACT THAT AN ANOINTED MINISTER, CHURCH LEADER, CHURCH WORKER AND BELIEVING CHRISTIAN LACKS FOOD AND WATER DOES NOT MEAN DISREGARD THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST PREACHED TO YOU FROM THEM. IT DOES NOT MEAN TO IGNORE THEIR HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED AND INSPIRED TEACHINGS OF THE WORD OF GOD. FOR GOD IS GLORIFIED IN CHRIST EVEN IN SUCH CHALLENGING TIMES IN MINISTRY WORKS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE SACRIFICES OF YOUR MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHURCH WORKERS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST COMMANDS ALL HOLY SPIRIT FILLED BELIEVING CHRISTIANS TO HELP AND SUPPORT IN THE PROVISION OF THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE SUCH AS FOOD AND WATER, BESIDES PRAYERS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

NAKEDNESS AND POORLY CLOTHED IN MINISTRY; A GREAT POSSIBILITY

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. Even when you lack the basic necessities of life like food, water, clothing and shelter, the heavenly and earthly witnesses are watching to see your actions and inactions, hear your words of faith or no faith, confidence in God or complaints.

In the physical, clothing stands for covering our bodies and nakedness **(Proverbs 27:26, 31:25)**. In the spiritual, clothing stands is covering salvation, righteousness and justice **(Hosea 2:3, Revelations 16:15)**. But Paul's emphasis was on lack of physical clothing because he was already clothed spiritually as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:11b – Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked ...

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians Believers that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

He began to provide details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry. He declared here that they suffered nakedness and therefore exposure to the vagaries of the weather in ministry. That is their physical needs sometimes was lacking because there was no one to help in the provision of the basic necessities of life. This means that they traveled and moved from one place to the other wearing the same clothing or few clothing.

Though the Ministers lived simple lives just like our Lord Jesus Christ; though having and wearing few clothes facilitated their traveling and missionary journeys, Apostle Paul's message to the Corinthians indicated wearing the same clothing for a long period of time. It means to say that they desired to wear new clothes but lacked them. By this truth, he made the Church in Corinth aware that their sacrificial lives had made them blessed through their sufferings in ministry. His second epistle also confirmed this truth; suffered nakedness and cold **(2 Corinthians 11:27)**. The good news is that Paul was not anxious and in a hurry to fix the so called problem as we find in our days. He believed that when we seek first the kingdom of God and it's righteousness, all the other things we need will be added unto us **(Matthew 6:28 – 34)**.

It revealed the determined purpose of God to sacrifice the lives of His Ministers and save other people. For nakedness in scripture represent shame and

disgrace physically as well as one's disobedience to the word of God **(Isaiah 47:3, Nahum 3:5, Revelations 3:18)**.

Poor clothing is a sign of poverty in the eyes of the world **(Job 24:10)** but it is a life of simplicity to change people and establish the Church. This was Jesus' testimony about John the Baptist to the multitudes that followed Him: John was not in soft clothing and fine linen known of the rich and powerful in society; neither was he a reed shaken by the wind. But he was about a Prophet by all righteous standards. Jesus described him as more than a Prophet because he fulfilled the prophecy of being the forerunner of the Messiah written in the prophetic writing of Isaiah. Besides, Jesus mentioned that under the Old Covenant, John was the greatest born of a woman but those under the New Covenant in the kingdom of heaven was least **(Matthew 11:7 – 11)**.

Hence Paul's writing to the Corinthians that they had become fools for Christ and made a public spectacle both to angels and people **(1 Corinthians 4:9)**. They were made naked by God just like His Son Jesus Christ whose messianic ministry and crucifixion on the cross for the salvation of the world.

What this teaches us is that that God empties His servants of self to reveal His covering of power and righteousness in Christ by the Holy Spirit to bless people and His Church. If the Corinthians Believers were blessed this way, then know that God will make you naked in ministry just for the salvation of souls and perfection of His Church. Yes situations of this kind will always arise as long as it fulfill His purposes in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Discern to know those from God and His Church, family and friends, or the devil and his demons and your enemies, and strategically pray in the name of Jesus for your miracle.

If Paul preached and taught powerfully in his poorly clothed and humbled state, then know that God does not depend on clothing and shoes and riches to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ but a willing heart, obedience, humility, commitment and dedication to His call in ministry **(1 Corinthians 2:4 & 5)**.

It is also important to note that the gospel of Jesus Christ makes us naked to God. It exposes our weaknesses through the conviction of the Holy Spirit to respond and help one another in difficult and challenging times **(Matthew 25:34 – 40)**. The prophecy of Simon the righteous about baby Jesus in the Jerusalem temple being the reason for the rising and falling of many in Israel and His word revealing the thoughts of many hearts still stands true and sure **(Luke 2:34 & 35)**.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT THE SACRIFICE OF BEING NAKED WAS ENDURED IN THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

HENCE THEIR OBEDIENCE MUST ALWAYS BE TO THE GOSPEL AND THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

PRAYER

Our all Powerful God, teach us perfectly to have a willing heart, humility and obedience to your call in ministry.

In times of nakedness and poorly clothed, help us to endure the shame and disgrace in order to fulfill our divine mandate to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

With Your Holy Spirit as our Helper, make us like Apostle Paul and all other Ministers, Christian and Church leaders and Church workers to be committed and faithful.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WHEN GOD TELLS YOU THAT MINISTRY WORK SOMETIMES RESULTS IN SHAME OF NAKEDNESS AND POORLY CLOTHED, IT IS TO PREPARE YOU TO DELIVER RIGHTEOUS RESULTS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ACHIEVE HEAVENLY RESULTS. THIS ONE TOO THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS AS WELL AS HUMAN ENEMIES CANNOT FATHOM THE DEPTH OF GOD'S WISDOM IN IT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

BEING NAKED OR POORLY CLOTHED IN MINISTRY IS NOT A SIGN OF FAILURE. RATHER, IT IS A SIGN OF SUCCESS AS LONG AS THE SOVEREIGNTY AND WILL OF GOD ARE WORKING TO REVEAL CHRIST TO PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. YES RICH MINISTERS, CHRISTIAN AND CHURCH LEADERS AND CHURCH WORKERS AND POOR MINISTERS, CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND CHURCH WORKERS MUST BE IN THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD. BE DISCERNING. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

BUFFETED IN MINISTRY; INEVITABILITY AND REVIVAL

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. Even when you lack the basic necessities of life like food, water, clothing and shelter, the heavenly and earthly witnesses are watching to see your actions and in-actions, hear your words of faith or no faith, confidence in God or complaints.

In your times of lack and support, that is when buffeting increases from the devil and your human enemies. But our trust is in God and faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ (**Psalms 20:7**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:11c – Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted...

Likewise, Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

He began to provide details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry.

He declared here that they had suffered buffeting from all angles in ministry. Like other sufferings, this was a constant thing that was experienced in his apostolic ministry. For he had been subjected to physical beatings and violent attacks and violent situations, and psychological trauma almost everywhere he went to preach the gospel, and in the synagogues where he taught the Jews. That was one of the sacrificial things he underwent to ensure that both Jews and Gentiles were saved and also Churches were established such as the Church of Corinth.

A simple biblical definition of buffet is to struggle with blows of hand or fist; to force once way to fight. It is synonymous with struggle, force, challenge, violence, beaten, whipped, lashed, punched.

Later in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, he stated clearly that the grace of God in his apostolic ministry resulted in the salvation of many people whose faith were in the Lord Jesus Christ. His Holy Spirit works made him the founder of many Churches with the Church of Corinth part of it. As a result, a messenger of Satan was assigned to buffet him so that he will not exalt himself above God. Yes he was saved from the condemnation of the devil (**2 Corinthians 12:7**). This revealed constant torment in his physical body with some form of psychological trauma.

This revealed the enormous pressure in the life and ministry of Paul and ministry partners. They were men of prayer and yet they were buffeted like the roaring waves at the seashore **(Psalms 42:7, 66:7, 88:7, Jeremiah 31:35, Luke 21:26)**. The bible describes the nature of the ungodly as raging waves of the sea foaming their own shame **(Jude 1:13)**.

God allowed them to go through this buffeting to make the gospel of Jesus Christ reach out to both Jews and Gentiles. Besides it was prophetic fulfillment in the life and ministry of Paul as Jesus informed him through the disciple Ananias **(Acts 9:10 – 16)**. Truly Paul in his missionary journeys suffered beatings, stoning, shipwreck, cold and nakedness, insults and attacks, and escapes from the Jews often times **(2 Corinthians 11:24 – 28)**. Even Jesus the Son of God was buffeted in His messianic ministry but overcame all because of His prayerful life, faith words and faith works, knowledge base and high level of wisdom to answer enemies.

It teaches us that ministry work at any level can be frustrated with the buffeting of life. The vagaries of the weather and evil works of enemies who oppose the gospel of Jesus Christ are life's buffetings. Once the spirit of the anti-christ is still at work in this world **(1 John 4:3, 2 John 1:7)**, the Church cannot be spared from buffeting. Therefore what we are experiencing through the hands of our enemies is not new at all for they had been prophesied and written for our warning long ago. Yes anyone who wants to live a righteous life will suffer persecution **(2 Timothy 3:12)**.

It means to be prayerful like Jesus, Paul and the first Apostles of Peter and others to have the spiritual strength and spiritual stamina to overcome in the name of Jesus. For the spirit of endurance is the work of the Holy Spirit in us as Believing Christians, Christian leaders and Church leaders, and Ministers. Therefore arise and pray for them whenever they are being buffeted by enemies of righteousness and the devil and his demons.

Do you know that God has given us the grace as a Church to revive Christian leaders, Ministers, and Church leaders, Church workers and Believing Christians when they are buffeted by enemies' attacks? The bible gives us an example of Paul being stoned to death at Lystra through the instigation of Jews from Antioch and Iconium. But when the disciples gathered around him outside the city where he laid, he regained his strength and rose up and followed them into the city **(Acts 14:8 – 20)**.

It means to say that the Church must gather around those in Christ to heal and awaken them to their faith in Christ and leading of the Holy Spirit. When we pray for their healing and revival, the power of the Holy Spirit will be evident in their lives and ministries. Hallelujah. We become like the angels of the Lord; for when they gather around a person in Christ, he or she is revived and healed completely.

To God, it is not the life and enemies buffeting that matters but the action and reaction of the Church to pray and revive the physically and spiritually

wounded (**Psalms 119:40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 138:7, 143:11, Hosea 6:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17**). Yes if you want a prayer topic to pray daily, this one is for you and God will bless you accordingly in Jesus' name. Amen.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT HE ENDURED BUFFETING OF ENEMIES ATTACKS ON HIS LIFE, MINISTRY AND INTEGRITY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL AND TEACH GOSPEL TRUTHS AND REVELATIONS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

HENCE THE NEED FOR THEM TO OBEY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. IT MEANS TO SAY THAT GOING BEING BUFFETED IN LIFE BY ALL KINDS OF CHALLENGES IS NOT AN EXCUSE TO ABANDON YOUR CALL AND MINISTRY AND SWITCH TO ANOTHER RELIGIOUS FAITH THROUGH DENIAL AND REJECTION AND APOSTASY.

PRAYER

Your name is Jehovah Shammah, Ever Present God. Your name is Jehovah Sabbaoth, the Lord of Hosts.

We pray that you do not exempt us from the buffetings of this life, ministry and the Church.

Rather we pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit will awaken us to pray, help and support the physically and spiritually wounded for healing and reviving.

We ask for this grace in the name of Jesus. Amen.

WE CANNOT BE EXEMPTED FROM THE BLOWS, KICKS, INSULTS, STRUGGLES, CHALLENGES AND SCHEMES OF OUR ENEMIES AS WELL AS THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS FROM THIS LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. BUT WE CAN ARISE IN PRAYER TO HELP AND SUPPORT THE PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY WOUNDED OF FELLOW BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND MINISTERS TO BE REVIVED IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHENEVER BUFFETED. NANA KWAKU DUODU

NO DWELLING PLACE IN MINISTRY; HAVE THE MIND OF PAUL

INSPIRATION

In every game, both side of the players and coaches and sponsors are fully aware of the presence of the cheering fans to win matches. Even when you lack the basic necessities of life like food, water, clothing and shelter, the heavenly and earthly witnesses are watching to see your actions and inactions, hear your words of faith or no faith, confidence in God or complaints.

The bible says that God hears our prayers from His dwelling place in heaven **(2 Chronicles 6:21, 30, 33, 39)** and He is also interested in our dwelling places on earth though without God, it is futility **(2 Chronicles 29:6, Psalms 49:11, Acts 17:26)**. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:11d – Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place

Apostle Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians that the ministry of the Apostles was not friendly to people but hostile in nature. For experience shown that venturing into new and unfamiliar territories to preach Christ and plant and establish Churches through teachings and appointment of Church leaders by the Holy Spirit was associated with threats and sufferings equivalent to somebody sentenced to death in the Roman colosseum.

He began to provide details of his sufferings as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience in ministry.

He declared here that as ministers, they had no certain dwelling place. It meant that you could not point at any building or structure that belonged to the Apostles. Clearly, they were apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and in today's terminology considered missionaries whose traveling purpose was for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to save people and establish Churches with leaders and bishops.

By this truth, Paul made the Corinthians aware that they sacrificed their comfort and place of habitation to travel and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It means to say that they slept in tents and in the cold sometimes and were always at the mercy and favour of believers in the cities, towns and villages.

It revealed that ministry work was not after seeking worldly pleasures. It was also for ordinary people who can leave their personal comfort in response to the call and ministry work. According to the gospel of Paul, God had made them a public spectacle to angels and to people **(1 Corinthians 4:9)**. Hence there was no permanent abode or building or structure that belonged to him. He was focused in ministry to invest in souls and this was confirmed in his movements from one place to the other.

When you are sold out to Jesus, you become His bondservant. And it's just business as usual responding to preach the message of salvation anytime and everywhere as the Holy Spirit leads you. The bible says that there was a call from the Israelites to God in remembrance of His covenant with David about giving him a royal house forever. The covenant recalled David's words to God of not giving sleep to his eyes and sleep in the comfort of his bedroom in his house till he found and built a place of worship as a temple for Him **(Psalms 132:1 – 4)**.

What this teaches us is that when we decide to obey the Lord's call to preach and teach and shepherd His people as the Church, we have to show commitment and determination even at the expense of comfort and sleep on a luxurious bed and house. Be ready to sleep everywhere even in the open as Paul talked about peril of the field and cold in ministry. Therefore guest preachers and teachers of the word of God in the fivefold ministry must not complain about host Churches and Ministers giving them low class hotels, Guest Houses and places to sleep. If it saves cost and cuts down spending, the better for them financially to God's glory.

Truly those who are busy in their ministries preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and establishing Churches do not entangle themselves with worldly affairs. They live to do God's perfect will and are led by the Holy Spirit all the time. Jesus spoke and shared the same view with the multitudes when He said that foxes have holes, and birds have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head **(Matthew 8:20)**. For He made known to them the cost of discipleship.

It means to say that busy preachers being led by the Holy Spirit do not have permanent place of abode to rest because they are always on the move for Jesus Christ. Every meeting is an opportunity to preach and reveal the Lord Jesus Christ to people and know the state of the Churches. The comfort of a bed and sleep in preaching Christ in all manner of places is not there because you can only get it at one place; home with family. Remember when Jacob was on his way to his uncle Laban's house, he slept on a hard ground using a stone as a pillow at Bethel. Yet he dreamt of seeing angels ascending and descending on a ladder set to heaven **(Genesis 28:10 – 17)**. Truly, it is about the anointing in your life and ministry and not personalities or sleeping in luxurious buildings and decorations without the anointing.

Indeed missionaries find themselves in this scripture because they travel from one place to the other for Christ. The bible says that when the Israelites enjoyed Jesus' ministry of teaching, healing and miracles and casting out devils in Capernaum, they decided to keep Him at one place. The anointing was great especially when He was with the new chosen disciples. They wanted all for themselves contrary to the mission of Jesus to preach to other people. The whole city trooped to His door. But Jesus secluded Himself to pray for spiritual renewal and more specific directions in ministry **(Mark 1:35 – 37)**. Then confidently and boldly, Jesus replied that it was necessary to go to the next towns so that He could preach also to them in order to fulfill the purpose of His coming as the Messiah and the Christ **(Mark 1:38)**.

Capernaum seemed to be a place of comfort and resting place of Jesus and the disciples. But they were on a mission to reveal the kingdom of God to people. Yes they rejected the pleasures of Capernaum to be mission minded just the way Moses rejected the pleasures of Pharaoh's palace to lead the Israelites out of bondage **(Hebrews 11:24 – 27)**. Moses discerned rightly about his mission by rejecting the pleasures of sin in Egypt during the consequences. Besides, he had revelation of the suffering Christ which he saw greater and better than the treasures of Egypt.

This counsels us to be mindful of worldly enticements and treasures that limit or prevent us from fulfilling our ministries. If we are sold out to Jesus, we will live for Him and be in service to Him. We can also be described as a people with the restriction of dwelling in best places because preaching and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ is our concern and motive.

Truly the Israelites dwelt in tents for a long time from Abraham to the time of Joshua after the distribution of the lands to the eleven tribes of Israel. For they were also on the move in the wilderness journeys. They had no permanent dwelling places and therefore lived in tents **(Genesis 12:8, 13:3,5,1218, 18:1 & 2, 6, 9 & 10, 24:67, 25:27, 26:17, 25, 31:25, 33 & 34, 33:18 & 19)**. They had the Tabernacle of the tent of meeting; place of worship **(Exodus 39:40, 40:2, 6, 19)**. The tents of Jacob and blessings of Israel are described as lovely **(Numbers 24:5)**. The sons of Issachar were told to rejoice in their tents **(Deuteronomy 33:18)**. Joshua blessed the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh and told them to return to their tents **(Joshua 22:6 - 8)**. Gideon attacked the kings of Midian in their tents and killed them after a hot chase; Zebah and Zalmunna **(Judges 8:11 – 13)**. They built permanent dwelling places only when they settled down in the Promised Land.

Likewise, as travelers in this world, let us be mission minded as the Church; Believing Christians, Christian and Church leaders and workers, and Ministers.

It is not wrong to build houses and live in them but they should not take the place of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We cannot replace or exchange the glory of God with the glories of this world. For nothing is pleasing to God than the place and time of prayer, word, fellowship, evangelism, worship, praise, and service to Him by the Church. And they are far above the glories of this world like houses, buildings and properties that define the permanent dwelling places of people. Hey don't sell your birthright in Christ because God loves you and the Holy Spirit is in you for eternal blessings. Live for Christ and make sacrifices for Him to preach His gospel of salvation anytime and everywhere when the Holy Spirit leads you.

You are a citizen of heaven and a traveler on earth. Fulfill your ministry before you go to your permanent dwelling place as Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders **(Philippians 3:18 – 21)**. Yes you are destined to overcome. Be victorious.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT HE SACRIFICED AND ENDURE THE DISCOMFORT OF SLEEPING IN ODD

PLACES JUST TO PREACH CHRIST AND TEACH GOSPEL TRUTHS AND REVELATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCHES LIKE THE CHURCH OF CORINTH.

WITH THIS MESSAGE, PAUL ENCOURAGED THE CHURCH OF CORINTH TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST JUST HE AND OTHER APOSTLES WERE STILL ENDURING FOR THEIR BLESSING.

PRAYER

Dear God, let me have the mind of Christ and the mind of Paul to be mission minded as a traveler on this earth.

We pray for grace to sleep in all manner of places to identify ourselves with the needs and concerns of the people we preach the gospel of salvation, and the Believing Christians in the Churches.

Make us heaven focused and give us the power to make sacrifices that reject worldly enticements, treasures and pleasures to limit us or divert our attention from Your perfect will in Christ.

May the Holy Spirit be our Helper in Jesus' name. Amen.

WHEN WE MAKE JESUS' MISSION OUR FOCUS, WE CANNOT HAVE THE MINDSET OF HAVING COZY AND CONVENIENT PLACES FOR SLEEP AND RELAXATION. RATHER, WE WILL BE BUSY WITH THE WORKS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO CHANGE AND BLESS PEOPLE AND GENERATIONS. DON'T FALL INTO THE TRAP OF LIVING FOREVER ON THIS EARTH AND ENJOYING WORLDLY TREASURES FOREVER. BE HEAVEN FOCUSED. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

FIND GOOD WORK TO DO; DON'T EXPLOIT THE CHURCH

The worth of a leader is also measured by his concern for the people's welfare. If the leader does not exploit the people but has good work to do with salary, it lessens the financial burden of the people.

For the Lord has blessed the work of our hands to profit as long as we trust Him (**Deuteronomy 15:10, 16:15b, 20:4, 28:8 & 12, 30:9 & 10, Psalms 90:17, Isaiah 48:17**). The bible says also that a non – diligent hand becomes poor but a diligent hand becomes rich (**Proverbs 10:4**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:12a – And labour, working with our own hands:

This was Apostle Paul's message to the Church in Corinth. Despite all the hardships of life, and from human enemies and demonic enemies, one thing was certain and true about him. He and his ministry partners laboured in tent making. For they worked with their own hands and not hired hands. It means that Paul and his team used their talents and skills to work hard and to put food and water in their mouths, clothing to wear and places to sleep. In other words, they decided not to be a burden on the Church but used their tent making skills to make tents and make money for a living.

The bible says that Paul had come from Athens to Corinth. There, he met Aquila and his wife Priscilla who were tent makers. This made Paul stayed with them and worked as a tent maker (**Acts 18:1 – 3**).

The New King James Bible Commentary for Acts 18:3 states that all young rabbinical students had to learn a trade. Tent makers were leather workers. The province of Cilicia, from which Paul came, was noted for its cloth made from goat's hair. It is likely that Paul's skill involved making such cloth.

It means to say that Paul did not burden his hosts, Aquila and Priscilla. Neither did he exploit them because his own hands worked to put money into his pocket and food on his table as well as clothing to wear. Thus he combined ministry works with talents of being a skillful tent weaver.

In this truth, Paul's confidence of having personal integrity and ministry integrity was meant to emphasize his innocence and righteousness as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was also meant to make the Corinthians Believers know the sacrifice he had made in this area for their establishment in the Christian faith and eternal blessings. Hence the need for their obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ preached and taught them.

To the Thessalonian believers, Paul instructed and counseled them to lead a quiet life, mind their own business as well as work with their own hands in order to have a good reputation and testimony to people who are outside (**1 Thessalonians 4:11**).

All of us have desires but the bible says that the desire of the lazy man kills him because his hands refuse to labour **(Proverbs 21:25)**. Again the bible says that the lazy man buries his hand in the bowl and it wearies him to bring him back to his mouth **(Proverbs 26:15)**. Again the bible says that the lazy man sees a lion or fierce lion on the street and does not proceed further **(Proverbs 26:13)**.

In this truth and revelation, let us work hard because it rewards us with increase, multiplication in blessings, prosperity and righteousness. The bible says that Isaac obeyed the word of God to remain in the land of Gerar **(Genesis 26:1 – 6)**. When Isaac sowed, the LORD blessed him and reaped a hundred fold that same year. He prospered greatly in a progressive and systematic way in flocks of herds and a great number of servants to the envy of the Philistine **(Genesis 26:12 – 14)**. It proves the blessing of God to prosper us in every good work we do as a Church. Indeed there is hard work without God's blessings and there is also hard work with God's blessings.

Therefore since God blesses us, it is never luck or lottery to us because He gives us the power and wisdom to make wealth **(Deuteronomy 8:18)**. For the parable of the talents shows us that God blesses our hard works to reap abundantly in various areas and levels **(Matthew 25:14 – 30)**. Therefore work hard in a righteous manner like Jacob even in the face of the likes of Laban, and not as a liar, deceiver, and a wicked person. For the righteous Judge is still at work to reward us **(Genesis 31:1 – 3, 4 – 18, 38 – 42)**.

We learn from Paul's personal integrity and ministry integrity and ministry integrity where he told the Ephesian Elders confidently about how he had coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. How his own hands had provided for his necessities and ministry partners. This was purposed driven to let them know that laboring righteously to support the weak is the responsibility of the Church. This righteous example was also premised on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ that "it is more blessed to give than to receive". **(Acts 20:33 – 35)**.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS WAS THAT HE AND HIS MINISTRY PARTNERS AND MINISTRY HELPERS LABOURED WITH HIS OWN HANDS TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR NEEDS SUCH AS FOOD, WATER, CLOTHING AND SHELTER AND BOOKS IN MOST TIMES. THOUGH THEY DID RECEIVE HELPS AND SUPPORTS, IT WAS BORNE OF RECEIVED LOVE AND COMPASSION, AND NOT BY COMPULSION.

HENCE THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS TO SEE THROUGH THEIR LABOURS OF LOVE AND KEEP ON BELIEVING IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND AS A CHURCH.

PRAYER

O God who has blessed us with the blessings of the earth, give us the wisdom of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and Paul and Aquila and Priscilla to work hard and be blessed.

Help us to dodge sinful works so that our righteousness will be rewarded in the name of Jesus.

May the Holy Spirit be our Helper in Jesus name. Amen

TO BE BLESSED IN WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT BY LUCK BUT THE DETERMINED PURPOSE OF GOD AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH WORKERS, CHURCH LEADERS, MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

BEING REVILED; WE BLESS IN MINISTRY

INSPIRATION

One of the distinctive aspect of Paul's ministry was his love for the Church just as Christ taught the disciples **(John 13:34)**. He was not to seek revenge but expressed love to make sure that Christ is preached at all costs to the people. He expressed love also to the Churches in order to sanctify and bless them with gospel truths and revelation for spiritual growth and maturity. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:12b – And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless

At this stage in Paul's ministry, it became clear that he was making clean the Church in Corinth with his epistle. For the Church was being informed that it is not just about the anointing but also habits and character formation. By this truth, Paul meant that the anointing of the Holy Spirit which teaches us also makes us have Christ-like nature and character.

In this truth and revelation, Paul emphasized on being reviled by enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ but always had a righteous response of blessing. In other words, the Holy Spirit in him could only bless and not revile.

Let us take a critical look at dictionary definitions of the word "revile".

It means to criticize in an abusive or angrily manner. It means also someone who speaks abusively or contemptuously to or of another person or thing. It has synonyms of scold, abuse, upbraid, berate, rail and vituperate.

Clearly, the Holy Spirit could not be corrupted with the nature and spirit of sin, evil and wickedness of the devil and his demons. That is why Paul wrote to encourage the Corinthians that though enemies criticized him abusively or angrily, he could only bless them in love. Though people spoke bad and evil things about his apostolic ministry and ministry works by the Holy Spirit, he could not retaliate but bless them in love.

Yes to believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and be closely associated with Him in ministry as His Apostle is to believe in His words for obedience unto perfection. Jesus had taught the disciples to love and pray for their enemies in ministry. He did not teach them to curse because cursing enemies makes you give up on them to be saved by His gospel.

Therefore Paul's message was timely to the Corinthians whose society and culture did not see anything wrong with reviling. In this truth, Paul imparted the Spirit of Christ into them because they were now children of God and needed to be perfected.

It means to say that anybody who reviles another person is corrupted in sin. It means to say also that your righteous nature in Christ would be corrupted when you respond negatively to the provocation of reviling. Yes no one is free from sin when you revile another person; abusively or angrily. But if the anointing makes you bless them like Paul, then your words are clean and righteous to God. One of the many encouraging things Paul told the Ephesian elders in Miletus was that it is more blessed to give than receive **(Acts 20:35)**.

Again, Jesus reminds us that every spoken idle word will be accounted to God. Besides, our words will either justify or condemn us before God **(Matthew 2:36 & 37)**. Therefore watch your words carefully and rather speak scripture to inspire, encourage and bless somebody or reply opponents with answers that will convict their consciences unto repentance.

The bible says in **Exodus 22:28 – Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of the people.**

When this scripture was quoted to Paul for his strong words against the high priest Ananias before the council, he apologized for this error in his trial and question before the Roman Commander and garrison. For he did not know that Ananias was the High Priest because of his abusive behaviour towards him **(Acts 23:1 – 5)**.

As a Church of Believing Christians, Church workers, Ministers and Christian leaders, let us have the habit of blessing opponents when they revile us because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and righteous works by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that when people revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you, know and remember that we are blessed **(Matthew 5:11)**.

Indeed Jesus demonstrated it on the cross when robbers reviled Him **(Matthew 27:44)**. The bible says also that when Jesus was on the cross, people who passed by reviled Him saying He claims to have power to destroy the Jerusalem temple and rebuild it in three days. They taunted Him to save Himself by coming down from the cross. Likewise the chief priests and the Scribes mocked Him on the cross as a powerless Person who could not set Himself free from the cross though He saves people.

Besides, they provoked Him saying that they were ready to believe Him as the Christ if He was able to come down from the cross **(Mark 15:29 – 32)**. Yet Jesus did not insult or replied angrily for their evil words. For He was determined to complete and accomplish eternal salvation for humanity as the Son of God, the Messiah and the Christ. And this truth and testimony is shared by Apostle Peter in his first epistle **(1 Peter 2:23)**.

Likewise you have the nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit to be like Paul as a Minister, Missionary, Church deacon and Church elder, Christian worker and Believing Christian. Learn to pray for enemies of the cross of Jesus when they speak evil of your authority in Christ as a servant of God. Don't be perturbed.

Keep preaching, teaching and praying for the Church and salvation of souls and keep blessing them. Fulfill the Great Commission **(Matthew 28:18 – 20)**.

Know that the voice of the reviler becomes louder when you are in your difficult and challenging situations in life. In your weakest moments, they provoke you to sin but bless them **(1 Samuel 25:14, 2 Chronicles. 32:17, Psalms 44:16)**. They tell you they are ready to believe in you like Jesus if only you prove yourself strong and mighty. But in their innermost hearts their agenda is to make you a reviler and sinful like them. Be wise to bless them and see the power of God at work unto your salvation and their salvation.

Cultivate the habit of not reviling Church and dignitaries such as Christian leaders and Ministers because it is against scripture **(Exodus 22:28, Jude 1:8 – 10)**. For reviling is a characteristic of an evil and corrupt nature of a person. Rather pray for them to fulfill their ministries and be protected from the devil and his demons and human enemies. Yes bless them physically and spiritually.

Learning from Paul's righteous example to bless and not revile, our new nature in Christ by the Holy Spirit should result in good Christian lives and works that any reviling will be contrary to our Christian faith. It means that our righteousness will speak for us and our enemies can only speak against our Christian faith but will not have any sin in us to revile. Therefore be holy, righteous and obedient to the complete gospel of Jesus Christ **(1 Peter 3:16)**. This gives us the confidence and boldness to bless our enemies in the name of Jesus.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT MINISTRY WORK WITH SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY INVOLVES THE USE OF SPIRITUAL WEAPON OF BLESSING AND NOT THE CARNAL WEAPON OF REVILING. THE FRUIT OF LOVE IS GOD'S GREATEST WEAPON IN THE MIDST OF REVILING AND CURSING FROM ENEMIES.

IT MEANS TO SAY THAT PAUL DID NOT USE THE DESTRUCTIVE DEMONIC WEAPON TO AVENGE HIS ENEMIES BUT CHOSE TO LOVE AND BLESS ALL PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED AND FOUGHT AGAINST HIS APOSTOLIC MINISTRY AND WORKS. HENCE THE NEED FOR THE CHURCH OF CORINTH TO OBEY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

PRAYER

Our All Wise God. You have taught us in Christ and through the life and ministry of Paul to bless and not revile in the midst of provocation.

Help us to maintain our holy and righteous nature in Christ by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

For we cannot be subjected to the whims and caprices of people and societal and cultural perceptions other than the gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God.

With Jesus' perfect example, let us practice our Christian faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to be a blessing in word and works always in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHOWMANSHIP OF STRENGTH DOES NOT LIE IN ABUSIVE LANGUAGE AND TONE. RATHER BLESSING YOUR ENEMIES IS THE LANGUAGE AND TONE OF THE CHURCH AND HEAVEN AND ALL BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND MINISTERS MUST CULTIVATE AS HABITS AND CHARACTER IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND PEOPLE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

LORD ACTON WRITES TO BISHOP CREIGHTON THAT THE SAME MORAL STANDARDS SHOULD BE APPLIED TO ALL MEN, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS: POWER TENDS TO CORRUPT AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY. GREAT MEN ARE ALMOST ALWAYS BAD MEN, EVEN WHEN THEY EXERCISE INFLUENCE AND NOT AUTHORITY; STILL MORE WHEN YOU SUPERADD THE TENDENCY OF THE CERTAINTY OF CORRUPTION BY AUTHORITY – **LORD ACTON (1834 – 1902)**

BEING PERSECUTED; ENDURING SPIRIT

INSPIRATION

What is sweet is sweet and what is bitter is bitter. In Christ, there are good, wonderful and memorable experiences and days as well as difficult, challenging, and suffering experiences and days.

The bible says that God has made the day of prosperity to enjoy and the day of adversity to consider. For God had made both times and seasons so that we look up to Him always and not depend on ourselves and other gods and people and the devil and his demons (**Ecclesiastics 7:14**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:12d – And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

Here Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians believers emphasizing that he had gone through persecution times to stop and silence him in ministry but contained the suffering. That is he endured sufferings for the sake of Christ and his mission to the Gentile world as an Apostle. It means to say also that what he accomplished in ministry such as establishing and maintaining the Church in Corinth was borne out of endured sufferings beside prayers and word delivery.

When you go through suffering for preaching Christ, gather people as a Church, and establish Christ's righteousness in the Church members, you will understand Paul's boldness in declaring his suffering to the Corinthians Believers. It is also important to note that Paul's suffering in ministry was prophetic as the Lord Jesus Christ told Ananias in the city of Damascus (**Acts 99:10 – 16**). As revealed, this was part of his call and ministry as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:1**). If we go through suffering prophetically in the will of God, and not because of sin, we are bound to have righteous results like Apostle Paul.

Earlier in **chapter 4**, Paul has given a hint of his suffering which he described as a package for Apostles; condemned to death and made a public spectacle to angels and men (**1 Corinthians 4:9**). Having identified various challenges in ministry which are a form of suffering (**1 Corinthians 4:10, 11, 12a,b,c**), he mentioned specifically for the first time that he experienced suffering but endured them for the sake of Christ and the Church.

It is important to note that Paul was introduced to persecution early in ministry when the Jews wanted to kill him in the city of Damascus. But the disciples helped him to escape hidden in a large basket through the city wall (**Acts 9:20 – 25**).

By this message, Paul was determined to make sure that the Church in Corinth was successful with increased knowledge, understanding and revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It meant that he was ready to make sacrifices in line with his

interest and determination that Christ was formed in them **(1 Corinthians 2:2)**. Hence he endured persecutions from people who misunderstood his apostolic ministry and righteous intent.

It is also written about Paul in Corinth that the Jews took offence at the testimony of Jesus Christ and opposed him and used blasphemous words against him. With this experience, he shook off the dust from his feet and declared a new direction of ministry to the Gentiles **(Acts 18:5 & 6)**.

Again the Jews rose up against Paul to oppose his ministry when Crispus the ruler of the synagogue and his household believed as well as the proconsul and many other Jews. Paul seemed to be doing well for a period of one year and six months under the Lord's protection. In the face of Gallio, the Jews opposed Paul with one accord and brought him before the judgment seat. The charge was that Paul taught people to worship God contrary to the law. Eventually Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue was beaten before the judgment seat and forced Paul to leave the place **(Acts 18:7 – 17 & 18)**.

Indeed, bearing the fruit of longsuffering by the Holy Spirit as a result of persecutions is one of the difficult positions of Christians **(Galatians 5:22d)**. This is linked to dependence on God's grace and not human strategies to outsmart enemies. You are being persecuted and suffering and yet God says be faithful and trust Him for righteous results. Even when you have the power to revenge and stop your enemies, God's word tells you to use righteous means and strategies as an example in wisdom, innocence, and humility in life and ministry and the Church.

Know that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ will suffer persecution as Paul told Timothy **(2 Timothy 3:12)**. It is a reminder of the words of Jesus that just as the world hated Him, so also they will hate the disciples. Therefore it is normal to be hated and persecuted for being a Believing Christian, Church worker, Church leader, Minister and Christian leader. For it has been granted on our behalf to believe in Jesus as well as suffer for Him **(Philippians 1:29)**.

The natural man likes doing his own thing different from God. We read

Romans 12:14 – “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

This was what Apostle Paul went through in his ministry and concluded that Christians need to endure persecutions to prove the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to endure and be a victor in Christ even in the midst of persecutions and sufferings. Following the example of Jesus Christ, we need to go a second mile with such hostile attitudes and sentiments from enemies of righteousness and not behave like them. Endure like Jesus endured the suffering on the cross forsaking its shame for a brighter and glorious tomorrow **(Hebrews 12:2)**.

Learning from Jesus, we are not to be revengeful but loving towards our enemies. We read

Mathew 5:38 – 40 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”

These are the words of Jesus to the disciples revealing a paradigm shift from the Old covenant of the Law to the New Covenant where love rules instead of revenge. Here Jesus preached the necessity of love where peace and innocence keeps one away from being revengeful. For the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of peace and righteousness through faith and dependence on God, and not self – interests and self – will.

It advocated also for avoiding people who wants to use the law courts and forceful means to waste our time which could have been invested in profitable living and ministry and Church works. Besides, Jesus promoted good business practices of giving and sharing as from a lender to a borrower in a good and cordial human relationship.

Truly, the Holy Spirit is our Helper to endure hardships as a result of persecutions in ministry. All of us need prayers, encouragements and comfort in love when we are being persecuted in life and ministry and even in the Church. The bible says that Paul requested prayers from the Church in Thessalonica first that the preaching of the gospel would run swiftly and be glorified as it was in them. The second dimension of prayers was for protection from unreasonable and wicked men in ministry. For he realized that not all of them had faith like him and the Church **(2 Thessalonians 3:1 & 2)**.

We must agree with Paul in his words to strengthen the disciples in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch that **“we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:21 & 22)**. For in our weaknesses, the power of God is made excellent to save and establish the Church. Endure buddy.

PAUL EMPHASIZED ON SUFFERING AS ONE OF THE NOTABLE THINGS IN HIS MINISTRY TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS. HIS MESSAGE REVEALED THAT HE ENDURED SUFFERINGS FROM ENEMIES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO PREACH CHRIST AND ESTABLISH THE CHURCH IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

BY THIS GOSPEL TRUTH, PAUL REVEALED THAT THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS NOT FORMED AND ESTABLISHED ON A SILVER PLATTER BUT THROUGH LABOURS OF LOVE AND PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING, AS WELL AS ENDURING THE VAGARIES OF THE WEATHER. HENCE THEIR OBEDIENCE TO MAKE HIS JOY COMPLETE.

PRAYER

Jehovah El – Gibbor is thy name. For You are the Mighty God.

We pray for strength to endure suffering in the Christian faith and works by the Holy Spirit and scriptures.

For every persecution, give us the enduring and overcoming spirit trusting in Your grace.

We look to Jesus on the cross and Paul in his ministry persecutions and say that You are able to help us too.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDURANCE IN SUFFERING HAS THE HIDDEN ELEMENTS OF RICHES AND GLORY OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. IT SEEMS HIDDEN AND INVINCIBLE IN THE BEGINNING BUT THE END PROVES IT WORTH AND BLESSINGS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

ENDURANCE IN SUFFERING IS A CHOICE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW AND ETERNITY. IT IS REJECTING THE TEMPORARY PLEASURE AND COMFORT IN SIN FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND FULFILLMENT OF MINISTRY AND SALVATION OF PEOPLE AS WELL AS ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE PROMISES OF GOD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

BEING DEFAMED; WE ENTREAT

INSPIRATION

Character building is a long time of habits with strengths and weaknesses. It shapes and defines one's personality to the admiration of people with societal benefits. When one is determined to protect and preserve good character with the fear of God, wisdom is given to apply the right strategies such as conciliation and hospitality.

The bible says that to turn aside the justice due a man Before the face of the Most High, Or subvert a man in his cause— The Lord does not approve **(Lamentations 3:36 & 37)**.

God knows that personal and ministry integrity will be attacked by enemies outside and within but your reaction to the prevailing situation matters most to Him. Why because He has given us the grace to correct and change it for the edification of the Church. Yes God is with us. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:13a – Being defamed, we entreat:

Apostle Paul was very concerned about his hard won reputation first as a Believing Christian and second an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though his life of integrity was attacked many times by unbelieving Jewish and Gentile enemies, he did not become like them. Rather he responded joyfully by welcoming people to his life and ministry for a blessing and not a curse.

Even within the Church of Corinth he had formed, Paul had to ward off attacks on his personal integrity and ministry integrity. When Paul heard the report from Chloe's household about the sin of sectarianism in the Church, he pleaded with them to have sense of unity and purpose in their Christian faith **(1 Corinthians 1:10 – 17)**.

Later, Paul had to deal with the puffing up spirit in the Church in a conciliatory manner and not retaliatory manner. For those who accused his personal and ministry integrity for not coming as expected, he replied with the assurance to visit them shortly. Besides he revealed his rejection for the puffers in the Church but trusted in the power of God to make his visit achievable **(1 Corinthians 4:18 & 19)**.

Again we see Paul dealing with the puffing up spirit in the Church of Corinth against sexual immorality. For the culprit was a Church member who was sleeping with the father's wife in an open affair without repentance and remorse **(1 Corinthians 5:1 & 2)**.

According to the Bible Exposition Commentary, the Apostles pleaded and conciliated with the people who dishonoured them. They requested cessation of slander from men by conciliation. They were not petty or petulant and did not fly off the handle because of the diminishing of their reputation.

From the very beginning in his salutation, his first epistle to the Corinthians revealed him as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ by the will of God **(1 Corinthians 1:1)**. It meant that his loyalty was Jesus Christ and to God and not subjected to the whims and caprices of the people.

Having heard of the spirit of sectarianism in the Church with its effects of divisions, Paul diagnosed the Church of Corinth as a people who did not have one mind in their confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the noticeable slandering spirit with speaking against Christian and Church leaders as if they were bad and not to be accepted and recognized. He cautioned them early to uproot this evil from the Church. Though he was also chastised by a section of the Church, he urged them strongly to overcome it because the Holy Spirit was the One leading Him.

As a good minister and spiritual father to the Church of Corinth, he was determined not to know anything other than Christ crucified and formed in them **(1 Corinthians 2:2)**. If Ministers, Church leaders and Christian leaders would emulate the righteous examples to manage Church problems and conflicts, there would be love at work and not chastisement and revenge.

He noticed that one of the devil's weapons is the spirit of slander where evil words, lies and accusations are leveled against one another in the church by fellow Christians. It kills the faith of believers as Jesus said in **John 10:10**. He did not yield to the strategy of the devil to cause divisiveness but promoted unity among the believers to confirm his call to Apostleship.

The bible says that do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge **(James 4:11)**.

In truth, to slander someone is to destroy his or her hard won reputation and God does not approve of it. It means to destroy his name, personality and righteous works by the Holy Spirit. The bible speaks against slandering your biological brother or family member just because of what you need in life **(Psalms 50:20)**. The bible warns us about slandering our neighbours because God shall destroy us **(Psalms 101:5)**. The bible tells us that slanders are evil people who cannot be established on earth **(Psalms 140:11)**. In other words, slanderers are not needed on earth; lives, families, work places, ministries and the Church because their words and ways are destructive.

They are described as fools **(Proverbs 10:18)**. And their number will increase in these last days **(2 Timothy 3:3)**. As a matter of righteousness, we don't need slanderers in the Church especially wives of deacons **(1 Timothy 3:11)**, and older women **(Titus 2:3)**.

With this understanding, we must bear the fruit of gentleness where answers and reactions are based on Christ's teachings and not by brute force of strength and power **(Galatians 5:23a)**. For like Paul, we must value our

reputation as Ministers, Christian leaders and Believing Christians than our natural selves.

In prayers, preaching and teachings, counseling, instructions in righteousness, rebuke and cautions, let us urge the Church to be led by the Holy Spirit and think and act good towards one other. Let love lead us always just as God loves us in Christ to help and support one another. Let us have the mind of Christ and not the mind of the world. Yes though we are defamed, we urged strongly to overcome with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit; love, humility, plea, conciliatory and hospitality.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS HIS HUMBLING STATE TO LOVE, URGE, PLEAD, CONCILIATE AND BE HOSPITABLE IN THE MIDST OF DEFAMATION OF PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND CHURCH INTEGRITY.

IF MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS WOULD EMULATE PAUL'S MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND EXAMPLE, ATTACKS ON PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND MINISTRY INTEGRITY WILL NOT CAUSE DIVISIONS AND BREAK UP CHURCHES BUT HAVE A SENSE OF UNITY OF FAITH AND PURPOSE IN CHRIST.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, you have taught us that ministry work reveals the evil weapon of slandering by the devil and his demons and enemies of righteousness.

Help us to overcome like Apostle Paul in his presiding over the Church in Corinth.

Help us to have one mind and confession of our Christian faith without agreeing with unbelievers and sinners against one another.

Help us to clean the Church of this evil by the help of Your Holy Spirit in Jesus' name. Amen.

SLANDERERS SIT IN THE SEAT OF JUDGES AND CONDEMN WHEN THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION. THEY DISOBEY THE LAW OF GOD TO PROMOTE LOVE AND UNITY BECAUSE THEY BECOME JUDGES OF THE LAW. BUT THE CALL TO ENTREAT IN THE EVENT OF DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER, PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND MINISTRY INTEGRITY IS INEVITABLE TO ENSURE A SENSE OF UNITY OF FAITH AND PURPOSE IN THE CHURCH. NANA KWAKU DUODU

WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK IN YOU, YOUR WORDS AND REACTIONS TO DEFAMATION OF CHARACTER SPEAK OF THE TRUTH IN CHRIST AND NOT BY HUMAN STANDARDS. PROTECT YOUR REPUTATION AND MINISTRY AS A CHURCH OF BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH WORKERS, CHURCH LEADERS, MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN AND CHURCH LEADERS. NANA KWAKU DUODU

BEING THE GARBAGE OF THE WORLD; THE WASTE OF ALL THINGS

INSPIRATION

Birds that eat at refuse sites are not the same as parrots that live in clean places and feeds in palaces. For the Church, God requires holiness and not corruption, sanctification and not filth of our Christmas faith.

Despite the world's perception of the Church as garbage where Ministers play frontline roles as leaders, the promise of God is to comfort Zion and all her waste places. Our wilderness will be like Eden and desert like the Garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found it **(Isaiah 51:3)**. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:13b,c – Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Apostle Paul's message to the Corinthians emphasized on the truth that God had made Apostles the filth of the world where people mistreat them for the sake of Christ and the ministry. In the eyes of the people especially unbelievers and sinners, their disobedience and unbelief in the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ means that it is foolishness to them. For it does not make sense to them at all **(1 Corinthians 1:18)**.

It means to say that what the Apostles believed and embraced is what the world rejected as filth. As we all know, garbage is an unwanted product in our homes, organizations, institutions and companies and communities. It is meant for the refuse sites and not for us. In other words, the perception of the world towards Apostles and the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is garbage; unwanted product.

Paul's message seems to be true even in our time because of the proliferation of religions in the name of culture, tradition, identity and democracy. The world now believes in freedom and practice of one's religion and thus making the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ a garbage to them.

Besides, the hardships and sufferings associated with the apostolic ministry makes them the offscouring of all things. By this message of Paul, it means that the perception of people towards the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ was hatred, rejection, outcast, shame and disgrace in life, ministry and the Church. They were considered as the misfits in society among the living.

Clearly the world's taste and passion was in sharp contrast to that of the Apostles and the Church. Hence the battle between the Church and the world for supremacy, authority and influence. Earlier Paul had revealed to the Corinthians about reigning with them in Christ if only they were obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ **(1 Corinthians 4:8)**. Indeed Paul wrote these words based on his apostolic experiences with scriptural basis as led by the Holy Spirit.

The bible says that the lamentation of the Prophet Jeremiah concerning the severity of God's judgment included making the Israelites the offscouring of the people because of their sins **(Lamentations 3:45)**. Even the heavens were shut against their prayers because of the prevailing sin **(Lamentations 3:44)**.

Indeed Paul's apostolic picture of being garbage and offscouring of the world was a sharp contrast to sinful Israel in the days of the Prophet Jeremiah. In God's wisdom, the Apostles were at the forefront of preaching Christ, teaching, praying, planting and establishing Churches but the filth and offscouring of the world. Yet saving many people through the message of the cross as the power of God to those who believe and being saved but foolishness to those who are perishing. For God has chosen the foolish and base things of this world to confound the wise people **(1 Corinthians 1:23 – 28)**.

Paul's position reaffirmed his earlier message to the Church in Corinth that the ministry of the Apostles was equaled to condemned prisoners. For they had been made by God a public spectacle to the world; both angels and people. They were fools for Christ's sake, weak, and dishonoured in contrast to the Church being wise, strong and distinguished through their ministries **(1 Corinthians 4:9 & 10)**. All these coupled with personal experiences of hardships, sufferings and attacks made them the garbage of the world and rejected and relegated to the background in all things by worldly standards **(1 Corinthians 4:10 – 13)**.

Therefore the Church today cannot be different from the Church of old. If the Apostles suffered rejection, hatred, shame and disgrace like our Lord Jesus Christ and yet revealed the wisdom of God to save people, then we are in the same boat with them. If these things happen to us also, remember that the superior wisdom of God is at work in Christ and the Holy Spirit to bless and change people. For in our sufferings, the power of God is revealed.

We are in a battle with the devil and his kingdom and the Church is leading with the divine mandate first given to Peter symbolic of the keys of the Church **(Mathew 16:18 & 19) – And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."**

Knowing the revelation of Jesus as the Christ, the Church had the divine mandate to preach Christ crucified and resurrected after the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Having the keys of the Kingdom of heaven to bind and loose, we are unstoppable. The Church is on the winning side; for God is with us to reveal Christ to the world and destroy the works of the devil that has kept peoples, nations, tribes and tongues and countries in bondage and darkness throughout the generations. The church has the power destroy every power of the devil in the name of Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Be encouraged Church: Apostle Paul agrees with Apostle Peter as God's word for all Christians in **1 Peter 5:8 & 9 – Be sober, be vigilant; because your**

adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

The devil is on the rampage to destroy the righteous whose faith is in Christ but can only touch the vulnerable and weaklings. We have the divine authority as a Church to resist him, stand fast in the Christian faith; commitment and faithfulness. It means to say that when you say no to the devil in Christ, he cannot do anything to you except to roar and make noise with threats. Even his threats are against the word of God (**Isaiah 54:16 & 17**) just as issuing threats is a human rights violation in most countries if not all countries of the world.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS IS THAT THE SACRIFICES OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY CAN EXPOSE YOU TO THE WORLD AS GARBAGE AND FILTH. EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE HEAVEN'S RICHEST RESOURCES ON EARTH, THE WORLD'S PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM IN MINISTRY WAS FILTH AND UNWANTED.

IT MEANS TO SAY THAT THE WORLD OF UNBELIEVERS AND SINNERS DOES NOT HESITATE AT ALL TO DISPOSE US LIKE GARBAGE BUT WE MUST HAVE THE MINDSET OF PAUL AND OTHER APOSTLES TO CHAMPION THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCHES IN A DETERMINED AND SACRIFICIAL MANNER.

PRAYER

Our All Wise God, we thank You for the ministries of Paul and Peter which have shown us that we are the filth of the world and offscouring of all things in the revelation of Christ to the world.

Though the world rejects us, Your supreme wisdom is at work to change people and nations with the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Give us the enduring Spirit; the fruit of longsuffering to overcome and fulfill Your righteous purposes in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Prepare, lead, protect and preserve every Church to be a blessing in the midst of societal aggression and rejection because of truth, holiness and righteousness. In Jesus' name. Amen

WHAT IS WRITTEN IS WRITTEN; WHAT IS EXPERIENCED IS EXPERIENCED; WHAT WE MUST GO THROUGH AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH WORKERS, CHURCH LEADERS, MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS TO REVEAL CHRIST TO PEOPLE AND NATIONS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY GOD'S GRACE. THEREFORE WE FACE DAILY CHALLENGES IN CONFIDENCE AND BOLDNESS, AS PREACHERS AND TEACHERS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST EVEN WHEN WE ARE HATED, BEATEN, REJECTED AND MADE THE GARBAGE OF THE WORLD AND OFFSCOURING IN ALL THINGS. NANA KWAKU DUODU

THE HEART AND MOTIVES OF THE GOOD PREACHER; APOSTLE PAUL

INSPIRATION

Every preacher has a message and every message has an audience. Always, God anoints people to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The content of a letter reveals the mind, motives, aspirations, vision and mission of the writer. Hence the personality behind a message speaks volumes. Also the relationship between the leader and the followers determines the kind of messages for mutual benefits. The bible says that where we have the word of the king, there is power (**Ecclesiastes 8:4**).

It is important to note that natural law has played a significant formulation of laws to regulate and shape human behaviour. Though natural law was first practiced by the ancient Greeks, many philosophers expanded its horizon and among them included Aristotle, Plato and Thomas Aquinas.

The concept of supreme principle of morality was first propounded by **Kant (1785)**. His concept is deontological in the sense that one has to obey the duties and obligations which derives from his supreme principle of morality. That is the categorical imperative. Act only according to the maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

Hence natural laws as moral laws regulates and shapes the physical and spiritual lives of the people as a nation. For the legal system of countries with practicing natural and moral laws strengthens the courts where lawyers arguments are endorsed by the Judges. Can Paul's messages be termed as moral laws? Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:14 – I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

The messages of Paul to the Corinthians Believers revealed the intent and purpose to encourage, strengthen and edify them. He was quick to mention that the content of his messages was not to shame them but to warn them as his beloved children. This message revealed that Paul had built personal and ministry relationship with the Corinthians Believers; a spiritual father. For it had the semblance of a father having had a meeting with his children and concluding that the rebukes, corrections and instructions was borne out of love and not condemnation.

In this chapter, Paul had warned the Corinthians Believers not to be judgmental of his apostolic ministry because they were servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. He was not ready to succumb to dictates of human courts ruled by unbelieving sinners. Giving them insight and understanding to their ministries, he mentioned further that God is the Judge who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the secrets and counsels of every man's heart. Therefore they were not to judge

presumptuously or jump the gun because every praise of a Believing Christian and especially Church worker, Church leader, Minister and Christian leader would come from God **(1 Corinthians 4:1 – 5)**.

Besides, Paul defended his apostolic ministry by emphasizing on the unity of ministry and purpose to the Corinthians Believers. By connecting his apostolic ministry to that of Apollos, he taught and warned the Corinthians not to think of them outside of scripture. In other words, they were to accord them the needed respect and reverence as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. That is there was no difference between him and Apollos as well as other Ministers.

As a result, Paul revealed the many sacrifices he had made in ministry to establish the Church of Corinth to bring them to the point of reigning with him as well as preaching Christ everywhere **(1 Corinthians 4:8)**. He considered themselves as the world's garbage and as condemned prisoners where the world is the prison guards taunting and punishing them. He emphasized on societal perception of them as fools and non – entities just because they were preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ **(1 Corinthians 4:9 & 10)**.

Again Paul revealed his sacrificial life in ministry when he mentioned on lacks of the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter besides being beaten **(1 Corinthians 4:11)**. Furthermore, Paul mentioned laboring with hands and the attacks on character, personal integrity and ministry integrity, with psychological effects such as being the filth of the world and offscouring of all things **(1 Corinthians 4:12 & 13)**.

Paul knew that some of the Corinthians Believers would misinterpret his messages and take offences. Hence his determination to make his righteous thoughts and motives very clear to them; keeping them under the banner of God's love and righteousness through faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul stated the truth emphatically in

Romans 10:14 & 15 – How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

And Paul's apostolic ministry and writings were of no mean importance because he was called and anointed by the Lord Jesus Christ as His Apostle to preach and save both the Jews and Gentiles **(Acts 9:1 – 14, 15 & 16, 1 Corinthians 1:1 – 3)**.

Some of his messages to them so far were a composition of soft and strong words in forms of instructions, counsels, wisdom, corrections and rebuke in works and writings **(Acts 18:1 – 17, 1 Corinthians 1:17 & 18, 22 – 26, 2:13 & 14, 3:1 – 14, 11 – 15, 21 – 23, 4:8)**. Be it as it may, Paul expressed his good

heart and motives as righteous concern for their physical wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing **(1 Corinthians 1:27 – 31)**.

The message of Apostle Paul to the Church in Corinth was to assure them of his righteous heart and good motives towards them **(1 Corinthians 2:1 – 5)**. It means to say that the receptive faculties of your congregation must be of importance to you. Hence the need for effective prayers for the Church as a Minister and Christian and Church leader with the divine mandate to preach and teach, instruct in righteousness and counsel and rebuke.

The Apostle Paul preached to people and taught them to live Christ and be in service unto Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. This explains why he revealed and warned them to obey the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ other than self – imposed religions, traditions, cultures and attitudes, behaviours and characters that make them sinful and cause divisiveness in the church **(1 Corinthians 1:10 – 18)**.

The exposure of their sins was not to shame and discourage them in their Christian faith but to caution and warn them to be wary of lies, deceit and demonic strategies by the devil against the church **(1 Corinthians 1:4 – 8, 10 – 17)**.

He called the Corinthian Christians his beloved children because he loved and cared for both their physical relationships in that corrupted society and eternal salvation which could be maintained through commitment and faithfulness in Christ. For he cherished the work of the ministry in Corinth with commitment to perfect them in Christ by the Holy Spirit. This is why he wrote to them saying that their sense of belonging is Christ and Christ is God's **(1 Corinthians 3:23)**.

Paul teaches us that when we make righteous investments in the Church and kingdom of God, we must have a heart, determination and will to perfect the lives of the Believing Christians as well as ensure that right Christian teachings and doctrines are in place to outlive generations. This is the heart of a good shepherd in the likeness of the Chief Shepherd; our Lord Jesus Christ **(John 10)**.

He revealed further that when the foundation of the Church is righteous and good, interventions can be done in the power of the Holy Spirit with references to God's original plan. The bible says that the conclusion of the Preacher man, Solomon, was that the whole duty of man is to fear God and obey His commandments. For God will bring every work into judgment including every secret thing whether good or evil **(Ecclesiastes 12:13 & 14)**.

Be happy and rejoice in the Lord when your Ministers and Christian leaders pray always for the physical wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing of the Church. Rejoice in the Lord when His ministers preach the gospel messages in the power of the Holy Spirit to perfect the Churches and be in God's perfect will. Rejoice in the Lord when Ministers preach not with words of persuasion and enticement but in the demonstration of the Spirit and power to make the

Churches put their faith in God and not the wisdom of men **(1 Corinthians 2:4 & 5)**. I say again rejoice.

PAUL AFFIRMED HIS MESSAGES TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH ABOUT THE TRUTH THAT THEY WERE SERVANTS OF CHRIST AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. THEY WAS THE NEED TO LEAVE JUDGMENT TO GOD AND NOT BE JUDGES OF MINISTERS. THEIR OBEDIENCE WAS NECESSARY AND ETERNALLY REWARDING.

HAVING STATED THEIR POSITION IN MINISTRY AND PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD WITH PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERINGS, IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVED AND OBEYED THEIR GOSPEL MESSAGES WHICH WAS TIED TO PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND MINISTRY INTEGRITY.

PRAYER

Thank You O God for blessing the Church with Ministers, Church and Christian leaders with hearts of a good shepherd.

We pray that Your anointing in their lives and ministries will direct Your Church in Christ's righteousness and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

May You provide, protect and preserve them in the name of Jesus. Amen.

THE MESSAGE OF THE PREACHER ENCOURAGES AND WARN PEOPLE TO LIVE RIGHT WITH GOD IN THE NAME OF JESUS AND IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. LOVE, PRAY, HELP AND SUPPORT THEM. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE PREACHER AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD IS THE EMBLEM OF UNITY AND NOT DIVISIVENESS IN THE CHURCH AS THEY UPHOLD THE TEACHINGS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY LOVE YOU JUST AS JESUS CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH AND LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

FEW FATHERS; MANY INSTRUCTORS – REVERSE THE TREND

INSPIRATION

The relationship between a father and children is full of love and obedience unlike that between an instructor and a people with rules and regulations for obedience. The former is deep with a sense of belonging whereas the latter is mainly for obedience and results. For fathers rejoice over their children's obedience (**Proverbs 1:8, 4:1, 13:1, 15:20, 23:22, 24, 25**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:15 – For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

This was the same message by Apostle Paul to the Church in Corinth. He revealed that though the Corinthians had many instructors, he had begotten them as children through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It means also that Paul had taught them gospel truths and revelations to establish them in their Christian faith as confirmed in his letters. This revealed a close and undeniably relationship between Paul and the Church of Corinth he had formed and established together with other Apostles like Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos.

This was a father and children relationship in the Church and not a master and slaves relationship known in the Jewish and Gentile societies; Corinthian society. For they were the fruits of his apostolic ministry; begotten them in Christ. He planted the Church in Corinth and Apollos watered (**Acts 18:1 – 17, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 3:6**). For he had proven his love in mercy, correction, wisdom, direction, counseling, rebuke, patience and protection towards God in Christ and the Holy Spirit, against the works of the devil. However, their instructors did not have the love and patience like him Paul to ensure their spiritual development and relationship with God as Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders.

Earlier, Paul had thanked God for His grace that had come upon the Corinthians Believers since the day they believed (**1 Corinthians 1:4**).

Besides, he had been praying for them since the day he heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; characteristic of his ministry and personal desire for them to be enriched in Christ to God (**1 Corinthians 1:5, 2:2**).

Specifically, Apostle Paul made the distinction between a father and an instructor in the Lord. He introduced them to Christ Jesus and they believed in Him unto righteousness. He taught them the elementary principles of the Christian faith, prayed and encouraged them to attain spiritual growth and maturity. He diagnosed the problems of the Corinthian Church and provided direction and solutions to ensure love and unity among them.

This means that they became his children in the Lord when they heard the gospel from him to become Christians and therefore spiritually he fathered them as his children. This was uncharacteristic of instructors in his days

because they did not have the interest and passion to ensure their spiritual growth and development through understanding of their Christian faith.

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, instructors and fathers are not the same in meaning to Church relationships. Paul used these two terms to differentiate between his role and the role of the Corinthians teachers; slaves who took care of their masters' children. Paul was the Corinthians' spiritual father. He had final responsibility for them and had the right to command them to follow his example.

Apostle Paul's assertion was that he was a father to them with greater and better interest in their Christian lives than people categorized as instructors who just issued commands and did not relate with them or disciple them to be worthy of Christ.

Indeed Christian fathers are interested in foundation works and cherishes sustainability and progress of the Church as written in

Ephesians 2:20 – having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

This explains why founders of Churches with foundation on the Lord Jesus Christ have so much interest and passion to ensure the numerical growth and spiritual growth of their members. Church prayers and doctrines seem to play a significant role in shaping the faith and unity of the members by the Holy Spirit. Clearly, with Ministers and the Church, we see fathers and children relationship; mothers and children relationship. And we are all one in Christ in the name of unity of faith and purpose. Hallelujah.

It is also important to note as a Church that the Law was our instructor to bring us to Christ so that we must be justified by faith **(Galatians 3:24)**. Its power was vested in making us know our sins anytime we disobeyed the Law but it did not have power to save and change us. Hence the scripture confined all things by law under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe **(Galatians 3:22)**. But Christ is the perfection of the Law and a true Father and Shepherd to His Church. For we are sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ. Our only identity is Christ and not by sex as male or female. For we are all one in Christ **(Galatians 3:25 – 29)**.

Like the Corinthians, let us be mindful and support the roles our Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers **(Ephesians 4:11 – 16)** play to enrich us in Christ and protect us from the devil and his demons as well as human enemies. Likewise let us value and support the roles of deacons, deaconesses and elders as well as all Church leaders. Yes those who have served well will receive an unfading crown **(1 Peter 5:2 – 4)** and double honour rewards **(1 Timothy 5:17)**.

PAUL DEFENDED HIS MINISTRY WORKS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS BY CONTRASTING HIS ROLE AS A SPIRITUAL FATHER TO AN INSTRUCTOR.

FOR HE WAS INTERESTED IN THEIR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL WELLBEING; SPIRITUAL GROWTH, MATURITY, PERFECTION AND ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE, INHERITANCE AND BLESSINGS IN CHRIST UNLIKE AN INSTRUCTOR WITH THE SAME STATUS OF A SLAVE WHO JUST OBEY INSTRUCTIONS WHETHER GOOD OR BAD.

PRAYER

Our prayer O God is that you help us to love and appreciate all Your Ministers, Church and Christian leaders as fathers and mothers and shepherds over our souls.

We pray for them that in their ministries, they will relate with us in Christ to ensure perfection of our Christian faith and the Church, and not as instructors in the imperfect law.

May the Holy Spirit be our Helper always as we ask for this grace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE PASSION OF BIOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL FATHERS ARE SACRIFICIAL AND PERMANENT MORE THAN INSTRUCTORS WITH RESTRICTED GOALS. CHRISTIAN FATHERS AND MOTHERS ARE MORE BAPTIZED IN THE PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH THAN INSTRUCTORS OF THE IMPERFECT LAW BECAUSE IT IS CONNECTED TO THEIR MINISTRIES AND BEGOTTEN OF THEIR MEMBERS IN CHRIST.

NANA KWAKU DUODU

SPIRITUAL FATHERS GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO IMPROVE AND BENEFIT THE CHURCH NUMERICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY; EDIFICATION. FOR THEY ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. INSTRUCTORS ARE TOO LEGALISTIC IN APPROACH AND GIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. THEREFORE PRAY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVESTS TO GIVE THE CHURCHES SPIRITUAL FATHERS WHOSE INTERESTS AND MINISTRY WORKS ARE FOR THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND NUMERICAL GROWTH OF THE MEMBERS.

NANA KWAKU DUODU

A FATHER IS A MAN WHO EXPECTS HIS SON TO BE AS GOOD A MAN AS HE MEANT TO BE – **FRANK A. CLARK**

THE RIGHTEOUS CHARGE; IMITATE YOUR MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS

INSPIRATION

Instructors of the imperfect law are difficult to imitate because they are also victims of the law. But spiritual fathers and mothers are easy to imitate because they bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit to make our lives, ministries and Church better by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The bible says that some trust in chariots and others in horses but we will remember the name of the Lord **(Psalms 20:7)**. Why because we trust the Lord and not human might and power or demonic might and power. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:16 – Therefore imitate me as I imitate Christ

The main reason for Paul's charge to the Church in Corinth to imitate him was his role as a spiritual father to them. His interest in their affairs; sense of unity and oneness in Christ by the Holy Spirit, spiritual growth unto maturity was unmatched with the many instructors that also influenced their lives with their doctrines.

A plus and credit to Apostle Paul was his confidence to tell the Corinthian Church to imitate him because of the Christ factor which reflected in all his words and works. His love and passion was that they build on the foundation works of Jesus Christ **(1 Corinthians 3:11 – 15)** to become strong in their Christian faith and prove the Lordship of Jesus to the world. In this spiritual empowerment, they could destroy all the works of the devil that was battling against the love and unity of the Church.

Indeed it is only a true father who would be interested in Christ crucified in them to become like Him than worldly people **(1 Corinthians 2:2)**. It is only a true father whose preaching and teaching would be by the Holy Spirit to make them put their faith in God and not in him **(1 Corinthians 2:4 & 5)**.

The bible says that Jesus' testimony about His eternal works revealed the eternal relationship between Him and the Father, and greater works than John because of being the Son of God. We read

John 5:36 – But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

By this truth, Jesus exhibited the same works as the Father in greater dimensions beyond even the notable and major Prophets known in Israel. Yes Jesus imitated the Father in His messianic ministry and works on earth. Hence high level confidence and boldness to declare that His works bear witness of Him as the Messiah and the Christ.

Clearly, the ministry of Paul was of the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly if the works of Paul in Corinth was great, then it is a true reflection of the prophetic word of Jesus to His Church. We read

John 14:11 & 12 – Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Jesus had a tough time making the Israelites believe in Him as the Son of God, Messiah and the Christ. Hence He used His righteous works by the Holy Spirit written and prophesied by the Prophets to prove His messianic identity.

Besides, He edified the disciples to do His works as they followed Him. Here He talked about imitating Him. Again He gave them assurance that greater works would be true of them when He returned to the Father in heaven. For Jesus knew that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would produce more ministry works than Him. I tell you the truth that fulfilling this prophetic word by Jesus is imitating Him as evident in the Church.

The Church cannot afford the price of lackadaisical attitude when it comes to spiritual growth and maturity. For a matured Believing Christian, Church worker, Church leader, Minister and Christian leader is an asset and not a liability in the Church and kingdom of God. We read

Judges 8:20 & 21 – And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

Gideon's first son was described a youth and could not imitate his brave father when he was given the opportunity to kill the two enemy Midian kings of Israel; Zebah and Zalmunna. Know that he lacked confidence in himself to handle the sword and boldness into action.

That is why when Ministers and Church and Christian leaders pray with us, and teach us how to pray, and obey the complete gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God, works, gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, as well as Christian doctrines, we will easily imitate them. If they fail in their leadership responsibilities, there will be people in the likes of Gideon's first son; a youth.

We are to be confident in ourselves as Believing Christians, and ministries and gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, and power of the Holy Spirit to do the will of God in Christ. We must be able to cast out devils by exercising our authority in the name of Jesus.

It is important to note that obedience to the Great Commission makes us resemble our Lord Jesus Christ **(Matthew 28:18 – 20)**. It requires submissiveness to His will and authority for attainment of eternal results.

We read **John 17:18 – As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.**

Jesus sent forth His twelve disciples to preach and save people, heal the sick and cast out devils. Ministers and Church and Christian leaders must follow the example of Jesus.

The Great Commission is given to all Believing Christians, Church and Christian leaders and Ministers to fulfill. As we obey, we imitate our Lord Jesus Christ and the likes of the twelve Apostles and later Apostles like Paul. Even when people doubt the Christian faith, obedience to the Great Commission means also that we are imitating our Lord Jesus Christ in achieving heaven's will on earth.

As people observe us, they must see the seed of Christ in us. We cannot hide the Holy Spirit in us because He reveals Christ and makes us conform to His image. We read

Acts 11:26 – And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

The early disciples in Antioch had a nick name coined by the people through observation. Their words, works and lifestyles were just like Jesus the Son of God and the Christ and Saviour whom they heard preached by Paul and other Ministers. Hence they were called Christians for the first time in Antioch; Christ-like people. Little did they know that emulation of Jesus Christ as Believers would be the name **“Christian”** used for all Believers in subsequent generations of the Church.

Whom do you resemble in life, ministry and the Church? Jesus Christ or the devil and his demons, Ministers and Church and Christian leaders or enemies of righteousness? **(Ephesians 4:11 – 16)**. Do you have God's nature in you or the nature of the devil? Do you love the principles of the kingdom of God or the worldly pleasures? Are you determined to go to heaven or hell per your belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ or not. As the Holy Spirit led them, so He leads us. As we are mentored by Ministers and Church and Christian leaders, we must imitate their righteousness in words, works, prayers, preaching, teaching, counsel, deliverance, casting out devils, healing, welfare of widows and widowers and orphans, poor and needy **(1 Timothy 5:3, James 1:27)**.

New King James Bible Commentary: Paul urged his readers to imitate him as he followed the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). The word refers to the way a student would follow a teacher or the way an actor would play a role.

PAUL CHARGED THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS TO HAVE THE SAME CHRISTIAN QUALITIES IN HIM AS THEIR SPIRITUAL FATHER BECAUSE HE IMITATED CHRIST. BY THIS, HE MEANT SAME FAITH, SAME MIND, SAME CONFESSION, SAME WORKS, PRAYERS, PREACHING, TEACHING, FORMING AND ESTABLISHING CHURCHES, LETTERS, AND SENSE OF UNITY.

LIVING BY EXAMPLE IN CHRIST AS MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS IS THE BEST WAY TO COMMAND YOUR DISCIPLES TO FOLLOW YOU AND EMULATE YOUR RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLES IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS IS ALSO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO APOSTLE PAUL.

PRAYER

We pray O God that Your Holy Spirit helps us to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ on earth and in the Church as well as Ministers, Church and Christian leaders.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CAN YOU EMULATE THE EXAMPLES OF MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL? WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU, YOU WILL ATTAIN THE LEVEL OF YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER AND MOTHER IN THE LORD AND EVEN DO GREATER WORKS AS JESUS REVEALED. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

WHEN CHURCH MEMBERS SIT AT THE FEET OF MINISTERS OF CHRIST TO LEARN AND PRAY, GROW IN THE WORD OF GOD, BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, PERFORM CHRISTIAN WORKS IN SERVICE, EVANGELIZE, AND FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, WE CAN ONLY BECOME LIKE THEM AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IF WE RESEMBLE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND OUR MINISTERS AS SERVANTS AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD, THEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK IN US AND ANGELS OF GOD ARE WITH US AS HELPERS. BUT IF INVOLVE OURSELVES WITH SINFUL, EVIL AND WICKED THINGS AND ACTIVITIES, WE CAN ONLY RESEMBLE THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

USE MINISTRY PARTNERS; THE LIKES OF TIMOTHY

INSPIRATION

Every work and the required human, material and financial resources to achieve specific goals in mission towards achieving the vision. Indeed the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ and missionary work to the nations and establishment and management of Churches involve the use of human resource besides material, financial and time resources.

This is very important to God because they involve a group of Believing Christians, Christian and Church leaders and workers, and Ministers who are saved and anointed by the Holy Spirit to do His will in Christ.

The bible says that when the righteous rule, the people rejoice but with the wicked, the people groan (**Proverbs 29:2**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:17 – For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

With all the news about the Church of Corinth, Apostle Paul sent Timothy to them for the purpose of awakening them to righteousness in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Specifically, Paul mentioned and emphasized his ways of life in Christ and teachings in all the Churches as a Preacher and Teacher. It means that Paul had one message of the cross of Jesus that saves eternally through faith in repentance and forgiveness of sins.

Also Paul assured them of his ministry partner, Timothy, as a very important person in his life, ministry and the kingdom of God. He described him as a beloved son and faithful in the Lord. A very trusted and loyal person whose proven ministry and support to Paul was the assignment to remind them of his ways and teachings in places like Jerusalem, Syria and Cilicia (**Acts 15:41**), Derbe and Lystra and Iconium (**Acts 16:1 & 2**), Philippi in Macedonia (**Acts 16:12**), Amphipolis, Apollonia and Thessalonica (**Acts 17:1**), Berea (**Acts 17:10 – 12**), Athens (**Acts 17:15 – 34**), Corinth (**Acts 18:1**), Achaia (**Acts 18:27 & 28**), Ephesus (**Acts 19:1**).

Earlier Paul had emphasized on Jesus Christ as the righteous and eternal foundation that all Churches are to build their faith, ministries and works (**1 Corinthians 3:10 – 15**).

Knowing the challenges of the Church of Corinth, Paul's decision to send his beloved son and trusted ministry partner, Timothy, was a step in the right direction to build and establish the faith of the Corinthian Believers and their leadership. With delegated authority, Timothy was to remind them of how he lived his Christian life of prayer, preaching, teaching, and enduring suffering for the cause of Christ and the Church. In other words, the Church of Corinth was

going to be schooled again on righteousness and holiness, commitment and faithfulness, building the Lord's Church with the right building materials and receipt of eternal rewards accordingly.

This is to inform the Church today that the work of the ministry is busy, hectic, time consuming and saps the strength and energy of the Ministers, Christian and Church leaders and workers as Believing Christians. The population is big, increasing number of Churches and ministries in all manner of places which require distances of kilometers to be covered through travelling across borders and continents sometimes.

Besides, they cannot be at the same place to teach and counsel and instruct the Churches in Christ righteousness. Hence there is the need to depend and use ministry partners in any Church capacity and position as representatives to convey the same information just like the substantive Preacher and Teacher. If Paul could give a good testimony about Timothy and send him with a righteous message to encourage, correct, counsel and instruct and edify the Corinthians Believers in Christ's righteousness, then busy Ministers and Church leaders who cannot be present in Churches they formed or other Churches when invited and needed should delegate anointed people in the likes of Timothy to represent them. As a quick measure to make righteous interventions, let us send anointed men and women with proven ministries to feed the Churches.

I tell you the truth that some Church programs need not to be postponed or cancelled when the Minister or Church leader can delegate another person prayerfully to represent him or her. And still achieve the same purpose of encouragement, correction, strengthening and edification of the Church. The bible says that Moses complained to the Lord about the workload on him towards the management of the Israelites. So The Lord commanded Moses to select seventy elders and come before Him. Then He took part of his spirit (anointing) and gave it to them and administered justice on all the Israelites **(Numbers 11:10 – 15, 16 – 30)**. If in the days of Moses the Lord heard the cry of Moses and heeded to the need for delegated authority, then it is more righteous in our days under the New Covenant to train and have proven ministers, Church leaders and Christian leaders with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to represent leaders in invitations.

Even Jesus could not do it all despite being the Son of God, the Messiah and the Christ. He had the anointing and yet sent the disciples on missions to achieve God's perfect will **(Luke 10:1)**. Besides the Great Commission is with baptism of the Holy Spirit to the Church is a proof of the Lord's management to make all people who believe in Him to send the gospel of salvation to every part of the world **(Matthew 28:18 – 20)**.

With the Holy Spirit, be selfless, wise, humble and determined to use other ministry partners achieve God's interests in Christ all the time.

PAUL'S MANAGEMENT POLICY AND MAXIM DELEGATED HIS BELOVED SON AND TRUSTED MINISTRY PARTNER, TIMOTHY WITH THE ASSIGNMENT OF REMINDING THE CHURCH OF CORINTH ALL HIS

WAYS IN CHRIST AND MINISTRY. THIS WAS A DAUNTING TASK THAT TIMOTHY HAD TO DO AND ACCOMPLISH.

KNOWING THE CHALLENGES OF THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS, PAUL HAD TO USE HIS BEST HUMAN RESOURCE PERSON, TIMOTHY, WHO HAD BEEN WITH HIM IN MINISTRY AND PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER ALL THAT WAS IN THE HEART OF PAUL FOR THE CHURCH OF CORINTH.

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray that the wisdom of Paul to delegate his spiritual son Timothy and represented him would be given to us.

Make us selfless, wise, humble and determined to make God's word; the gospel of Jesus Christ reachable to people, Churches and the nations all the time without excuses.

Help our Ministers, Church leaders and Christian leaders with Your wisdom to make righteous decisions by delegating anointed men and women that are trustworthy and loyal to deliver gospel messages to Churches when they cannot respond to all calls and invitations by word or letter.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will be our Helper in Jesus' name. Amen.

LET HEAVEN RECORD YOUR MINISTRY WORKS AS SELFLESS, WISE, HUMBLE AND DETERMINED TO LET THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST REACH OUT TO PEOPLE, CHURCHES AND THE NATIONS THROUGH DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TOO BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR BUSY MOMENTS AS THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE CALL INTO MINISTRY MUST BE EVIDENCED WITH ANOINTING, WISDOM, COMMITMENT AND FAITHFULNESS AND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES TO ENSURE SPIRITUAL GROWTH UNTO MATURITY OF MEMBERS AS WELL AS NUMERICAL GROWTH. HENCE DELEGATED AUTHORITY AS A REPRESENTATIVE IS INEVITABLE TO RELATE WITH OTHER CHURCHES LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

DESPITE MINISTRY SUCCESSES, THE ASPECT OF WISDOM AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO DELEGATE EQUALLY ANOINTED MINISTRY PARTNERS IN RESPONSE TO THE MANY INVITATIONS MUST BE ENCOURAGED. FOR WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST, THERE MUST BE A COMMON OBJECTIVE TO ENCOURAGE, STRENGTHEN, AND EDIFY THE CHURCHES. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

DEAL WITH THE SPIRIT OF ARROGANCE IN THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

People who are able to solve problems in life are good leaders whose works have lasting impact in the lives of the people and communities and nations.

The bible says that the pride, loftiness and arrogance, and haughtiness of Moab was heard by God and described in an allegory form to reveal His judgment against her (**Jeremiah 48:29**). Indeed when you hear the pride, arrogance and haughtiness of some members of the Church against the Minister, there is the need to put in intervention measures in accordance of scripture and leading of the Holy Spirit. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:18 – Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

The anointing on the life and ministry of Apostle Paul made him a problem solver in the church. In his desire to restore the church to her former glory, he targeted another group of arrogant and disrespectful church members. He discerned that some of the Church members had labeled him as an abandoned Apostle Paul who had forsaken his children even though his desire was to visit and be with them.

Church history shows that the sending of Timothy was perceived as an excuse to be present with other congregations unlike them. They wanted him to be with them instead of preaching and teaching at other places. It shows that they were so glued to the Apostle (founder) so much that the ministries of other Apostles and pastors were relegated to the background.

This increased the factions with related problems that came to the notice of Apostle Paul. Indeed a complaint is a recipe for factions, arrogance and backsliding in the Christian faith evident in the Church of Corinth. Know that pride and arrogance are bedmates (**Proverbs 8:13**). Rebuke the spirit of arrogance in the Church (**1 Samuel 2:3**).

What they lacked was the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives; for they were controlled by the spirit of arrogance to determine events in the church and attempt to manipulate their leaders like Apostle Paul. Apostle Paul had to rebuke them for their backsliding state and bad reaction to the physical absence of him.

New King James Bible Commentary: verses 18 – 20 Some people in Corinth, probably the instructors who had caused divisions (see verse 15) acted as though Paul would never return to hold them accountable for their actions.

The New King James Bible Commentary states that some of the Corinthians were puffed up. These people were conceited and prone to boasting.

By this biblical commentary, it means to say that the words and activities of the pride and arrogant thrives in an environment where the Minister in charge is absent even for the Lord's work at other places. This is not in God's will.

Know that the anointing and ministries of your pastors can take them to places beyond the walls of your Church for Christ sake. It can also be delegated authority in a timely measure to foster peace and unity in a troubled Church. Do not be quick to condemn them because it is to serve God's interest in Christ if they are led by the Holy Spirit **(Romans 8:14)**. Rather pray for them and know the Lord's will in such decisions. For ministry work and Church preaching, teachings, prayers, crusades, Church meetings and programs, and missionary work in cosmopolitan societies, nations and countries are inevitable and require commitment and faithfulness.

The bible says in **Mark 1:37 – 39 When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.**

When the disciples found Jesus in his secluded place of prayer and meditation, they said that everyone was looking for him. But Jesus replied that the purpose of his coming was to preach God's word of salvation to other people and places. By this revelation, He meant that He could not be boxed into one place for the work of the ministry. He was to preach to all other people and places as the Holy Spirit led Him.

It means to say that God is interested in reaching to a bigger audience in other places as opportunities to hear and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ unto salvation. In the revelation of Jesus, He meant that God is not interested only in your salvation but the collective salvation of all other people. Hence the need to move from the place of comfort to other places for the purpose of preaching the gospel of salvation.

On the eve of Ghana's independence at the Black Star Square, history recalls the words of Osagyeafo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah: **Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent.**

Clearly his Pan African agenda was unveiled to show his commitment to the emancipation of the African continent from the dominance of colonization. This is the spirit of the Church to be understood by all for the betterment of the Body of Christ beyond the level of denomination.

Be careful that your expectations do not contrast God's will in Christ for Ministers and Church leaders. Know that one of the detestable things to God is

breaking the unity of the brethren and thus breeding divisions and factions in the Church **(Proverbs 6:19b)**.

Instead of being puffed up against your Ministers, rather pray for them to have understanding of their ministries and encourage them with your words and works. For there is assurance of the peace of God unlike unrighteous thoughts and pride **(Philippians 4:6 & 7)**.

IF CHURCH MEMBERS ARE PRAYERFUL, UNDERSTAND THE WAYS OF CHRIST AND ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEY WOULD APPRECIATE THE MINISTRIES OF ALL THEIR PASTORS AND NOT CONDEMN THEM IN ARROGANCE.

The bible says also in

John 3:34 – For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

In other words, you cannot quantify and calculate the workings of the Holy Spirit in us, ministries and the Church. For by the Holy Spirit, we speak the word of God as His Minister.

There are seven important promises that Christians can count on receiving from the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit shall remain with you forever
2. The Holy Spirit gives you wisdom
3. The Holy Spirit gives you understanding
4. The Holy Spirit gives you counsel
5. The Holy Spirit gives you power (faith)
6. The Holy Spirit gives you knowledge
7. The Holy Spirit gives you delight in the fear of the Lord

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray for all Churches and Ministers to handle all arrogance related matters in the Church according to scripture and workings of the Holy Spirit.

In the area of perceived wrong paradigm shift by Ministers, help us to pray and understand the Lord's will. Help us to communicate effectively to Church members who misconstrue response to the Lord's work at other places as abandonment of the local Church.

We ask for grace in knowledge, wisdom and understanding to ensure and maintain peace and unity of the Church like Apostle Paul in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

WHEN THE CHURCH FAILS TO PRAY FOR THEIR MINISTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS, THEY LACK UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR MINISTRIES AND COMPLAIN BITTERLY ABOUT THEIR ENGAGEMENTS WITH OTHER CHURCHES. BUT WHEN THE CHURCH PRAYS FOR THE MINISTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS, THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS THEM TO UNDERSTAND AND COOPERATE WITH THEM TO SERVE GOD'S INTEREST IN CHRIST AT OTHER CHURCHES AND PLACES AND PEOPLE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

EAGER TO RETURN TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH; SUBJECT TO THE LORD'S WILL AND POWER ONLY

INSPIRATION

The decisions of a confident person is preparedness to face and overcome challenging situations. The bible says that the wicked flees when no one pursues but the righteous is as bold as a lion (**Proverbs 28:1**). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:19 – But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.

Apostle Paul showed his authority as the spiritual father to the Church in Corinth when he revealed his mission direction. His desire was to return to them but subject to the Lord's will. His decision was that he would return to them if God permits it. He was ready to prove his critics wrong.

His ministry was subject to the leading and directions of the Holy Spirit as evidenced in **Acts 16:6 – 10**. It revealed his level of submission and humility as an anointed and Holy Spirit filled Apostle of Jesus Christ.

This is also a revelation of the truth that absence in the Church of Corinth for Paul meant presence in other Churches and areas doing the Lord's work. Yes he could not be idle but busy in the Lord's work as His chosen Apostle and missionary to the Gentiles. I believe that the title "Travelling Evangelist" describes his missionary work perfectly even to this day just as he wrote to the Romans (**Romans 1:15, 15:19 – 21**). Here was an Apostle diligent in his missionary work and absolute obedience to his call, ministry and assignment.

Yet his decision and determination to return to the Church in Corinth was commendable and reassuring. He was ready to return and end the bluff of the proud and arrogant.

NEVER BE IN A RUSH TO DO SOMETHING IN MINISTRY EXCEPT IN GOD'S WILL. FOR ETERNAL RESULTS ARE PREFERRED TO EARTHLY RESULTS.

This confirms God's word in **James 4:13 – 17** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

By this scripture, the Apostle James makes it clear to us that our lives are not in our own hands but God. He holds the key to our lives and destinies and this includes ministry work. He craved the indulgence to be humble and submit to

the Lordship of Christ as Believing Christians, Christian and Church leaders and Ministers. Only the proud and the ignorant say that it is in their power to do things anytime and anywhere even with limited knowledge.

SUBMISSION AND HUMILITY TO GOD IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS YOUR HOLY DESIRE AND TRUST TO BE IN THE WILL OF GOD AT ALL TIMES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HIS RESULTS. THE VOICE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER IS “IF THE LORD WILLS IN THE SHOW OF FAITH AND UNCERTAINTY”

Learning further, Apostle Paul wrote: **not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.** Not the word of the arrogant who complained about his absence and wanted to see him physically for selfish reasons and not acceptance of God’s interests in other places.

The power that Apostle Paul placed emphasis is the Holy Spirit power needed to work effectively in all Christian ministers and Churches in the preaching and teaching of the gospel and doing the works of God for Christ like results. It makes you depend on God’s grace and not on human and demonic power, strength and wisdom. It is the Holy Spirit who was effective in his ministry towards the Church and not their undiscerning noise about his anointing and ministry and his long absence from them.

This confirms also Jesus’ promise to the disciples to wait for the promised Holy Spirit in Jerusalem which was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost in **Acts 1:8 – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

For Apostle Paul, it was not just responding to the request to visit and teach, but the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit as a result of being in God’s will for His kind of results. He was, therefore, interested in the power of God and of His Christ to preach and teach and revisit Churches like the Church of Corinth. For he was not ready to succumb to the pride and arrogance of those who complained bitterly in their perceived absence and abandonment.

It means to say that such an identifiable group of complainants with a unified voice must not be the reasonable pressure to visit when the time is due; not according to the bluff of people. Rather, it must be by the Lord’s will and this requires prayers and teachings for their understanding of ministries to be receptive and not antagonistic.

It is also a righteous sign and information that the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ would not be subjected to the arrogance and puff up spirit of some Church members. But according to stated prophetic end time events which includes fulfillment of the Great Commission by the Church **(Matthew Chapter 24).**

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS WAS THAT HE WAS WILLING TO RETURN TO THEM BUT ONLY AT THE LORD'S WILL AND POWER, AND NOT THE PRESSURES OF PEOPLE WITH THE SPIRIT OF ARROGANCE.

MINISTERS MUST BE ABLE TO DISCERN THE WILL OF GOD AND NOW THE CORRECT TIMING TO VISIT OR REVISIT CHURCHES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGEMENT, STRENGTHENING AND EDIFICATION. FOR WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEY CAN RESIST THE PRESSURES OF PEOPLE WITH THE SPIRIT OF ARROGANCE AND MANIPULATIONS IN THE CHURCHES.

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray for discerning hearts and minds to respond to pressures about visitations and re-visitations of Churches and Christian programs.

We pray that decisions to respond to prove critics wrong in ministry would be according to Your will and not self – will or the will of other people.

Help Ministers, Church leaders and Christian leaders to promote and maintain peace in the Churches using scripture as the standard of righteousness.

Lead us always with Your Holy Spirit to experience power and will to do in the fulfillment of all righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHRISTIAN MINISTERS MUST SEEK THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PRAY, PREACH, TEACH, PROPHECY, SING, COUNSEL AND GENERALLY DO THE WORKS OF GOD IN HIS WILL THAN QUICKLY RESPOND TO INVITATIONS FOR SELFISH REASONS LIKE RECEIPT OF BIG MONEY, BIG SIZE OF THE CONGREGATION, POPULARITY OF THE HOST MINISTER, CHURCH BUILDING, FAME, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS LIKE THE LOCAL AND FOREIGN POLICIES OF KING SOLOMON IN HIS MARRIAGE TO MANY WOMEN. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE GOSPEL MUST BE PREACHED IN THE POWER OF GOD'S KINGDOM

INSPIRATION

Every kingdom has a king and subjects, and characteristics and features associated with the kingdom. Some kingdoms are powerful whilst others are weak because of the level of the king's power and authority, and the professions and works of the subjects.

It is written in the scriptures that Jesus told the people that He was from above whereas they were from beneath; earth **(John 8:23)**.

It is written in the scriptures that Jesus rebuked the disciple who drew his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest servant. For He could pray to the Father to send forth twelve legions of angels and save Him from the arrest and swords of the High Priest **(Matthew 26:51 – 54)**.

When Pilate in his authority talked about having power to release Jesus, His reply was that there was no way he could have power over Him unless it is given to him from above **(John 19:11)**. By these revelations, we have insight to kingdom power and authority in word and deeds. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:20 – For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

Apostle Paul was emphatic when he wrote that God's Kingdom is not in word but power. When God speaks, there are results as evident in His creative works, the fulfilled messianic prophecy about Jesus and His gospel of salvation and hope of eternal life, and the active work of the Holy Spirit. This marks the difference between God and the devil because it is only God's word in Christ by the Holy Spirit that makes us His children.

He inferred that his return to them should be a heavenly decision made by the King (God) in Christ so that works and results would be by the power of the Holy Spirit and not human strength and wisdom. He revealed his submission as an Apostle of the Christian faith whose master is Jesus Christ who called him into ministry and anointed him for service. Hallelujah! This explains his salutation messages to the churches in

1 Corinthians 1:1 – Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.

Therefore he did not succumb to pressure from the faction in the church to manipulate him contrary to God's will as a minister.

The New King James Bible Commentary states that the Kingdom of God in this context does not refer to the future reign of Christ, but to Christ's present rule in the hearts of His people. This reality guaranteed that Paul would have the power to expose and discipline those who afflicted the Corinthian Church.

Earlier Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that God had conferred kingdom power and authority on them to reign as kings whilst they had been reduced to puppets of this world. And practically, he wished that the Corinthians reigned with them through spiritual growth and maturity **(1 Corinthians 4:8)**. In this truth, Paul referred to the reign of Christ in their lives. They needed to experience and manifest kingdom power not only in preaching, teachings, healings, miracles, signs and wonders but also living in the holiness and righteousness of God to support ministers and not castigate them.

It means to say that power of God's kingdom in us should be used to promote and maintain peace and order and unity in the Church where all of us have the mind of Christ and are filled and led by the Holy Spirit **(1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:11 – 16)**.

The truth is that the Kingdom of God is superior to all other kingdoms because God the Creator is the head of the trinity and works in unison with God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit **(Matthew 28:18 – 20)**. For fulfilling the Great Commission is the manifestation of the power of the kingdom of God. And you are part of it.

We read

Ecclesiastics 8:4 – Where the word of a king is, there is power; And who may say to him, “What are you doing?”

King Solomon admitted that the word of the king is powerful because by its actions and in-actions and results are recorded, experiences and events are recorded, promotions and destinies are shaped, and judgments are made and executed. This is also because God's Kingdom is ruled by His laws in Christ and the Holy Spirit and Christian principles, and not by human, organizational, institutional, company, judicial and demonic systems, laws, principles and maxims.

We read

1 Thessalonians 1:5 – For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Paul's message to the Church of Thessalonica was that the gospel of Jesus Christ he preached and explained to them was in power by the Holy Spirit to produce righteous and eternal results. By this truth, God confirmed His word of salvation to show them forth as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. For the Thessalonians were witnesses to their proven ministries when they reasoned with them from the Old Testament scriptures to prove the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy. Many converts as Jews, Greeks leaders of women became disciples of Paul and Silas **(Acts 17:1 – 4)**.

Clearly Paul was right to say that the kingdom of God was not in word but power; eternal results.

This is a confirmation of the words of revelation by Jesus that the kingdom of God is neither here nor there but within us **(Luke 17:21)**. Not the future reign of Christ but the present reference to the reign of Christ over believers and now the Church where Believing Christians, Church and Christian leaders and workers and Ministers show forth kingdom power and authority to reign with Christ. This is evidenced in the baptism of the Holy Spirit to live and work for Christ proving Him as Saviour and Lord to the world.

Yes this is the power of God unto the Church who are being saved daily but foolishness to those who are perishing as Paul stated to the Corinthians earlier in this first epistle **(1 Corinthians 1:18)**. Therefore Paul did not just preach Christ crucified but Christ resurrected because of kingdom power.

The bible says that Peter preached the same message when he told Cornelius and his household that God is not partial but accepts people of every nation who fears Him and works righteousness. That God sent His word of peace to His children preaching Christ as Lord of all **(Acts 10:34 – 36)**. He continued by saying that the word of God was preached extensively after John's baptism and covered the regions of Judea and Galilee under the jurisdictions of Pilate and Herod **(Acts 10:37)**. This was confirmed as the process of baptism of the Holy Spirit with power and was accompanied with doing good, healing all oppressed by the devil from one place to the other because God was with Him; Jehovah Shammah **(Acts 10:38)**.

Know that the process to Jesus receiving the anointing was by accepting the call, prayer, fasting, holiness, righteous living, hating sin, and obedience to God all times even when the situation is bad. In other words, the anointing makes the difference in ministry works and convict people to believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

For Apostle Paul, the power of the Holy Spirit is evident in preaching and teaching, healings, miracles, signs and wonders, and the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit in greater dimensions to change people eternally. The Holy Spirit conviction and works among the people proved the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It revealed the power of God to use ordinary people, people with bad and evil and wicked records to preach the gospel and change people like Apostle Paul himself **(1 Timothy 1:12 & 13)**. This is the power of God that Apostle Paul wrote about and concluded that it should be the basis of his desire and response to be with them again.

If the Church has survived the generational years, it is because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit **(Acts 2:1 – 4)**. For in it the power of God is revealed to confirm Jesus as the Christ, Messiah and Saviour of the world. Let Pentecost Day live and work in us daily to confirm the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy. That is the power and reign of God's kingdom in us to change the world.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS WAS THAT THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD EVIDENCED WITH THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST MADE THEM BELIEVERS AND

TRANSFORMED THEIR HABITS AND CHARACTER. FOR IT WAS NOT IN WORD OR RHETORIC BUT POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH ETERNAL RESULTS THROUGH CONVICTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEIR OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST CONFIRMED IT ALL.

HENCE BELIEF IN HIS MESSAGES TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH OF CORINTH AS A REVELATION OF THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

PRAYER

O what a mighty and powerful God you are to us and the Church.

We pray that Christ shall reign in our lives daily to prove Your salvation power in our lives, ministries and the Church.

Reign in us O Lord that there will be love, peace and unity in the Church having the mind of Christ and fulfilling the works of God by the Holy Spirit.

We ask for this grace in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE VALUE OF POWER, REFLECT ON WHEN YOUR ELECTRICITY POWER GOES OFF AND ALL YOUR VALUABLE THINGS ARE USELESS AND DISAPPOINTING. SO IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH POWER IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. BELIEVE IN THE ANOINTING. WITH IT, WE MAKE PROGRESS; WITHOUT IT, WE ARE STAGNANT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MAKE AND UNMAKE YOU IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD FOR THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND WORKERS AND MINISTERS ARE MARKED FOR HOLINESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, POWER, SERVICE, BLESSINGS AND FRUITFULNESS. FOR THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES ALL THESE THINGS ACHIEVABLE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

CORRECTION THROUGH ROD OF REBUKE OR IN LOVE AND MEEKNESS

INSPIRATION

God expects us to make wise decisions to correct wrongful attitude and characters when the Holy Spirit makes them known to us. The Minister, Church leader and Christian leader is expected to play a leading role in it. The Churches must respond positively because the Holy Spirit honours and glorifies Jesus Christ **(John 16:14)**. Hallelujah!

Pride and disobedience are arch enemies of God and stifle fruitfulness, spiritual growth, and maturity in God's kingdom. However, humility, repentance, obedience and being in God's will make the Church healthy and God's kingdom fruitful. Indeed, choice determines the direction of obedience or disobedience; success or failure, pride or humility in life. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 4:21 – What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

Clearly, Apostle Paul had declared his intention to visit the Church in Corinth and silence his critics. As he indicated, it will be subjected to the Lord's will and power and not the word of the proud and accusers **(1 Corinthians 4:19)**. That is he would be there at the right time when the Holy Spirit prompted him. He believed that it would be the power of God beyond mere words to edify them.

Hence his dual counsel and warning to the Church in Corinth about the need to repent and change their perception and attitude before he returned to them. He gave them options for correction through rebuke by the rod or in love and meekness.

Truly, Paul was ready to help them but his approach was to be determined by state of mind and readiness to be corrected. It means that Paul was ready to deal with all complaints and factions in the Church to ensure unity of the Christian faith.

He was ready to use the rod of rebuke against all arrogance and stubbornness. After all, the bible says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child but the rod of correction will drive it far from him **(Proverbs 22:15)**.

Again the bible tells us not to withhold correction from a child because he will not die from the beating of the rod (cane) **(Proverbs 23:13)**. Also the bible says in **Proverbs 13:24 – He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly**. Love is the motivating factor to use the rod of correction and straighten your children.

As children in the Christian faith, Paul's fatherly concern was also to use the rod if necessary because it goes with rebuke to give wisdom and is better than a child who is left alone to be stubborn and bring shame to the mother (parents)

(Proverbs 29:15). The bible says also that faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful **(Proverbs 27:6)**. In other words, if the Corinthians chose stubbornness in disobedience, he had no choice but to use the rod of rebuke to correct. But they had a choice; the spirit of democracy.

Paul was also ready to use love, mercy and humility as formidable weapons to embrace the Corinthians if they repented and changed their minds as Jesus taught the disciples with the woman caught in adultery **(John 8:1 – 12)** and his prayer of forgiveness on the cross **(Luke 23:34)**.

To correct in love also meant using prayers **(1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 13:18)** and scripture **(2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 12:9)** and humility **(2 Timothy 2:15)** and examples of Jesus Christ to convict our consciences, minds and lives to repent from backsliding.

To use the spirit of meekness in the Church of Corinth was Paul's third option to manage the conflicts among the Corinthians Believers. Instead of rebuke or love, Paul was ready to humble himself and overlook all the nonsense in the Church but find righteous ways to correct them. It means to say that Paul in the leading of the Holy Spirit was ready to encourage them in righteous works but discourage them in unrighteous works without any form of punishment. It means to say that Paul was ready to slow down his words of rebuke with works of righteousness like prayers and Christian teachings and Christian doctrines and counselings.

The bible says that the wise and understanding in the Church should prove it with good conduct that his works are done with meekness of wisdom **(James 3:13)**. The New King James Bible Commentary explains that the solution to the problem of controlling our tongues is to ask for divine wisdom **(see James 1:5)**. The person who possesses godly wisdom **(James 1:17)** will meekly slow it with works; not just words. That is believers should be slow to speak **(James 1:19)**.

Whichever way, Paul's righteous intent was revealed to restore the Church in Corinth to its former glory. For he was determined to see Christ crucified and formed in them than any other thing **(1 Corinthians 2:2)**. And with this truth, he ended the fourth chapter of his first epistle to them.

This is Barnes bible commentary and meaning to Paul's message to the Corinthians.

What will ye – It depends on yourselves how I shall come. If you lay aside your contentions and strifes; if you administer discipline as you should; if you give yourselves heartily and entirely to the work of the Lord, I shall come, not to reprove or to punish, but as a father and a friend. But if you do not heed my exhortations or the labors of Timothy; if you still continue your contentions, and do not remove the occasions of offense, I shall come with severity and the language of rebuke.

With a rod – To correct and punish.

In the spirit of meekness – Comforting and commending instead of chastising. Paul intimates that this depended on themselves. They had the power, and it was their duty to administer discipline; but if they would not do it, the task would devolve on him as the founder and father of the church, and as entrusted with power by the Lord Jesus to administer the severity of Christian discipline, or to punish those who offended by bodily suffering.

To us as a Church, we expect Ministers and Church and Christian leaders to maintain a high standard of training and discipline among Believing Christians. We have to apply the rod of rebuke when all correctional measures have been rejected by offenders.

In prayer, scripture and humility, we can also lift up the perfect standard of Christ by the help of the Holy Spirit to correct Church complaints and challenges as well as instituted and documented disciplinary measures. Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit so that we do not abuse our authority in Christ.

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, Paul uses the same Greek word for rod here that Luke uses to describe the instrument that was used to beat Paul and Silas (Acts 16:22 – 24). The term is also used figuratively in Christ’s authority to judge (Revelations 19:15). God had given Paul authority to punish agitators in Corinth, though he preferred not to use that power.

PAUL WAS READY TO RETURN TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH BUT GAVE THEM THREE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER: THE WEAPONS OF REBUKE, LOVE AND MEEKNESS TO USE IN HIS BID TO CORRECT THEM OF THEIR BACKSLIDING NATURE. THOUGH HE HAD SO MUCH AUTHORITY, HE DID NOT WANT TO ABUSE IT BUT MAKE ROOM FOR OTHER OPTIONS TO RESTORE THEIR DIMINISHED DIGNITY AND GLORY.

PRAYER

May the All Wise God guides His Ministers and Church and Christian leaders with wisdom to resolve all conflicts and misunderstanding in the Churches.

With the rod of rebuke or love or spirit of meekness available to Church and Christian leaderships, help us to have the mind of Christ and enjoy the leading of the Holy Spirit to rebuke all errors and sin in stubbornness or love or employ the spirit of meekness like Apostle Paul and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Help us to discern rightly but let love rule our hearts to correct and restore the dignity and glory of the Church. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ARE MULTIFACETED TO RESTORE DIGNITY AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH. THE THREE OPTIONS OF REBUKE, LOVE AND SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS ARE DESIGNED BY GOD TO STRAIGHTEN AND PERFECT HIS CHURCH IN ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS. USE THEM IN WISDOM AND NOT ABUSIVELY. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IN OUR ATTEMPT TO CORRECT WRONGDOINGS IN THE CHURCH THAT SIGNIFY BACKSLIDING AND INSENSITIVITY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, MAY WE NOT BECOME VICTIMS OF ABUSE OF POWER. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

TAKE NOTE: POWER TENDS TO CORRUPT AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY – **LORD ACTON (1834 – 1902)**



Writer: Nana Kwaku Duodu – You can make contact via

+2330547104895, +233202504350, +233276091904

**Email Address: exploits34@yahoo.com
powermight41@gmail.com**

