

## **INTRODUCTION – 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

This whole chapter is beautifully titled the greatest gift to describe Paul's excellent way of love in divine and Christian relationships; in and outside the Church. I have also done my best to categorize Paul's messages on love into five sections of the chapter for our study, understanding, obedience, blessings and edification. They are:

1. Spiritual Gifts without Love: **1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3**
2. The true picture of Love: **1 Corinthians 13:4 – 8a**
3. Love has strong eternal influence unlike spiritual gifts: **1 Corinthians 13:8b – 10**
4. Love in spiritual growth and maturity: **1 Corinthians 13:11 & 12**
5. Love is the Greatest: **1 Corinthians 13:13**

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. At the tail end of chapter twelve, he promised to show the excellent way of love even as they desire the best gifts (**1 Corinthians 12:31**) and he fulfilled it in chapter thirteen as a true and genuine spiritual father. For he advocated and taught them how to edify the Church and Body of Christ with the spiritual gifts and love.

The first section revealed Paul's emphasis and caution of administering spiritual gifts without love. The danger revealed being noise makers compared to a sounding brass or clanging cymbal without any purpose and drive in the Church.

The second section also revealed Paul's great teaching on the true picture of love that beautifies, excels, perfects and glorifies the works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Here he listed eight points each of what constitutes love and does not constitute love in the Christian faith and in the Church. For he preferred edification to encourage mass acceptance and participation and fulfill Christ's vision and mission to individual gifts and talents and praise.

The third section revealed Paul's revelation on the strong influence of love eternally unlike the spiritual gifts. The Church of Corinth was blessed with the abundance of spiritual gifts to do the works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Yet Paul enlightened them that they were needed to fulfill ministries, bless and edify the Church. Besides, he revealed that unlike love which never fails, prophecies will fail, speaking in tongues will cease and knowledge will varnish away when we come into the full love, knowledge and power of God in eternity.

With the fourth section, Paul's teaching was on love in spiritual growth and maturity. It revealed the necessity and importance of the correlation of spiritual growth and maturity with love. In this truth, Paul wanted to see love at work in the Church of Corinth in the attainment spiritual growth and maturity. This was a righteous sign that full spiritual growth

and maturity would be attained in eternity when we come face to face with God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and we know in full of all mysteries and not in part.

The fifth section by Paul concluded this thirteenth chapter with a message on love as the greatest. He emphasized on the uncompromising three cardinal Christian virtues of faith, hope and love as taught the Corinthians Believers from the first day he visited Corinth and preached Christ to them, through to Church formation, correction of errors and righteous instructions. He counseled and taught them to crown faith and hope with love though the three are needed in all Christian relationships and works. For love does not fail.

To enable readers and the Churches and Body of Christ understand the thirteenth 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)**. Truly, the Holy Spirit has come to 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 unto us as Believing Christians **(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 show 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 of the Church and Body of Christ. 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!

## YOUR WORKS IN LOVE; NOT WORKS WITHOUT LOVE

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### INSPIRATION

God is perfect and commands that His children walk in His word and become perfect (**Matthew 5:48**). The Bible also describes the creative works of God's excellent (**Psalms 18:30, 32**). In other words, let us strive to be perfect and excellent just as God is perfect and Jesus was perfect in obedience to His Father (**Psalms 8:1, 9, 16:3**). Let's study further.

**1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.**

Apostle Paul teaches us that the excellent way of faith and works in Christ is love in this new chapter of his epistle. It is *primus inter pares*, the first among the equals, with regards to the best gifts the Corinthians Believers were taught and counseled to desire for the purpose of edification of the Church beyond self – edification (**1 Corinthians 12:31**). Therefore, he revisited his earlier message on the spiritual gifts in **1 Corinthians 12:8 – 10**. On this truth, I say confidently and boldly that we are to bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**).

Love is the epitome of human and Godly relationships. It is the power behind actions and inactions. Truly love is the reason that moved God to save the dying world through His Son Jesus Christ (**John 3:16 & Romans 5:8**). Hence fulfillment of the messianic prophecy.

Love is the reason for giving the Holy Spirit to all people who believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; the Church (**Acts 2:1 – 4**). Indeed love is the binding force between a husband and a wife like Isaac and Rebecca (**Genesis 24:67**). Love is everything and the environment of love promotes provisions, protection, preservation, progress, maturity and unity. In Paul's teaching, his emphasis was the love of God in Christ which is the agape kind of love. It revolves also around fellowship and eating meals together and in an atmosphere of peace and serenity. This is sacrificial and seeks the interests of other people. It reveals emphasis between the giver and the receiver as the Hebrew word of love 'ahava' and meaning explains.

Apostle Paul revealed to the Corinthian Church the more excellent way of doing things that wins the favour of God and people. He illustrated and demonstrated five (5) important ways of the Christian faith to support his message of love.

**WHEN ONE COMES TO THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, HE OR SHE IS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF LOVE BECAUSE IT IS THE EPITOME OF GOD'S NATURE AND CHARACTER.**

**1// SPEAKING TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS; WHY BECOME A SOUNDING BRASS OR CLANGING CYMBAL?**

**1 Corinthians 13:1 – Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.**

Let us understand the message of Paul to the Corinthians Believers as he showed them the excellent way of love. Without love, speaking tongues of men and of angels is equaled to a noise maker in an allegory form of a sounding brass or clanging cymbal alone. For there is no systematic rhythm pleasing to the ears.

The ability to speak the languages of peoples of different countries like English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Swahili, Indian, Arabic, Portuguese, Japanese, German, Chinese, Swedish, Danish and many other languages and local dialects on the five continents for profitable ventures is good but is fragile and has damaging effects without love. It can break and distort truth and destroy human relationships when it should rather promote unity in human relationships. When you use your ability and talent to promote self-other than the interests of others, or to execute sin, evil and wickedness in extreme and subtle forms, then you have arrogated false authority to abuse people.

The tongues of angels is the speaking of diverse tongues by the Holy Spirit where mysteries and revelations are spoken and made known **(1 Corinthians 12:10d,e)**. Even when the baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced in speaking tongues **(Acts 2:1 – 4)**, every step of the Christian should be guided in love. Without it, you become a noise maker like the sounding brass and clanging cymbals that has no rhythm to music and dance. This cannot edify the Church and reveal Christ to improve the lives and ministries of people in a practical way.

What Paul meant was that speaking in tongues is a high spiritual activity but must be expressed in love to serve the purposes of God in Christ and benefit the Church. Praying alone in tongues is self – edification as one speaks the mysteries of God. Hence he who speaks in tongues must also pray for the gift of interpretation to edify the Church. Therefore he taught the Corinthians Believers to pray and sing with their spirit and understanding as the way of love for mutual benefits **(1 Corinthians 4:15)**.

The big question is also before us as a Church. Why should I fit into the category of being a sounding brass or clanging cymbal, that is noise maker, because of abuse of speaking in tongues? Truly if we are led by the Holy Spirit, love would rule our hearts; thoughts, words and works. Therefore seek to edify the Church in tongues speaking.

**According to the New King James Bible Commentary, Paul uses an intentional exaggeration to illustrate the uselessness of each spiritual gift without love. The**

Corinthians would understand the images of a sounding brass or a clanging cymbals. Many of the Corinthians had used brass instruments and cymbals as standard elements of pagan worship in their lives before believing in Christ.

**SPEAKING THE LANGUAGES OF MANY PEOPLE IS THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE INFORMATION TO A WIDER GROUP OF PEOPLE BUT IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE AND PERFECT WITHOUT LOVE.**

**SPEAKING IN DIVERSE TONGUES IS EVIDENCE OF BEING BAPTIZED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THOUGH A HIGH LEVEL SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY AND VOLTAGE, LOVE PERFECTS AS WE EXPERIENCE GOD IN CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN, FAMILY, FRIENDS AND PEOPLE RELATIONSHIPS. WITHOUT LOVE, WE SPEAK AND DO THINGS IMPERFECTLY AND HALF – BAKED.**

**2// HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE; WHY BECOME USELESS AND UNPROFITABLE?**

**1 Corinthians 13:2a – And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge ... I am nothing.**

Let us understand the message of Paul to the Corinthians Believers as he showed them the excellent way of love. Without love, the prophetic gift to understand all mysteries and knowledge is equaled to a useless person with no vision and dream and purpose in life, ministry and the Church. Such a person is just like the uselessness of idols **(1 Corinthians 8:4)**.

Truly, the gift of prophecy enables the Christian to speak about people and events, understand all mysteries and knowledge with spiritual and physical dimensions **(1 Corinthians 12:10b)**. Prophecy by nature edifies the Church and is preferred to speaking in tongues by Paul. Therefore its usage without love makes it a serious violation to promote and exalt self in the eyes of the people and the Church other than to God and reveal Christ and establish us in the Christian faith.

Indeed the Church loves this gift because they like to hear and know things and events of the Spirit and the physical. Even if you are like Joseph in Egypt (Genesis and Daniel and his three friends of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego with the gift of prophecy to prophesy and understand all forms of literature, knowledge and understanding of physical and spiritual things, you are nobody without love. If all these things are happening, and there is no love to speak and share in Christ way, then you are nothing; proud and selfish. Then your emotions and selfishness are at work to promote a human agenda and not Christ's vision and mission by the Holy Spirit. As already stated, the ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit must compliment and complement each other in the Church and Body of Christ.

Indeed one needs to be clothed in love, humility and obedience to make the gift of prophecy, received mysteries and knowledge for the Church and individual Believing

Christians beneficial and rewarding like Jesus. For Christ was not proud with the many revelations, and prophecies and knowledge of the scriptures to teach people and defeat His enemies. Rather He did all things in love sacrificing his comfort of sleep, food, time, energy and family, and even His life for the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy. His food was to do the will of the Father who sent Him and to finish it **(John 4:34)**.

**IF GOD CAN INSPIRE YOU TO PROPHECY AND HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL MYSTERIES, AND YOU INHIBIT HIS LOVE TO EDIFY THE CHURCH, THEN YOU ARE A WASTER OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS INVESTMENTS IN YOUR LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH.**

### **(3) HAVE ALL FAITH TO MOVE MOUNTAINS; WHY BECOME USELESS AND UNPROFITABLE?**

**1 Corinthians 13:2b – and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**

Let us understand the message of Paul to the Corinthians Believers as he showed them the excellent way of love. Without love, the gift of faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ to remove mountains and make impossibilities possibilities is equaled to a useless person; an idol worshipper who believes in the futility of idols **(1 Corinthians 8:4)**.

The gift of faith is necessary to produce results and is so powerful to make the impossible happen as the revealed power of God in the name of Jesus. Healings and miracles are also received through the gift of faith. Truly, it makes things happen such as the promises of God; great exploits. If love is not the motivating force to reveal Christ to people, then self is at work according to the gospel of Paul. Earlier Paul had messaged the Corinthians Believers that his apostolic ministry was proven and tangible and verifiable because it was not with words of persuasion and enticement but in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power so that their trusts would be in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men **(1 Corinthians 2:4 & 5)**.

Truly Paul's missionary journeys and in the context of formation of the Church of Corinth was by means of gift of faith also. For when he went to Corinth from Athens in his third missionary journey, he met two believers in the persons of Aquila and his wife Priscilla **(Acts 18:1 – 3)**. For about one year and six months, his preachings and teachings in and outside the synagogues won many souls for the Lord **(Acts 18:4 – 6, 7 – 12, 13 – 17)**. Together, they formed the Church and later transferred the leadership mantle to Apollos.

Indeed Paul's epistles with specific messages to address issues in the Church of Corinth revealed a grown Church with members and part of the Body of Christ. Clearly, the gift of faith produced great results in accordance with Paul's call and apostolic ministry (Acts 9). For his apostolic ministry broke through the hard ground of idolized community, society and culture of the Corinthians.

Remember, Prophet Elijah's contending with the prophets of Baal god that resulted in the release of fire from heaven to burn the water logged wood proved His love for God to turn the hearts of the Israelites unto Him. Christians are to show the gift of faith to turn the hearts of people to God and increase their faith in Him and not for selfish means.

We are to give glory to God always as a Church just as Jesus taught us **(John 17)**. For He did the works of God as He saw Him doing. The Hebrew writer places emphasis on the gift of faith to receive answered prayers and blessings from God as Believing Christians. Truly without faith it is impossible to please God for all Christian relationships with God in Christ must believe that God is God and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him **(Hebrews 11:6)**. It is the means to obtain a good report and testimony like the elders **(Hebrews 11:2)**. Know also that righteous men and women under the Old Testament and Old Covenant of the Law had faith in God and died in faith even though they did not receive the promise of the Christ. They believed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth because they believed in the gift of eternal life **(Hebrews 11:39)**.

The Hebrew writer revealed further that the Church under the New Testament and New Covenant has received the promise of the Messiah and the Christ **(John 3:16)**. Its righteous intent and purpose was to make the Church complete the faith of the Old Covenanted people without the advent of Christ **(Hebrews 11:40)**. In other words, the wisdom of God is that the faith of the old is made complete with the faith of the new. Therefore we are to show forth faith in Christ unto God by the Holy Spirit. Hence the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit is to make Believing Christians achieve great, mighty and eternal things for God even more than the people of old.

It is of this revelation that Paul messaged the Corinthians Believers that all faith works and achievements without love is nothing and unprofitable eternally. For love perfects the works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. If we have faith to move mountains, why should we become nothing and unprofitable to the Church and people because we failed to show forth love? Therefore the gospel of Paul teaches us to add love to faith works and achievements to become useful and profitable eternally. Pray, believe, do works of righteousness but crown it all with love.

The bible reminds us not to ascribe glory to ourselves but God because of His mercy and truth **(Psalms 115:1)**. Yeah we can do great and mighty things but without love, it is useless and not profitable.

**THE GIFT OF FAITH IS OUTWARDLY AND REWARDING BUT IF WITHOUT LOVE TO CHRIST, IT IS UNPROFITABLE ETERNALLY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND UNPROFITABLE TO THE SPIRITUAL AND NUMERICAL GROWTH, AND EXPANSION TO THE CHURCH.**

#### **(4) BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR; WHY BECOME UNPROFITABLE?**

**1 Corinthians 13:3a – And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor ... it profits me nothing.**

Let us understand the message of Paul to the Corinthians Believers as he showed them the excellent way of love. Without love, the gift of giving to the poor and alleviate their poverty and needs in life, ministry and to the Church is unprofitable (**Proverbs 22:9, 11:25**). For love cares for one's present condition and situation and future condition and situation. In other words, it is not of God's nature to give without love because God is the One who teaches us to make profit and leads us in the way we should go (**Isaiah 48:17**).

This means that giving must be with love where provisions of worldly goods are accompanied with the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ for belief and salvation eternally. Do you know or remember the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus during the supper session? The bible says that when Zacchaeus saw the love that Jesus showed him despite being the Chief tax collector and labeled as a sinner, he proclaimed loudly that he gives half of all his goods to the poor. Besides, he restored fourfold anything he had taken from anybody by false accusation (**Luke 19:8**). This was the repentant heart of Zacchaeus after being convicted by the presence of Jesus. Jesus' reply was borne out of love. For He declared that salvation had come to Zacchaeus that day because he was also a son of Abraham (**Luke 19:9**). It means to say also that God's hand reaches to save all sinners as long as they embrace and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then He declared the mission of the Christ as the Son of Man to have come to seek and save that which was lost (**Luke 19:10**). This was love at work through revelation and truth beyond conviction. It means to say that the Church should not just be interested in the share of worldly goods to the poor but also be interested in their salvation eternally through conviction and repentance in Christ. Yes giving to the poor is good and righteous to God but show them the way of salvation and righteousness in Christ as the Holy Spirit leads. Don't endorse their sinful habits and character but pray and counsel them to be righteous in expression of love to them.

This is one of the charitable deeds of people and organizations that can be seen in every religion and society. For some of them believe that righteousness is attained in their giving to poor people other than the righteousness of God in Christ. As a result, Christian charity is sometimes polluted with this doctrine where love is not the motivating force. If you help people to promote self or achieve worldly claims and profits but without Christ, then it was not based on Christ's love; the agape kind of love. When Saul gave his daughter, Michal, to David as a reward for killing Goliath, it looked like love at work until the daughters of Jerusalem sang the praises of David more than him. Saul began to hate David and transferred him from his bodyguards regiment, and relocated him to be captain over one thousand soldiers to fight dangerous battles; perhaps be killed in battle (**1 Samuel 18:7 – 13**).

Indeed Christian charity should be led by the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ's love of feeding thousands of hungry people **(Matthew 14:14 – 21)** as symbolic of feeding His hungry sheep with His gospel of salvation and attainment of spiritual growth, maturity and fruitfulness in the Church and Body of Christ.

**Psalm 23** teaches about the Lord being the Shepherd of our lives and souls. Truly, it is love as the motivating factor between the Shepherd and His flock. Where there is love, the blessings cover physical and spiritual areas of life, ministry and the Church **(Ephesians 4:11 – 16)**. Life can be meaningful when love is fulfilling, satisfying and rewarding.

**According to the New King James Bible Commentary, to bestow all my goods to the poor likely pertains to the spiritual gift of giving unto others (Romans 12:8b).**

**CHARITABLE DEEDS TO OTHER PEOPLE WITH MEDIA COVERAGE SOMETIMES ARE GOOD, BUT IF FOR SELFISH GAINS, THERE IS NO LOVE BUT A USELESS VENTURE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.**

**DON'T JUST APPLAUD PHILANTHROPISTS AND PEOPLE WHO DO CHARITABLE DEEDS TO THE POOR AND NEGLECTED IN COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES. SEEK TO REVEAL CHRIST TO THEM AS EXPRESSION OF LOVE BECAUSE THEY DESERVED TO BE SAVED ETERNALLY IN CHRIST TOO LIKE ZACCHAEUS.**

### **5// GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED; WHY BECOME UNPROFITABLE?**

**1 Corinthians 13:3b – and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.**

Let us understand the message of Paul to the Corinthians Believers as he showed them the excellent way of love. Without love, giving the body to be burnt is unprofitable to God and His Christ. Paul must have made this statement in reference to the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego whose defiance to worship the golden image of an idol infuriated King and he cast them into the burning furnace **(Daniel 3:1 – 7, 8 – 12, 13 – 15, 16 – 18, 19 – 25, 26 – 28, 29 & 30)**. These Hebrew men gave their bodies to be burnt in defense of their God and defiance to bow and worship the golden image as King Nebuchadnezzar spoke. By this message, Paul meant that if a Believing Christian or group of Believing Christians defy an order against the Church and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and is ready to suffer even physical burns of their bodies, it must be done in love and not for strong show of faith, zeal and competition to be the first and a greater anointing level. In truth, love for God and His Christ should be the motivation to go that extra mile and turn the hearts of your enemies to God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The bible says that King Nebuchadnezzar eventually blessed the name of God and commanded that anybody, nation and language who speaks against the God of the Hebrew men would be cut into pieces and made a waste dumping site.

## SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABED – NEGO GAVE THEIR BODIES TO BE BURNT AS PROOF OF THEIR LOVE FOR GOD AND TO DEFEND THE SUPREMACY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL EVEN IN THE LAND OF CAPTIVITY. CAN YOU BE LIKE THEM?

Do you know that almost all the apostles of Jesus Christ were killed in various forms by enemies of righteousness? Yet they stood firm in their convictions and truths in Christ even unto death (**Hebrews 11:37 & 38**). Stephen was martyred under the supervision and authority of Saul who became the Apostle (**Acts 7:54 – 60**). Do you know many missionaries were killed by the sword and burnt on the cross for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ against the laws and culture of the nations and the Roman Catholic Church? They did not renounce their Christian convictions and revelations because they loved the Lord Jesus Christ and trust God to die on stakes.

Among them include Bishops Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer as Church history records their burning on the stakes on **16<sup>th</sup> October 1555**. The memorable prayer of **Ridley** was that: **Oh heavenly Father, I give unto thee most hearty thanks that thou has called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death. I beseech thee, Lord God, have mercy on this realm of England, and deliver it from all her enemies.**

The encouraging words but in a prayerful spirit of **Latimer** was that: **Be of good comfort, Mr. Ridley, and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out.**

Some were burnt by fire on the stakes just because they interpreted the bible from Latin to English. **William Tyndale** is described as father of the English bible with 90% translation into the King James Bible and 75% of the Revised Standard Version as we have presently but he suffered burning on the stake at Antwerp on **6<sup>th</sup> October, 1536**. It is said that before he died, his last prayer was that the Lord should open the eyes of the king of England. This prayer was answered three years later in **1539 where King Henry VIII** commanded every parish Church in England to make a copy of the English bible available to all parishioners (**Culled from the martyrdom of William Tyndale**).

Again, Paul must have made this statement in reference to Jesus' crucifixion on the cross. Truly, Jesus prophesied three (3) times about His own death on the cross in suffering at the hands of the religious class and groups in Israel (**Matthew 17:12, 22, 20:18**). Also, Jesus had the power to lay down his life and to take it up again (**John 10:15 – 17**). Figuratively Jesus sign to the Jews about His righteous works in fulfillment of scripture was: **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:18 – 22).**

**WHEN YOU OBEY GOD LIKE JESUS AND READY TO DO HIS PERFECT WILL, YOUR GREAT DESIRE AND PASSION IN LOVE TO SUFFER YOUR BODY TO BEATINGS, WHIPS, DAMAGES, AND EVEN DEATH BECOME SCRIPTURAL AND PROPHETIC TO PROVE AND DEFEND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE ETERNALLY.**

Remember also the seven words of Jesus revealed love and righteousness in obedience to the Father and passion to save the world. Jesus left Mary in the care of John the beloved disciple and John in the care of the mother; signified relationship and trust: **Woman, behold your son!...Son, behold your mother (John 19:26 & 27)**. Jesus forgave the sins of His enemies in prayer to God: **Father forgive them for they do not know what they do (Luke 24:34)**. To the repentant sinner on the cross who cried out to Jesus to remember him in His kingdom, Jesus' reply was that: **Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23:43)**. Jesus' immense suffering and loneliness in His life for the first time made Him cry to the Father on the cross: **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? (Matthew 27:46)**. Knowing that all things were now fulfilled, Jesus said that: **I thirst (John 19:28)**. Jesus declared boldly and confidently on the cross: **It is finished! (John 19:30)**. Jesus' last prayer on the cross was: **Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit (Luke 23:46)**. Besides, His great desire and passion to go to the cross and complete the work of eternal salvation was borne of love to save the world from the bondages of sin, evil and wickedness **(Luke 12:49 & 50)**.

Clearly, Jesus gave His body to be crucified on the cross in love to save His own people on earth; not as the Son of God and Son of Man but in accordance with scripture and prophecy as the perfect will of God. Hence, He is the Author of eternal salvation **(Hebrews 5:9)**.

**JESUS' SUFFERING ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY WAS LOVE IN ACTION TO OBEY THE FATHER AND SAVE HUMANITY FROM THE CURSE OF ADAM, LAW AND IDOLATRY AND DEMONISM. FOR IN HIS VICTORY WE HAVE RECEIVED THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS.**

The life of sacrifice is sometimes needed to reverse the old order of doing things to embrace the new order. The bible says that the brethren Judas and Silas were carefully chosen by the Jerusalem Church leadership to accompany Paul and Barnabas and other brethren to Antioch to deliver the decision of the Jerusalem Church concerning the controversy of being circumcised before being saved eternally. The testimony about Judas and Silas was that they were noted of having risked their lives for the sake of Christ and His gospel of salvation **(Acts 15:26)**. It means that any human sacrifice of time, energy, family, marriage, and resources to the Church and people must be with love to achieve eternal purposes. But without love for Jesus is a waste with no heavenly commendation, approval and achievements. Therefore the sacrifices, acts and works of the Church must promote the agape kind of love of Christ Jesus in us and in our bodies **(Philippians 1:20)** like His sacrificial life, death and resurrection for the attainment of eternal salvation. It must promote and ensure unity in the Churches and Body of Christ and make Christians uphold the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ to care and support one another.

**TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST, YOU MUST LEARN TO SUFFER IN THE BODY LIKE CHRIST AND ALL HIS DISCIPLES. BUT REMEMBER THAT THE HOLY**

## **SPIRIT IS YOUR HELPER TO MAKE YOUR SUFFERINGS IN THE BODY BE IN LOVE AND NOT OUT OF DUTY PER SE.**

The revelation and assessment of the Church in Ephesus by our Lord Jesus Christ confirms the illustrations of Apostle Paul **(Revelations 2:1 – 7)**. This Church was associated with many great works; workers in the Lord's Vineyard, patience in suffering and results achievement, trusted God, hated evil and functioned effectively in the gift of discerning spirits to know true and false Apostles in the Church, zealous for Christ and seemed to be spiritual in the eyes of the public. However, Jesus' assessment of them exposed their weakness of being dutiful Christians without love for Christ **(Revelations 2:4)**. Their worship and works of God in Christ was more of fear and obligation other than love and therefore made their works below Christ's standard. They were charged to repent and do their first works again with love for God and His Christ as the motivation factor **(Revelations 2:5)**. Like the Corinthian Christians and Ephesian Church, God expects us to repent and make Jesus Christ the centre of our Christian faith, life, ministries and works. Loving Jesus Christ is being like Him in all ways and not some ways.

## **SACRIFICES AND WORKS, ENDURANCE OF PAIN AND SUFFERING IN FASTING AND PRAYERS AND WRITING SCRIPTS AND BOOKS WITHOUT LOVE ARE USELESS.**

## **THE PAIN AND AGONY TO ENDURE SUFFERING FOR OTHER PEOPLE PORTRAYS LOVE BUT IF FOR SELFISH GAINS, THERE IS NO LOVE BUT A USELESS VENTURE TO GOD.**

We read

**“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept in My Father's commandments and abide in His love (John 15:9 &10).**

There is one thing be loved and another thing to maintain the love. Jesus was loved by the Father but He obeyed the Father's commandments to maintain the love. Likewise the Church has the love of Christ but our obedience to His word makes Him maintain His love for us.

**According to the New King James Bible Commentary, the love of God the Father for God the Son is the measure of the love of the Son for believers. To abide in Christ love means that He loves Believers unconditionally. But as Believers obey Christ's word and abide in His love, they come to experience and understand His love for them more and more.**

## **THERE IS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE WHICH WE ENJOY AS MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH IN CHRIST. BUT OUR OBEDIENCE MAKES US ABIDE AND EXPERIENCE CHRIST'S LOVE IN GREATER DIMENSIONS.**

We read

**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:7 – 11).**

The Apostle John instructed and counseled the believers to love one another as proof of their Christian lives. By this truth, they would have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the ways of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross is an example for us to emulate. It teaches us to love one another and to make sacrifices for the betterment of their lives and ministries and the Church. It means to say that failure to practice Christ's love as a Church is useless because of non – profitable ventures.

**THE COMMAND TO LOVE AS A CHURCH IS TO EMULATE THE RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLE OF GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH HIS CHURCH AS EVIDENCED IN THE WORK OF SALVATION ON THE CROSS.**

Paul told the Ephesians believers to walk in love as Christ loved the Church and proved it in giving His body as an offering and a sacrifice to God as a sweet smelling savour **(Ephesians 5:2, 25)**. It means to say that love brings out all the eternal blessings of the Christian faith for us to experience God and Christian relationships and services. Unconditional love and sacrifices are needed to bring up the best in people in and outside the Church.

In enriching Paul's emphasis of the spiritual gifts to be filled with love, let us do a spiritual comparison with **Romans 13:8** which tells us not to owe anyone anything except the debt of love. For whoever loves another person or believer has fulfilled the law. The descriptive areas suggest making it possible not to owe any one sin, evil, wickedness, and curses, selfishness, pride because they are offensive to God. Rather we are to pay the debt of love daily to make the works of God in Christ complete **(Colossians 2:10)** and perfect **(Matthew 5:48)**.

**WALKING IN LOVE MAKES THE CHURCH EXPERIENCE SENSE OF COMPLETENESS AND SENSE OF PERFECTION IN CHRIST AS A CHURCH.**

### PRAYER

**Gracious and Merciful God, thank You for Your warnings about doing things not by Your Spirit in love but in our own wisdom and strength.**

We pray that the Holy Spirit would enable us to think, say and do things in love as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers.

We pray that we would not be complacent and proud about received spiritual gifts and revelations but use them to serve one another in the spirit of love.

Make our Christian worship, services and works excellent and perfect in love as we obey Your word leading of Your Holy Spirit.

Help us to emulate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ to make sacrifices and to love unconditionally like God.

We ask for grace to be perfect and complete in Christ for the riches of Your glory to be evident in the Church.

All these we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

LOVE IS THE KEY IN ALL THINGS FOR EXCELLENT AND PERFECT RESULTS; IT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. BY ITS STANDARD, OUR WORKS IN CHRIST TO GOD FOR PEOPLE ARE MEASURED AND REWARDED. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE BEST SPIRITUAL GIFTS EDIFY THE CHURCH AND ARE ONLY EXCELLENT, PERFECT, COMPLETE, SATISFYING AND REWARDING IN CHRIST THROUGH LOVE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IF LOVE IS A GIFT FROM GOD AND MAKES ALL OTHER GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MINISTRIES PERFECT TO ACHIEVE CHRIST'S VISION AND MISSION, THEN IT IS PRIMUS INTER PARES; FIRST AMONG EQUALS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

I HAVE FOUND THE PARADOX, THAT IF YOU LOVE UNTIL IT HURTS, THERE CAN BE NO MORE HURT, ONLY MORE LOVE. **MOTHER TERESA**

## LOVE SUFFERS LONG; SPIRIT OF ENDURANCE

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4a – Love suffers long**

According to the gospel of Paul, love suffers long. If the Corinthians Believers were to perfect their spiritual gifts, they had to go the excellent way of love. To suffer long is to bear the fruit of long-suffering by the Holy Spirit. It is the patience of the Christian to endure ridicule, pain, suffering, and shame to see and experience the transformation of a bad situation to a good one. Christian ministers are to be selfless, depend on God's grace and be led by the Holy Spirit all the time to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in love and not in competition. One's ability to endure long-suffering of preachers with self – ambitions, ridicule, envy and jealousy is the mark of love for Christ in consistent and continuous fulfilling of ministry.

Again love in longsuffering denotes a long period of waiting and patience involving the use of energy, knowledge, wisdom, money, resources, gifts, talents and time to acquire something good in life and ministry. You know its high value and so you devote all your time and energy to get it.

On this gospel truth, Paul's emphasis on love showed that every spiritual gift needs the gift of love to make it shine brighter with the glory of God and have meaningful results to bless people eternally (**1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3**). Hence the need to endure suffering and ensure that the gift of the Holy Spirit is effectively used to fulfill its purposes in Christ. Indeed from the time of the formation of the Church of Corinth, he had endured all challenges with the love of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Among them included divisions of personalities over water baptism (**1 Corinthians 1:11 – 17, 12:12**), sexual immoralities in the Church (**1 Corinthians 5:1 & 2**), idolism and eating food offered to idols (**1 Corinthians 8:1 – 7**), corruption of the Lord's Table (**1 Corinthians 10:16 – 22**), Paul's

love in suffering sustained the existence of the Church as a branch of the Body of Christ. In all these Church challenges, Paul's love endured suffering to pray, teach, counsel and instruct the Corinthians Believers in Christ's righteousness to secure their eternal salvation and protect and preserve generations of the Church.

Paul began to show the Corinthians what it is by saying that love is long-suffering in nature as also shown to the Galatian Believers (**Galatians 5:22a**). By this truth, he meant that bearing the fruit of love is not on a silver platter or a nine day wonder but a daily affair. Since love is giving, you have to spend time in prayer and the word as well as use your strength, energy, time and money to do the works of God as a Believing Christian, Church leader, Christian leader and Minister. It is also about endurance and patience to fulfill all righteousness in the power of the Holy Spirit like Jesus in the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy; even death on the cross.

Earlier, Paul had written to the Corinthians Believers to follow him as he emulated the Lord Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). Clearly he meant that they were to walk in his righteous example of love to endure all things for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah. If he was successful in ministry, it was because he bore the fruit of long-suffering by the Holy Spirit. By this truth, he taught the Corinthians Believers to suffer long for their love to Christ and the sake of righteousness alongside his continual prayers from them (**1 Corinthians 1:4**).

### **WHEN YOUR LOVE TO CHRIST IS GENUINE, LOVE FOR THE CHURCH SUFFERS LONG TO SEE CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FORMED IN THEM.**

The bible says that some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel (**Philippians 1:15 – 17**).

### **YOUR ABILITY TO ENDURE THE TAUNTS OF WRONGFUL COMPETITION AND ACCUSERS OF FALSE BRETHREN IN MINISTRY IS EVIDENCE ON LONG-SUFFERING IN LOVE.**

The love of God can result in consistent prayers, preaching and counseling family members such as spouses, parents, children, uncles and aunties, nephews and nieces, in – laws, and cousins to repent of their sins and lives of self - righteousness to become Christians. This can take years but the end results are always memorable and satisfying with the positive changes. A righteous example is Jacob's enduring the trick and deception of his uncle Laban, and culture of the people of the East, for fourteen years to marry Rachel. For he was forced to marry Leah instead of Rachel after serving Laban for seven years (**Genesis 29:16 – 30**). To work for these long years for the woman he loved was no easy thing, and in Christ, it takes the grace of God by the Holy Spirit to endure and attain it righteously.

**JACOB LOVED RACHEL AND WORKED FOR ANOTHER SEVEN (7) YEARS TO HAVE HER AS A WIFE. TRULY LOVE SUFFERS LONG TO GET WHAT IS GOOD AND RIGHT FOR US IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH.**

**CAN YOU SUFFER LONG FOR YOUR SPOUSE OR SOMEBODY? CAN YOU PRAY AND FAST, HELP AND SUPPORT A GOOD CAUSE? I BELIEVE SOME CHURCHES AND POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE SCORED GOOD POINTS HERE.**

It is the selfless approach in one's Christian's faith to be faithful and overcome the challenges and problems of life and ministry, and experience the promises and blessings of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit. Love can suffer long for a Christian man or woman's marriage because of being holy and faithful to God. It is one's ability to overlook and overcome worldly lusts, passions and offers such as sex, money and properties if they are dangers and contrary to the Christian faith. It can even be denial of your rights to legitimate things in the family and life because of your Christian faith. Your ability to trust God and be faithful in patience is the long-suffering of the Holy Spirit and revelation of the nature of God to change and make things happen in a positive dimension. David's righteous example of fasting and praying for people who turned against him made him trust in God more **(Psalms 109:4 & 5, 24 – 27)**.

**LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF DAVID TO PRAY AND FAST FOR PEOPLE WHO SOMETIMES BECOME YOUR ENEMIES. FOR SOME OF THEM ARE CONVERTED EITHER IN THE SHORT TERM PERIOD OR LONG TERM PERIOD.**

The story is told of Dr. Thomas Cooper in the late 1500 whose work in editing 33,000 English words in dictionary. One fateful day, his stubborn and aggrieved wife burnt all his 8 years work in the library claiming that her husband gave more attention to his books than her; and the only way to save her marriage and the husband from premature death was the action taken. It is reported that Dr. Thomas Cooper's only complaint was "Oh Dinah, Dinah, thou hast given a world of trouble!" Then he quietly sat down to another eight years of hard labor, to replace the notes which she had destroyed. (Paul Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations [Assurance Publishers, #2350.]

Likewise when enemies of righteousness or even family members and friends become impediments to our righteous works in Christ by the Holy Spirit, we are not to be revengeful but begin the slow and painful process to build again. For if the foundations of the fathers are destroyed, what would the righteous do **(Psalms 11:3)**? What this means is that the foundations of God cannot be destroyed by any human being or devil or demon, and therefore let us build again what has been damaged because we have the Holy Spirit in us to love and endure all forms of suffering.

**DO YOU HAVE THE HEART AND PATIENCE OF DR. THOMAS COOPER TO BEGIN AGAIN AND SUFFER LONG FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS? THE HOLY SPIRIT; OUR HELPER.**

The Christian faith is not just about the sweet promises and blessings of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit but also includes suffering because of righteousness, holiness, and faithfulness. The bible says that Abraham believed the word of God to bless him with his own son and through the son make him the father of many nations. Hence he is noted to have believed God and described as righteous. This did not come on a silver platter but gave birth to Isaac at the old age of one hundred **(Genesis 21:1 – 7)**.

The bible says that Abraham did not stagger at the promise of God but believed God because he was convinced that God was able to perform His promised word to him. Hence God called him righteous and has made him an example to all Believing Christians and have faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ to save us eternally **(Romans 4:3, 20 – 25, Galatians 3:6)**.

**TO BE RIGHTEOUS LIKE ABRAHAM IS TO OBEY THE WORD OF GOD IN CHRIST AT ALL TIMES. IT COMES WITH THE HIGH COST OF SUFFERING AND ENDURANCE OF FAMILY AND SOCIETAL PERCEPTION TO DISCOURAGE YOU. BUT REMEMBER THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS YOU AND THE CHURCH FOR A BLESSING. THEREFORE KEEP BELIEVING AND DO NOT STAGGER AT THE PROMISE OF GOD. FOR LOVE THAT SUFFERS LONG IN RIGHTEOUSNESS PRODUCES GENERATIONAL AND ETERNAL RESULTS.**

This is what the bible says, **“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29)**.

There are no short cuts and easy ways in ministry and the Church. You have to work your way from the bottom to the top. You have to love unconditionally and make sacrifices. Prayers and fasting, preaching, teaching, counseling, Great Commission, Church management and Church conflict are necessary to receive the Lord’s mercy and favour for exaltation. Suffering in humility is inevitable before exaltation **(Psalms 75:5 – 7)**.

**EVERY CHRISTIAN IS BEING REMINDED THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS A DIVINE PACKAGE OF ETERNAL SALVATION, PROMISES AND BLESSINGS, AND ALSO SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; LOVE SUFFERS LONG BUT THE END RESULTS ARE GOOD AND MEMORABLE; EXALTATION.**

We read

**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:12 & 13).**

We read

**Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all of them have faith.” (2 Thessalonians 3:1 & 2).**

**THE DEVIL IS THE ENEMY OF ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THEREFORE FIGHTS AGAINST CHRISTIANS AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. HIS EVIL KINGDOM INCLUDE WITCHES AND WIZARDS, OCCULT, EVIL RITUALS, WORSHIPPERS OF IDOLS, DOERS OF SIN, AND ALL PEOPLE WHO LIVE A LIFE OF SELF – RIGHTEOUSNESS. MANY SUFFERINGS OF CHRISTIANS AND CHURCHES ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE AS A RESULT OF SATAN’S GRAND PLAN AND ACTIVITIES. YET WE TRUST GOD AND OVERCOME IN THE NAME OF JESUS.**

Clearly this was a replication of the words of Jesus to the disciples about the impending suffering to be experienced after His return to the Father. Yet they were promised of Christ’s peace in a troubled world and told to rejoice because Christ had overcome the world **(John 16:33)**.

Therefore longsuffering in Christ is rewarding with eternal results and blessings in our Christian walk. Let us be guided by the Holy Spirit and be in God’s perfect will as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers. Love makes it easy to endure suffering for long just as Christ and His disciples. Apply this gospel truth to your challenging moments in marriage, family, job, finances, investments, ministry and Church, state and country and be an achiever in Jesus’ name.

**IN THE MIDST OF THE STORMS OF LIFE, WE HAVE THE PROMISE AND ASSURANCE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO ENJOY HIS PEACE. TRULY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS A PROOF THAT LOVE SUFFERS LONG TO PRODUCE RIGHTEOUSNESS, GENERATIONAL AND ETERNAL RESULTS. BE FAITHFUL.**

### **PRAYER**

**Guide us O Lord with Your mighty Hand to love always and endure suffering for the formation of Christ’s righteousness in our lives and the Church.**

**Help us with Your word and Holy Spirit to endure challenging moments in life, ministry and the Church because we love you dearly to suffer for Your sake like the early Church and all faithful Christians over the generations.**

**As we bear the fruit of love and longsuffering, increase our faith in You for Your promises are Yes and Amen.**

**In Your grace, we say thank You for answered prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

LOVE IN ACTION; NOT JUST TALK OR PAPER WORK. LOVE SUFFERS LONG TO ATTAIN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. LOVE SUFFERS LONG TO RECEIVE THE PROMISES AND BLESSINGS OF GOD. BE FAITHFUL. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

ALL THE BLESSINGS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE LOVED AND CAN BE CLAIMED DOUBLE EXCEPT THE FRUIT OF LONGSUFFERING WHICH SOME CHRISTIANS SHY AWAY FROM IT. BUT LOVE IN LONGSUFFERING IS GOD'S CHOSEN WAY TO ENDURE AND OVERCOME AND BECOME ACHIEVERS AND PERFECT IN THIS TROUBLED WORLD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE IS KIND; BLESS THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

Now Paul's focused on what love is and the subject area is kindness. Yes Love is kind because it identifies its own and blessed it.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4b – Love is kind**

This is the act of a mild and sweet spirit of the Christian towards fellow Christians, family members, friends, strangers and even enemies. It is of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ in us and to others unlike the natural way of kindness which is selective of only people we like or identify ourselves with them. In Christ, love is perfect and therefore the Holy Spirit helps us to bear the fruit of kindness **(Galatians 5:22)**.

The Greek word is "chrestotes" inferring "useful and fit for use" and benefits as "useful for others". This is the kindness that Apostle Paul wrote about for the Christian to exhibit in love towards all categories of people. It is the nature of God; love was at work. Right from creation, God's kindness was evident in the creation of the Garden of Eden with things needed for a comfortable life was placed there.

Apostle Paul's message to the Corinthians Believers was the most excellent way of love among all the spiritual gifts and ministries. Specifically, he mentioned that love is kind in nature as a fruit of the Spirit. Thus there is no love without kindness, and kindness without love. The Corinthian Believers were to appreciate the fruit of love and the fruit of love by the Spirit to relate with each other; as Paul took keen interests in their affairs and worked assiduously to equip them with knowledge and gospel truths for edification purpose; as Jesus did with His disciples and His many followers on earth **(1 Corinthians 1:2)**.

We see Paul confidently telling the Church of Corinth that he was their only true spiritual father interested in their affairs and loved them dearly unlike the many instructors **(1 Corinthians 4:15 & 16)**.

That is why the devil cannot be kind to the children of God because He does not and cannot identify himself with us. His desire to steal, kill and destroy unlike Jesus who has given us eternal life and abundantly to experience spiritual growth unto maturity **(John 10:10)**. Truly, our adversary the devil is moving like a roaring lion and seeking whom he may devour **(1 Peter 5:8)**. Clearly our faith is in the Son of God and we have the Holy Spirit to live Christ and testify about Him in our lives, the Churches and the world.

**THE DEVIL CANNOT BE KIND TO THE CHURCH BECAUSE WE ARE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND MEMBERS OF CHRIST AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS. WE ARE NOT A FAMILY.**

We read

The bible says of God that, **“Let Us make man in Our image; according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth (Genesis 1:26). So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created man; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27). Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea; over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28).**

Right from creation, God identified Himself with humanity as Jehovah Elohim; the Lord our Creator and Jehovah Jireh; The Lord our Provider. Having created everything, He expressed His kindness by placing man in the Garden of Eden to manage it **(Genesis 2:8)**.

**GOD IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH US BEFORE HE BLESSES US. WHERE GOD LOCATES YOU, HE PROVIDES FOR YOU. YES HE IS USEFUL TO US.**

Many a time we need to be reminded of God’s kindness of His plan of eternal salvation to the world in which we are beneficiaries. The bible says: But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life **(Titus 3:4 – 7)**. For the work of salvation has been useful to us as Believing Christians with clear changes and transformations into the image of Christ.

The gospel of Jesus Christ to humanity and the Church is the expression of God’s kindness that must be testified for the belief and salvation of people.

**IT WAS LOVE THAT MADE GOD SHOW KINDNESS TO MANKIND IN MERCY THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, FOR YOU AND I, TO RECEIVE FREE ETERNAL SALVATION. GOD HAS PROVEN HIMSELF USEFUL TO US THROUGH LOVE.**

Jesus Christ set practical examples in His ministry on earth. He came to the earth from heaven in response to God's love for the world. In His ministry, He demonstrated love to all His hearers and disciples, and identified with their spiritual and physical needs.

We read

**“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” (Matthew 10:40 – 42)**

The spiritual levels of blessings revealed by Jesus show acts of kindness first to Him and therefore God who sent Him, second to the prophet and third to the righteous man. To receive Jesus Christ is to believe Him and His works; and therefore God. This is a serious matter here because if you refuse God's kindness of Jesus Christ as the sacrificial lamb for eternal salvation and righteousness, then you do not believe God and His righteous plans for humanity. In the same vein, all Believing Christians are to receive prophets and righteous people respectfully and honourably as servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe, accept and obey their righteous words and works by the Holy Spirit, then you have embraced God's kindness in Christ. Furthermore, all disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are examples of God's kindness. Therefore Jesus stated categorically that the provision of one cup of cold water to one of His disciple is acknowledgment of Him and His gospel of salvation, and would be rewarded.

**THE BENEFITS OF KINDNESS TO MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND ALL CHRISTIANS ARE THE RECOGNITION BY GOD AND RECEIPT OF REWARDS. IF YOU PRACTICE KINDNESS TO THE CHURCH, THE LORD WOULD BLESS YOU. YOUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN WOULD INCREASE ABUNDANTLY.**

Jesus Christ demonstrated it practically in the feeding of the poor and hungry as recorded in

**Matthew 14:15 & 16 – When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.” But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”**

Jesus' act of kindness first identified with the hungry multitudes who followed Him and listened to His teachings. He could not abandon them in their time of need. Therefore He told the disciples to be kind to them and provide food for them to eat. The message

revealed that Jesus taught the disciples to be useful for others; beneficial to them. It was his love for them to provide food after feeding them with spiritual food. This should be the mark of every pastor and all church leaders.

**IF JESUS PROVED HIMSELF TO BE USEFUL TO US IN LOVE AND KINDNESS, THEN THE CHURCH MUST EMULATE HIS RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLE. BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT; HAVE COMPASSION.**

The Holy Spirit helps Christians to be kind towards people. The Apostle Paul encourages Christians to be concerned for one another; therefore Churches should be concerned for one another.

We read

**Romans 12:10 – Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.**

**LOVE AND SHOW ACTS OF KINDNESS TO CHURCH MEMBERS AND CARE FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL NEEDS. CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME AND THEREFORE CHRISTIANS MUST RESPOND TO THE PROMPTINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

We read

**Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold (Acts 28:1 & 2).**

God provided a way of escape from the stormy sea for Apostle Paul and other prisoners and their Roman guards on the island of Malta. There the natives showed unusual kindness in the provision of fire to heat their bodies from the cold and rainy weather. Though they were strangers, God favoured them before the people whose hospitality was exemplary.

Ministry works and challenges give us opportunities to experience the truth of God's word that love is kind. The Lord always makes provisions as timely interventions in response to prayers and desires in conformity with His word and Holy Spirit. Therefore, never stop praying and trusting in the Lord even in difficult and challenging and hopeless situations because He is faithful. Indeed the unusual kindness shown to Apostle Paul on the island of Malta was the favour of the Lord to refresh him despite the existence of the culture of warm reception and hospitality to travelers and strangers.

**IF YOU ARE DOING THE LORD'S WILL, BE EXPECTANT OF UNUSUAL KINDNESS THAT WILL ASSURE YOU OF THE LORD'S LOVE AND PRESENCE IN MINISTRY. KEEP PRAYING AND TRUSTING.**

This explains why the bible says that Christians should not be reluctant to entertain strangers; for in it angels have been welcomed with accompanying blessings (**Hebrews 13:2**). Abraham entertained angels unknowingly and was blessed because his heart was filled with kindness and goodness (**Genesis 18:1 – 15**).

**LIKE ABRAHAM BUDDY. MAY GOD REMEMBER AND BLESS YOU IN TIME OF TROUBLE AND DIFFICULTY AS YOU SHOW KINDNESS TO PEOPLE AND STRANGERS.**

Truly, it is difficult to bless your enemies but this is the way to reveal Jesus Christ to them. To have the nature of God as Christians, we must obey: But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil (**Luke 6:35**).

**HAVE THE NATURE OF GOD TO LOVE AND BE KIND EVEN TO SINNERS. IF YOU LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BLESS YOUR ENEMIES, DO IT WILLINGLY AND JOYFULLY, AND NOT GRUDGINGLY.**

If David searched for a son of Saul and found Mephibosheth (**2 Samuel 9:1 – 13**); If Dorcas blessed people with her sown garments and was a memorial to God (**Acts 9:36 – 43**); then acts of kindness are righteous investments to open great blessings to your life, ministry and the Church. Yes bear the fruit of love and the fruit of kindness and the fruit of goodness.

This is big time. Your acts of kindness by the Holy Spirit to enemies is to reveal Christ to them and the love of God towards humanity. Love is kind and looks for all peoples to bless and improve their standard of living and spiritual state. It brings fulfillment and joy into homes, families, churches and people's lives where they acknowledge the gospel of Jesus Christ as salvation of their lives physically and eternally.

**MAY YOU BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT LIKE DAVID TO MEPHIBOSHETH, DORCAS IN HER GIFTS OF GARMENTS TO THE NEEDY. MAY THIS OBEDIENCE OPEN DOORS OF BLESSINGS TO YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL IN YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY.**

## PRAYER

**Our Gracious God, we thank You for bestowing upon the Church the fruit of love, and the fruit of kindness that expresses Your goodness to us.**

**We trust that Your word and Holy Spirit shall be our guiding principles in life, ministry and the Church as it was with the Corinthians Believers.**

**Make us obedient like Jesus, Paul and all other faithful Ministers, Christian and Church leaders and Believing Christians.**

We pray that our hearts shall be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit to have mercy and compassion to help and support one another in the Church and other people.

We ask for this grace to perfect spiritual gifts in the name of Jesus. Amen.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DETERMINED TO MAKE YOU SHOW ACTS OF KINDNESS IN LOVE TO THE CHURCH AND ALL PEOPLES AS HE LIVES AND WORKS IN US. THAT DESIRE IS THERE AND YOU HAVE GOD'S GRACE TO DO IT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

ANOINTED CHRISTIANS ARE LIKE ANGELS ON EARTH WHOSE PRONOUNCEMENTS WILL BE BLESSINGS AND PROPHETIC IN RESPONSE TO YOUR ACTS OF KINDNESS IN LOVE. YES THE ANOINTING MAKES THE DIFFERENCE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE DOES NOT ENVY; AVOID IT

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

Now Paul focused on what love is and the subject area of no envy. Yes love must not envy because it promotes divisions and stifles spiritual growth and maturity of the Church.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4c – Love does not envy**

The general meaning of envy is a feeling of discontentment and resentment in connection of someone's possession, blessings, achievements or luck. It is also a strong desire to possess what rightly belongs to another person. It is an emotional feeling. The bible says that The Lord prospered Isaac so much in Gerar that the Philistines envied him (**Genesis 26:12 – 14**). Know that the blessing and increasing prosperity of Isaac was due to obedience to God and remained in the land of Gerar and travel to Egypt (**Genesis 26:1 – 6**).

Apostle Paul reveals that love does not envy the life and progress of people in the same biological, friends and spiritual families. Love seeks the good and welfare of people, and does not fight and destroy them. The Holy Spirit is the marker and light to discern the good from the bad, and show positive attitudes towards the Church and another. Indeed love can be perfected if we are helpful and supportive than destroying people's progress, achievements and image.

The first time Paul identified and mentioned envy to the Corinthians Believers was when he saw the divisions in the Church with regards to the water baptism contentions. The contentions was centred on anointed personalities like Paul and Apollos and claim of allegiance and importance over one another's ministry. Hence Paul rebuked the Corinthians Believers for their state of carnality with the mention of envy besides strife

and divisions **(1 Corinthians 1:3)**. It was a reminder of their shifted focus and immaturity that made them carnal and not spiritual.

**ALL MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS LIKE PAUL MUST REBUKE THE SPIRIT OF ENVY FOR THE UNITY AND SPIRITUAL GROWN AND MATURITY OF THE CHURCH.**

What he meant was that envy makes them carnal and self – centred instead of being spiritual to promote the cause of Christ in the Church. Now in this context, Paul’s message is that the presence of envy in the Church was a sign of hatred and not love; for love does not envy. It means to say that where there is love, there is no envy but spirituality and unity. Where there is no love, carnality with envy is evident. Again it was a reminder and emphasis of Paul’s teaching on varieties of the spiritual gifts but of the same Spirit. Also it reminded them of differences in ministries but of the same Lord and working of activities by the same God. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the profit of all **(1 Corinthians 12:4 – 7)**.

**YOU DON’T GROW A CHURCH WITH ENVY BECAUSE IT IS NOT LOVE BUT HATRED. RATHER YOU GROW A CHURCH WITH DIFFERENCES IN MINISTRIES AND DIVERSITY OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE AND UNITY AS SPIRITUAL PERSONS.**

Watch out! Envy is a killer of dreams and visions. Let us read

**Genesis 4:4 – 8 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.**

The bible talks about the beautiful and wonderful family of Adam and Eve. Their two sons Cain and Abel performed sacrifices to God. Only Abel’s sacrifice was accepted because he gave the best in awe and reverence; the first born of the flock unlike Cain. In his jealousy, he murdered his brother. Indeed the end result of jealousy and envy is destruction. They were blood brothers and loving until the sin of jealousy and envy separated them.

**YOU MUST GUARD AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF ENVY AND JEALOUSY NO MATTER YOUR ANOINTING, MINISTRY AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN YOUR LIFE AND THE CHURCH FOR THE PROFIT OF ALL. FOR ACCEPTANCE BY GOD IS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO GIVE YOUR BEST ALWAYS. REJECTION BY GOD IS A WAKE – UP CALL TO DO THINGS RIGHTEOUSLY IN AWE AND REVERENCE.**

We read

**1 Samuel 18:6 – 12** Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" So Saul eyed David from that day forward. And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul.

The praises of people can make and unmake you and your contemporaries. Once you hear the victory song, be careful about pride and respect. In the case of David, his defeat of Goliath made him popular in one day and the women sang his praises more than King Saul. He attracted the anger and envy of King Saul because of the higher praise to him and not his king: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." Anger led to sadness and change of countenance and practical jealousy where he attempted to pin and kill David with a royal spear when ministering in his presence.

**PEOPLE CAN ADMIRE YOUR SUCCESS IN LIFE AND VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE MORE THAN OTHER PEOPLE. BE CAREFUL FOR THE SPIRIT OF ENVY AND JEALOUSY CAN CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS TOWARDS YOU FOR DESTRUCTIVE PURPOSE. BE WISE.**

We read

**John 3:25 – 31** Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

Now a critical look of the work of the Holy Spirit in us shows a contrasting view to the spirit of envy or jealousy. John the Baptist was the forerunner to the ministry of Jesus Christ

for the attainment of eternal salvation. Having baptized people and Jesus in the River Jordan, the Jews saw him as an acclaimed prophet whose words are to be respected and obeyed. The dispute between John's disciples and the Jews over purification was settled without any further controversy. The Holy Spirit made him speak the right words: He revealed to them about the call and ministry from heaven with greater authority and honour to speak and do divine things.

Besides, he reminded them of Jesus' baptism that He is the Christ, the anointed One and not him John the Baptist. He made a beautiful analogy of the bridegroom with his bride and the focus of attention where friends rejoice at the presence and voice of the bridegroom. Likewise, Jesus' call and ministry was of a higher call and authority than him, because He came from heaven and spoke things that He had seen, unlike him John the Baptist. Hence his divine words: He must increase, but I must decrease. This revealed perfect love in action to ensure the fulfillment of God's salvation plan for humanity through our Lord Jesus Christ. He was not envious of Jesus like Cain over Abel and king Saul over David but promoted Jesus' higher and superior messianic ministry. Hallelujah!

**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRISTIANS IS TO MAKE US APPRECIATE THE MINISTRIES AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH. THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMOTES AND DOES NOT MAKE US ENVIOUS AND JEALOUS OF THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE ALL OF HIM AND HAVE A COMMON AGENDA AND GOAL IN CHRIST. FOR MINISTRIES ARE OF THE SAME LORD AND THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE OF THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE SAME GOD WORKS IN THE DIVERSITY OF ACTIVITIES.**

If the Holy Spirit is at work in Christians, why then the envy and jealousies in the Church? How is it that the devil is able to influence Christians and pastors to fight each other in the Church? The bible records in

**James 4:1 – 4 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?**

Apostle James reveals that personal and selfish desires is the primary cause of jealousies and envy among us. Christians are to seek the cause of Christ and not a selfish cause. Any time personal and selfish ambitions take root in the Church, it distorts Christ's vision and mission. The only way to get them is to fight each other, use lies and deceits, maim, and even kill and destroy people. Indeed the strategies of this world are an affront to God in the receipt and usage of divine things.

**DO NOT ALLOW THE SEED OF PERSONAL AND SELFISH DESIRES TO BE SOWN IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES BECAUSE THEY DISTORT CHRIST'S VISION AND MISSION.**

Friendship takes many forms but all shape our habits and character for good or bad. We read

**James 4:5 & 6 – Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US IS JEALOUS FOR OUR SPIRITUAL STATE IN CHRIST AND GOD BECAUSE HIS INVESTMENTS ARE DIVINE AND RIGHTEOUS TO FULFILL CHRIST’S VISION AND MISSION FOR ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL SALVATION. HE DOES NOT WANT WORLDLY INFILTRATIONS TO CORRUPT HIS HOLY INVESTMENTS.**

IF I WERE YOU, I would rather fulfill

**Romans 12:15 – Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.**

This is the only way to express love and support to one another and not be tempted to be angry, covet and be envious and jealous in their time of blessing. Be simple and innocent and do not be envious of the blessings and prosperity of the wicked.

WHY BECAUSE OF

**Psalms 37: 1 & 2, 35 & 36 – Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb... I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a native green tree. Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.**

This is the revelation of David the Psalmist. The prosperity of evildoers and the wicked is said to be short lived. That is they cannot continue in the presence of God for long. Their end is marked with God’s judgment. Hence the righteous is warned not to be envious of the workers of sin because they cannot endure forever.

If we believe in the righteousness of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be led by the Holy Spirit and not be corrupt to pervert the holiness of the Church. We will not allow the spirit of envy to destroy Christian relationships, family relationships, and friendships.

**NO MATTER HOW SWEET THE BREAD OF SIN AND WICKEDNESS, IT ROCKS THE STOMACH FOR PAIN, SUFFERING AND DESTRUCTION. THEREFORE, BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND TRUST GOD ALL THE TIME AS A CHRISTIAN (PROVERBS 3:5 & 6). IT IS BETTER TO TRUST GOD FOR YOUR OWN BLESSING AND PROSPERITY THAN TO BE ENVIOUS IN THE PROSPERITY OF EVILDOERS AND**

## **THE WICKED. FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.**

Indeed, the most excellent way is love which makes the usages of the spiritual gifts and ministries achieve excellent, satisfying, perfect and rewarding results. Love does not envy but help and support one another to achieve Christ's mission and vision. This is the way to go as emphasized according to the gospel of Apostle Paul. If our Churches would be free from the spirit of envy, it will be a beautiful place to experience the love and power of God, and achieve greater works in the name of Jesus and leading of the Holy Spirit.

### **PRAYER**

**Thank You O God for teaching and instructing us to love one another to achieve excellent and perfect results.**

**Thank You for teaching us that love does not envy but help and support one another.**

**Thank You for reminding us that spiritual gifts are of the Holy Spirit though they vary.**

**Thank You for reminding us that ministries are different but of the Lord Jesus Christ for His mission and vision.**

**Thank You God for reminding us that God works all these activities and executing His good and righteous plans for the blessing of the Church and humanity.**

**Give us the grace to love and make the Church a spiritual house and not a place of carnality.**

**For by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we bear the fruit of love but overcome the spirit of envy in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**ENVY DESTROYS SPIRITUAL AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS; AVOID IT. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**WHY ENVY WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT DISTRIBUTES THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS HE WILLS? WHY ENVY WHEN MINISTRIES ARE DIFFERENT BUT ARE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? WHY ENVY WHEN GOD WORKS IN ALL DIVERSITIES OF ACTIVITIES? WHY ENVY WHEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFTS ARE FOR THE PROFIT OF ALL? TRULY LOVE DOES NOT ENVY BUT HELP AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LEADING US TO BE SPIRITUAL WITHOUT CARNALITY. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **LOVE DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF; SEEKS THE INTEREST OF OTHERS**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4d – Love does not parade itself**

Apostle Paul reveals that love does not brag and is not arrogant. It is not self – seeking but works for the interest of people to be Christ-like and have the endorsement of the Holy Spirit for eternal salvation. When he wrote to the Corinthians in this context, he referred to the spiritual gifts and their manifestations and usages in ministries and the Church.

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BRAG ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND BE PROUD AS IF IT IS IN YOUR POWER OR THE ONLY BELOVED OF THE LORD BUT USE THEM AS GOD INTENDED IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Those who want to be in front of others at all costs use good ways and bad ways to showcase their spiritual gifts and ministries. They are self – seeking without love for other people and don't care about their feelings and emotions, achievements and destinies in life. Their thoughts, words and works contrast with the vision and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are not led by the Holy Spirit but self – will. Usually wrong doctrines and teachings reveal that the practitioners are self – seeking oriented outside the teachings and doctrine of Christ. The bible says that God made man upright. But they have sought many schemes **(Ecclesiastes 7:29)**. In other words, man has become self – seeking without God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They parade themselves as if they have all the power to fulfill their desires and dreams. But they are wrong in their thoughts.

**PEOPLE WHO PARADE THEMSELVES ARE NOT IN THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD BECAUSE THEY DEVIATE FROM THE WORD AND WILL OF GOD.**

The strife and divisions recorded in the Church of Corinth concerning Church and Christian leaders regarding water baptism issues was an early sign of people who paraded themselves in the ministries and spiritual gifts of Paul and Apollos (**1 Corinthians 1:10 – 17**). Since these are synonymous with self – seeking and envy, it means to say that the abundance of spiritual gifts among them was abused in a paraded form. Hence Paul's show of the excellent way in love where parading the spiritual gift is to be avoided unlike seeking and serving the interests of others.

### **THE CHURCH OF CORINTH RECORDED STRIFE AND DIVISIONS WHICH CAN BE PARTLY BLAMED ON PARADING OF MINISTRIES OF PAUL AND APOLLOS.**

Learning from Paul's salutation, his credentials was his call to be an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ by the will of God. He acknowledged also the grace of God in life, ministry and the Church (**1 Corinthians 1:1 – 3**). In this obedience and acknowledgment and humility, there was no way he could parade his apostolic ministry to the detriment of the Christian faith and edification of the Church.

### **A TRUE MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER IS CALLED AND ANOINTED FOR SERVICE TO THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE, AND NOT CALLED AND ANOINTED TO HIMSELF OR HERSELF. THIS IS WHAT I CALL THE SALUTATION IDENTITY.**

Learning from Jesus, He defined the purpose of His messianic ministry as coming to serve people and not to be served, and to give His life as a ransom for many (**Matthew 20:28**).

### **WHEN THE LORD CALLS YOU IN MINISTRY, HE GIVES YOU THE MIND TO SERVE HIS INTEREST IN LOVE AGAINST SELF – INTERESTS.**

The bible says in

**Mark 1:35 – 38 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. 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."**

In this biblical story, Jesus went to a quiet place from the noisy environment to pray and be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Not only the disciples but the people in Galilee looked everywhere for Him. Earlier, Jesus had healed many people with all kinds of diseases. He could have taken advantage of the situation to make Himself popular but He was guided by His vision and mission fueled by love. Therefore he was determined to preach to other people in new places in fulfillment of divine purpose.

### **SELFLESS LOVE IS DETERMINED TO FULFILL DIVINE PURPOSE BEYOND PERSONAL AMBITIONS AND GRATIFICATION LIKE POPULARITY. YOU MUST BE**

## **MINDFUL OF VISION, MISSION AND GOALS TO ACHIEVE THEM AND NOT FALL INTO THE STATE OF STAGNATION.**

We read

**Mark 1:40 – 45 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.” Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.**

Jesus proved to a leper that one of His goals was to heal the sick in ministry. He commanded him not to publicize it but to show himself to the priests as a testimony to them. Divine protocol was broken; for divinity and earthly expectations were in sharp contrast depicting different spiritual levels. For the healed leper, he could not but spread the good news about Jesus' healing him of his leprosy. He was an outcast but Jesus made him acceptable to people. Jesus' fears were confirmed as the news of His healing made Him so popular that He had to hide Himself from the people (miracle seekers) to focus on His mission.

## **LOVE THAT PARADES ITSELF DISTRACTS AS THE DEVIL AND ENEMIES CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE TO DELAY AND DISCOURAGE YOUR MISSION. LOVE THAT IS SELFLESS AND SEEKS THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE FOCUSES ON THE MISSION UNTO COMPLETION.**

In these two examples, it is clear that Jesus did not brag about His exploits and abilities but was mission minded. Selfless and sacrificial love; the agape kind of love, reveals humility to acknowledge the sourced strength of your power and abilities. You know that it is the power of God at work in you and not self or any other power or the devil behind your works.

Is this scripture true in your life? We read

**1 Peter 4:10 & 11 – As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

The Apostle Peter teaches us the process and procedures of using our spiritual gifts for the Lord's purpose of blessing the Church. The phrase “As each one has received a gift”

suggests the receipt and impartation of spiritual gifts from God to His Church. Hence we are to use them to serve one another in love, and not make our boasts outside Christ as Believing Christians filled and led by the Holy Spirit.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES IT EASY AND POSSIBLE TO USE OUR GIFTS AND ABILITIES IN CHRISTIAN WORKS AND GLORIFY GOD ALL THE TIME. BUT TO PARADE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS IF BY YOUR OWN POWER IS TANTAMOUNT TO PRIDE AND ARROGANCE.**

If the Holy Spirit is involved, love would not claim the glory but give it to God for people to believe Him and accept His offer of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. How true is this scripture in your life and ministry?

We read

**1 Corinthians 2:4 & 5 – And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

**SELFLESS LOVE PROMOTES AND ENSURES FAITH IN THE POWER OF GOD AND NOT IN THE WISDOM OF MEN. AMEN!**

The bible tells us not to seek great things for ourselves when the Lord's judgment is upon the people and nations. To Baruch from Prophet Jeremiah, the prophetic word was judgment on His blessings to the people; to pull down and pluck up what has been planted because of the sins of His people (**Jeremiah 45:1 – 5**). Hence, there is no need to be selfish in life; no need for self – seeking but warning to the people of the Lord's judgment.

The bible says also that those who are self – seeking and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, what remains for them is indignation and wrath (**Romans 2:8**). Therefore do not be self – seeking against the word and will of God.

**SELF – SEEKING AND ENVIES HAVE AN UNBREAKABLE BOND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SERVICE. THE END RESULT IS INDIGNATION AND WRATH.**

If the Holy Spirit is not involved, your attitude, approach and style would be like the Scribes and Pharisees who loved public praises other than the praise of God.

We read

**Matthew 23:5 – 7 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'**

We read

**Luke 20:46 – “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts.”**

**IF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT INVOLVED, THIS WILL BE YOUR RELIGIOUS SONG. SELF – SEEKERS EASILY TRESPASS THE WILL OF GOD. BE CHRISTIAN.**

We read

**Psalms 115:1 – No unto us, O Lord, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.**

**BEING CLOTHED IN HUMILITY MAKES YOU GIVE THE GLORY TO GOD AND NOT ARROGATE IT YOURSELF.**

We read

**Romans 2:28 & 29 – For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**

**SEEK THE PRAISES OF GOD IN YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CHRISTIAN WORKS. FOR A TRANSFORMED PERSON IN CHRIST HAS A PURE HEART WITH WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

The Apostle James warns us about the wisdom of the earth in contrast to the wisdom of heaven. That is those who are self – seeking and envious are in danger of boasting and lying against the truth. Besides, where envy and self – seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing exist **(James 3:14 & 16)**.

As Believing Christians, Church, leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers, let us seek heavenly wisdom and not earthly wisdom. For heavenly wisdom is superior to earthly wisdom with the former honouring and glorifying God but the latter sensual and demonic in nature. Know that self – seekers corrupt their pure Christian faith with human and demonic ideologies and doctrines, and creates an environment of confusion and fertile ground for every evil thing.

**THOSE WHO SEEK THE LORD USE THEIR HEAVENLY WISDOM AND MAKE THE WORD OF GOD ACTIVE, POWERFUL AND RESULTS ORIENTED. BUT SELF – SEEKERS CANNOT BUT USE EARTHLY WISDOM TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF CONFUSION AND FERTILE GROUND FOR EVERY EVIL THING. BE WISE.**

## PRAYER

O Lord God who has blessed the Church with spiritual gifts for use in the Church to serve kingdom purposes, let grace abound upon us to use them in love, and not parade ourselves as independent of You.

We pray that we would not lose our faith in Christ but be led by Your Holy Spirit.

Make us humble and obedient to Your word, seek Your will and glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LOVE DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF WITH THE USAGE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS BECAUSE IT SEEKS THE INTEREST OF OTHERS. IF OUR FAITH IN CHRIST IS STRONG AND SEEK TO DO THE WILL OF GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, THEN WE ARE CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS AND NOT SELF – AMBASSADORS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

UNTIL OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEEDS THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES TO LOVE AND SEEK THE BLESSINGS OF OTHER PEOPLE, WE ARE NOT YET PERFECT IN CHRIST AND RESISTS THE LEADINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE IS NOT PUFFED UP; OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4e – Love is not puffed up**

The simple definition of puffed up is to swell or cause to enlarge. That is when something looks bigger than the usual. It shows a physical facial change in the life of a person in response to hearing a word, conversation, instruction, counsel and rebuke. According to the Collins English dictionary: If you describe someone as puffed up, you disapprove of them because they are very proud of themselves and think that they are very important. It is also important to note that to be puffed up is always synonymous with a situation to make its definite meaning clear and appropriate.

In the context of the Corinthians Believers, it was associated with negative reactions such as pride in response to love as the most excellent way of administering spiritual gifts in the Church. But the bible tells us not to be puffed up with pride **(Romans 11:21)**. Love should not be puffed up because it is the selfless approach to life where all your ways and actions reflect the nature of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit towards people. Being instructed in righteousness, counseled and rebuked to use spiritual gifts in love was meant to achieve the best results in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah.

### **YOU CANNOT ADMINISTER SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN LOVE WITH A PUFFED UP SPIRIT.**

Being puffed up with pride is disobedience to God's word in Christ. It is therefore of the flesh and not spiritual **(Colossians 2:18)**. It is an identity of the devil and not a trait of Jesus Christ. Paul foresaw the weaknesses of the Corinthians to re-surface especially

with the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives, ministries and the Church.

### **WHERE THERE IS A PUFFED UP SPIRIT, IT IS DISOBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD AND THERE IS NO LOVE.**

It is also a known negative response to the correction of sin in the lives of Christians who backslide. Since it is not the outward manifestation of the Holy Spirit but the sinful nature, there is no love to reveal the humility and simplicity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the sin of the Corinthian Church that Apostle Paul wrote and rebuked them, and it resulted in a positive change.

Indeed, Paul was right when he mentioned that love is not puffed up. It does not react negatively to challenge the word of God but his letters in various chapters confirmed its reoccurrences. Whenever Paul spoke the word of God to the Corinthian Believers and it rebuked them, the usual response was a puffed up attitude.

### **A PUFFED UP SPIRIT REACTS NEGATIVELY TO CHALLENGE THE WORD OF GOD.**

The unity of Paul and Apollos was necessary to teach the Corinthians to abide by the word of God and avert thinking outside scripture. In this truth, he warned and prevented them from puffing up against one another in the Church **(1 Corinthians 4:6)**.

### **THINK SCRIPTURE AND BE HUMBLE; THINK OUTSIDE SCRIPTURE AND YOU WILL SHOW A PUFFED UP ATTITUDE.**

Again Paul's letter revealed that some of the members of the Church of Corinth, likely instructors, thought that he would not return to hold them accountable for creating divisions in the Church. Hence their negative facial dispositions and reactions to the absence of Apostle Paul **(1 Corinthians 4:18)**. Furthermore, Paul's response was that he would surely return to the Church of Corinth but in response to the power of God and not the puff up spirit of the agitators **(1 Corinthians 4:19)**. Love is not puffed up because love makes you see and experience the truth and revelation of God's word, plans and purposes in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Note that those who were puffed up in the Church of Corinth were blind to truth and revelation and therefore undiscerning of the times and seasons.

### **PUFFED UP SPIRIT SPEAKS NEGATIVELY AGAINST MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS. AVOID IT. LOVE MAKES ONE REACT RIGHTEOUSLY AND POSITIVELY TO TRUTH AND REVELATION.**

Also Paul's rebuke of the leadership of the Church of Corinth for tolerating sexual immorality of a son sleeping with the father's wife, and perhaps eating Holy Communion, was because they were puffed up and did not repent and mourn **(1 Corinthians 5:1 & 2)**. According to Paul's gospel, this cannot be love because it is not puffed up but humble and submissive to correction.

## **INSENSITIVITY TO INSTRUCTION. COUNSEL AND REBUKE FOR CORRECTIONAL PURPOSE IS A PUFF UP SPIRIT AT WORK IN THE SEXUAL OFFENDER.**

In Paul's message to the Corinthians about the need for sensitivity of their conscience with regards to offered things to idols, he mentioned that worldly knowledge puffs up but love edifies **(1 Corinthians 8:1 – 3)**. Clearly academicians are a class of people whose depths of book knowledge makes them argue and analyze gospel truths, when they could have believed it in a simple way to have eternal life and lived the life of righteousness in Christ unto God.

## **WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE RESISTS GOSPEL TRUTHS AND PUFFS UP IN ANALYSIS AND ARGUMENTS. IT DOES NOT EDIFY BECAUSE THERE IS NO LOVE AND FAITH.**

These occurrences in Paul's ministry to the Corinthians clearly indicated that he was familiar with the negative reactions such as pride to his righteous instructions, counsels and rebukes. Hence the need to be watchful, prayerful and teaching of good Christian doctrines to build faith and works by the Holy Spirit.

## **THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN. THE POSSIBILITY OF REOCCURRENCES OF BAD THINGS IN THE CHURCH IS VERY HIGH UNLESS MINISTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS MAKE RIGHTEOUS INTERVENTIONS. THE PUFFED UP SPIRIT IS NOT AN ATTRIBUTE OF LOVE BUT CARNALITY. IT MUST BE UPROOTED FROM THE CHURCH BECAUSE IT IS SYNONYMOUS WITH REBELLION AND HATRED, AND NOT LOVE.**

We read

**Luke 3:19 & 20 – But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.**

The sin of pride and arrogance is commonly associated with unbelievers and sinners unlike Christians. John the Baptist confronted and rebuked Herod the tetrarch for using his position and authority as king to take his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. Herod was not repentant but proud and arrogant to the extent that he imprisoned John the Baptist for his rebuke. This was clearly a puffed up spirit associated with pride.

## **LOVE SPEAKS AGAINST EVILS AND WRONGS TO CAUSE CHANGE AND PREVENT RECURRENCE EVEN AGAINST LEADERSHIP. BUT A PROUD AND ARROGANT PERSON IN A PUFF UP SPIRIT AND ATTITUDE RESIST THE TRUTH. THE CASE STUDY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND HEROD. WHO THEN USED LOVE AS A WEAPON OF CHANGE? JOHN THE BAPTIST OR HEROD?**

When we agree with Apostle Paul that love is not puffed up, it reminds us of Jesus' words in

**John 13:34 & 35 – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

The love of God is irreplaceable because it has generation and eternal benefits to the Church. Hence Jesus by example of selfless and sacrificial show of love confidently and boldly gave the new commandment of love to His disciples. This is to ensure unity of faith and purpose as proof to the world that we are living examples of God’s love in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Church is the offspring of Christ and this new commandment to love one another replaced the law of loving only those who love you even if it causes divisions and strife.

**LOVE HAS THE POWER TO MAKE THE LIVES AND MINISTRIES OF PEOPLE BETTER WITH TIME. PRAYERS, WORD MINISTRATION, COUNSEL AND REBUKE ARE INEVITABLE BY THE LEADINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

### **IS LOVE PUFFED UP? WATCH THESE THINGS: WARNINGS**

**1// Sin causes pride – the devil’s fallen state reflects in the lives of all unrepented sinners; for they talk and show repetitive sin in pride and arrogance (Isaiah 14:12 – 16, Ezekiel 28:1 – 10, 12 – 15).**

**2// Corruption of spiritual authority (2 Samuel 15:31 & Ezekiel 28:11 - 17)**

**3// Self – glory in the usage of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and ministries – (John 2:23 - 25 & 1 Corinthians 2:4)**

**(4) Response to the applause of the people (John 2:23 – 25)**

**(5) Love for money is the root of all kinds of evil 1 Timothy 6:9 & 10 (Greed, covetousness, stealing, armed robbery, murder, social vices like fornication, adultery, prostitution, pornography, lesbianism, homosexuality and anal sex, sex with animals and demons and demonic rituals (Romans 1:18 – 32).**

**(6) Disobedience to good earthly authority and laws (Romans 13:1 – 7)**

If these sins are working in your life and ministry, do not be puffed up as if you are living for yourself; rather repent and be submissive and humble in Christ as the direction of the Holy Spirit. Submissiveness and humility ensure peace and prosperity in marriage. But pride and arrogance destroy every wonderful marriage union and relationships. Love the way of the Holy Spirit.

As Believing Christians, Church, leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers, let us be people who tremble at the hearing of the word of God to obey and not disobey (Isaiah 66:2). As Jesus said: More than human blessings are the people who hear the word of God and obey it and keep the word in their hearts (Luke 11:27 & 28).

Humble yourself like our Lord Jesus Christ for exaltation is by God and not a puff up attitude **(Philippians 2:5 – 11)**.

**LOVE IS SUBMISSIVE, HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, AND NOT PROUD AND DISOBEDIENT TO GOD'S WORD. BE WISE.**

### PRAYER

We pray O God that you give us a quiet, obedient and humble spirit to believe and accept Your word for instructional and correctional purpose in life, ministry and the Church.

With Your Holy Spirit and word, make our spirits be receptive to your truths and revelations without puff up attitudes.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE WAY WE ACCEPT AND REACT TO GOSPEL TRUTHS AND REVELATIONS AND PROPHECIES GO A LONG WAY TO SHAPE OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SERVICES. WE OVERCOME THE PUFF UP SPIRIT AND ATTITUDE IN THE NAME OF JESUS AS WE EMBRACE OBEDIENCE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH UNTO MATURITY. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST IN ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY TO THE FATHER. FOR THIS IS THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **LOVE DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY; RATHER MUTUAL RESPECT**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5a – Love does not behave rudely.**

The dictionary meaning of rudeness is ill mannered, unrefined, crude and primitive behaviour towards another person. It connotes force and aggressive behaviour through an impolite and discourteous way.

When our attitude towards parents, elderly, family members, friends, superiors, subordinates, and people in general are insulting, arrogant, shameful, and disgraceful then we are not expressing love but controlled by the spirit of rudeness. In both Godly and human relationships, one's ability to control passions is the victory for love over rudeness. It is also best expressed in the relationship of marriage.

Paul's message to the Corinthians Believers in a manly society was that love demands Christians to show respect for others and never behave in an uncivilized way. In other words, love does not behave rudely like survival of the fittest with brute force but in a civilized, polite and rational way with mutual respect. The Christian faith teaches us to have the gentleness of Christ **(2 Corinthians 10:1)**, accept and reward good behaviours but reject and punish bad behaviours in the family, and even the Church.

Therefore this message was a reminder to them about the proper usage of the spiritual gifts in the Church and towards one another. The fact that one is anointed with spiritual gifts does not mean rudeness of behaviour verbally and physically. It means to say that the Corinthians Believers were warned not to abuse their spiritual gifts and power but make them excellent, perfect, satisfying and rewarding to the Church and Kingdom of God.

## **ABUNDANCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS DOES NOT WARRANT ITS ABUSE THROUGH RUDENESS AS THE SIN OF THE FLESH.**

Earlier, Apostle Paul reminded them of their calling according to the mercies of God. That not many are called in their strength, nobility and might but God chose the foolish and base things of this world to shame the wise and the things that are mighty. Yet as despised and rejected as they were in society, God chose them to confound and make useless the strengths and trusts of people so that nobody glories in His presence **(1 Corinthians 1:26 – 28)**.

## **REMEMBER YOUR CALLING AS CHOSEN ABOVE THE WISE, RICH, NOBLE AND THE STRONG IN SOCIETY BECAUSE OF THE MERCY AND GLORY OF GOD.**

It means to say that they had been chosen by God to do His will because they believed His offer of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were not to be rude but respect one another as is of the Christian faith; fruit of gentleness **(Galatians 5:23a)**. The Holy Spirit teaches love based on mutual respect and not rudeness.

## **YOU BELIEVED IN GOD'S OFFER OF SALVATION IN CHRIST WHEN OTHERS DISBELIEVED. THEREFORE, DO NOT BE RUDE TO PEOPLE BUT GENTLENESS IN LOVE.**

In continuation, Paul reminded them of their divinity connection with God through faith in Christ Jesus, in demonstrated wisdom from God as evidenced in their righteousness, sanctification and redemption **(1 Corinthians 1:30)**. Again in this truth, they were to glory only in the Lord as children of God **(1 Corinthians 1:31)**. They were to crown their lives, ministries, spiritual gifts and Church relationships and Church work with love and not hatred.

## **YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO DISCONNECT YOURSELF FROM GOD BY BREAKING YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST. FOR IN THIS DIVINE CONNECTION IS YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION AND REDEMPTION IN LOVE. NO RUDENESS BUT LOVE IN GENTLENESS.**

It is evidently clear that Paul warned the Corinthians Believers about their state of carnality because of observed envy, strife and divisions. For in their carnality, they behaved as mere men **(1 Corinthians 3:3)**. They behaved rudely in carnality outside the parameters of love; outside the love of the Church.

## **CARNALITY BREEDS ENVY, STRIFE AND DIVISIONS AND THE PHYSICAL STRENGTH OF IT IS RUDENESS. LOVE DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY BUT RUDENESS IS CARNALITY.**

The bible says in

**Proverbs 25:28 – Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.**

**UNCONTROLLABLE ANGER OPENS THE DOOR FOR VARIETY OF SINS TO BE COMMITTED.**

**Quote of Pythagoras – No man is free who cannot command himself. If you cannot have mastery over your passions, then you are no better than a slave.**

The Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians enables us to bear the fruit of self – control (**Galatians 5:23b**). The Greek term is "egkrateia" with the meaning of having command or mastery over, control and possession of your behaviour. It is also associated with exercising power over desires to make them fit into the perfect will of God.

**IF THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES US TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF SELF – CONTROL, THEN LOVE MUST NOT BEHAVE RUDELY BUT GENTLY.**

In **Mark 9:33 – 37**, the bible talks about a dispute among the disciples over greatness. This was so strong that Jesus became aware and questioned them about it. The picture depicts heated arguments that revealed the selfish attitudes of the disciples. The expression of Jesus' love was transparent and polite to make them know the nature of God's kingdom. It is about humility and service like receipt and help to a child and the disadvantage for Jesus Christ and God, and not about positions and exerting authority associated with worldly institutions. Jesus could have been rude to them but chose to be respectful to them; since they were His disciples. Following the example of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is ever willing to use opportunities of this kind to portray love in the Church, Body of Christ and towards people with mutual respect and politeness.

**THE QUEST FOR POSITIONS IN THE CHURCH CAN OPEN THE DOOR OF RUDENESS TO SILENCE COMPETITORS; SUPERIORS AGAINST SUBORDINATES AND SOMETIMES SUBORDINATES AGAINST SUPERIORS.**

We read

**Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:39 – 43)**

A seared conscience, the sinner, cannot discern truth from error. This was the story of the two thieves crucified with Jesus on their respective wood crosses. One was rude and insulting based on condemnation but the other polite and courteous to Him based on truth

and revelation. The former was not discerning unlike the latter because of seared conscience.

**A SINNER WITH SEARED CONSCIENCE CONDEMNS EASILY AND IS RUDE TO PEOPLE EVEN CHRISTIANS AND THE INNOCENT FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE REPENTED SINNER RECEIVES HELP FROM GOD'S SPIRIT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRUTH FOR A BLESSING; RESPECT FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

The fear of God is said to be beginning of wisdom. This means that the knowledge and wisdom of God makes a person know who God is and ensures a loving and respectful relationship. Cain lacked understanding and therefore disrespected God in his response to His question about his brother Abel.

The bible records in

**Genesis 4:9 – Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brothers keeper?"**

Indeed Cain was rude for there was no love in him as a non – repented sinner. However, God's mercy and judgment prevailed over his life to make him experience life's difficulties from the presence of God.

**THE FEAR OF THE LORD MAKES US LOVE GOD UNLIKE THE INFLUENCE AND EFFECTS OF SIN IN OUR LIVES AND MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH. FOR IN CHRIST, GOD IS KNOWN COMPLETELY BUT ARROGANCE IS SINFUL.**

The response of evil for a righteous cause is discouraged by the Holy Spirit. In our human relationships and helps, sometimes, we become disappointed with the behaviours and attitudes of people towards us. Such was the story of David, Nabal and Abigail in **1 Samuel 25:1 – 44**. David and his men were good to Nabal in the wilderness because they protected their camels and sheep from thieves and attackers. But Nabal was rude and discourteous to David and his men because their relationship was not based on love. David's anger and judgment was against but Abigail's intervention saved the tensed situation.

We read

**1 Samuel 25:10 – 17 Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?" So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed**

with the supplies. Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him."

We read

**1 Samuel 25:23 – Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground.**

We read

**1 Samuel 25:32 – 35 Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. For indeed, as the Lord God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!" So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person."**

**THE SPIRIT OF NABAL IS DISRESPECTFUL AND RUDENESS BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON FRIENDSHIP OF BUSINESS ASSOCIATES AND SECURITY OF PROPERTIES WITHOUT LOVE. LOVE PROMOTES RESPECT, HONOUR, HELPS AND SUPPORTS IF IT IS DIRECTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. DO NOT DISRESPECT HELPERS IN LIFE AND MINISTRY. LOVE IS FORGIVING BECAUSE DAVID HEDED TO THE INTERVENTION OF ABIGAIL AND AVERTED BLOODSHED.**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT THRIVES ON THE AGAPE KIND OF LOVE TOWARDS FELLOW CHRISTIANS AND PEOPLE CONCERNING EVENTS AND SITUATIONS. UNLIKE THE HOLY SPIRIT, STRICT BUSINESS STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES HAVE NO SHOW OF MERCY AND COMPASSION WHEN VIOLATED BUT OFFENCES OF RUDDINESS AND DISRESPECT.**

**RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMOTE PEACE AND BLESSINGS OTHER THAN DISRESPECT, OFFENCES AND CURSES.**

Just as we don't grow a Church with envy, likewise we don't grow a Church with rudeness. Where there is love, there is care, help, support and mutual respect. Learn to overcome provocations by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

## PRAYER

Dear God, we pray that as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders, we would be filled with love to be gentle and not rude in the Church, family, marriage and society.

Help us to respond to the prompting and leading of Your Holy Spirit in Jesus' name. Amen.

NO MATTER YOUR ANOINTING LEVEL AND SOCIETAL STATUS, RUDENESS IS UNACCEPTABLE IN THE CHURCH. FOR YOU ARE TO LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY AND BE GENTLE, AND NOT BE RUDE. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

GENTLENESS IS PREFERRED TO RUDENESS IN THE CHURCH, FAMILY, MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP, ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND COMPANIES. FOR GENTLENESS IS AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE WHICH GROWS AND EXPANDS CHURCHES AND MISSIONS BUT RUDENESS KILLS THE FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND MISSIONS, AND GENERATES STRIFE AND DIVISIONS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

RUDENESS IS A WEAK PERSON'S IMITATION OF STRENGTH. **ERIC HOFFER**

## LOVE DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN BUT CHRIST'S AND PEOPLE

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5b – Love does not...seek its own**

Love is best expressed and appreciated when it is towards other people. It is not selfish but selfless and sacrificial to improve the lives of other people. The bible frowns on selfish ambitions away from the Lord's vision and mission for His Church. The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us to love our neighbours more than ourselves **(Luke 10:25 – 37)**.

The usages of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are also evidence of God's love to Christians and humanity in general. These gifts are of the Holy Spirit for the profit of all **(1 Corinthians 12:7)**. Love for Christ and people makes it achievable because it is selfless, unconditional and service in nature. Love does not seek its own but the interests of other people. In this truth, Paul warned the Corinthians Believers about having selfish ambitions in the Church. For it is an enemy against the Lord's work.

### **LOVE MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE USAGES OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS BENEFICIAL AND PROFITABLE TO ALL.**

Again, Paul informed the Corinthian Believers to choose edification of the Church and people over rights to specific things in life. Though all things were lawful for them, not all things edify **(1 Corinthians 10:23)**. In this knowledge, they were charged not to seek their own but the wellbeing of other people **(1 Corinthians 10:24)**.

### **OBEY THE WORD OF GOD TO EDIFY THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE SACRIFICIALLY OVER LAWFUL THINGS, RIGHTS, DESIRES AND TASTES. FOR A MIND THAT IS**

**DETERMINED TO EDIFY OTHER PEOPLE WILL VALUE THEM MORE THAN PERSONAL THINGS IN THEIR OWN LIVES. BE WISE.**

Selfish ambitions permeated the Church so much that even Ministers were found to preach Christ for personal gains and according to Paul, they added affliction to his chains. This was double affliction to Paul because of the negative attitude of some Ministers **(Philippians 1:16)**. But genuine Ministers preach the gospel out of love confirming Paul's apostolic mandate **(Philippians 1:17)**.

**SELFISHNESS IS CARNALITY AND NOT SPIRITUAL. HENCE SELFISH AMBITIOUS PREACHERS HAVE NO PLACE IN THE CHURCH AND KINGDOM OF GOD. BUT GENUINE PREACHERS IN TRUE SPIRITUALITY PREACH THE GOSPEL OUT OF LOVE UNTO OTHERS.**

The bible warns us against having selfish ambitions or conceit thinking that we are above other people. Let nothing be done out of selfish ambition. Be careful of high level educational status, riches, money, positions and societal accolades which have a deception of recognition and importance to people but not God. Though having ambitions are good, it must not conflict with your Christian faith and service to the Lord. It must not be absent of love meaning that you must not think only of yourself but others. That is when you have higher value of people than yourself, you will serve the interests of Christ and the Church **(Philippians 2:3)**.

**ANYTHING DONE OUT OF SELFISH AMBITION IS CONTRARY TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THEREFORE THE HOLY SPIRIT CANNOT TESTIFY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN IT. HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST EVEN AS YOU PURSUE PERSONAL AMBITIONS IN LIFE AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN. BUT FOR THE MINISTER, YOUR AMBITION IS PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND THIS IS LOVE AT WORK.**

Jesus demonstrated these gifts in the power of the Holy Spirit in His preaching, teachings, healings and casting out devils from people. Likewise Apostle Paul and all other Ministers, Church leaders and Christian leaders have made their righteous contributions. Since ministry work is about people, all that we do is for the interest and benefit of the people. Our prayers, preaching, teachings, counsels, instructions, corrections and rebukes in love produce righteous results in an excellent and perfect manner.

The bible says in

**Acts 10:38 – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**

The anointing of the Holy Spirit that was upon Jesus did not make Him sit down at one place comfortably. He received power to fulfill His messianic mission by moving from one place to the other doing good by preaching the kingdom of God, teaching righteousness,

exposing all forms of sin, evil and wickedness, healing the sick and delivering people who were under the bondage of the devil because God was with Him; agreed and approved of Him.

Likewise the anointing of the Holy Spirit enable us to do the works of Jesus and does not separate us from God. The baptism of the Holy Spirit makes us behave just like Jesus. The day that the anointing separates us from God and make us do sinful and unrighteous things in and outside the Church means that the spirit of the devil has possessed us. Clearly this cannot be the anointing of the Holy Spirit because it is not the power of God at work to magnify Christ and the Father.

**SEE THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FULFILLING CHRIST'S VISION AND MISSION; SERVICE IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD. NOT TO BE SUBJECTED TO THE WHIMS AND CAPRICES OF MANIPULATORS.**

Indeed gifts are given to people we love or like as Jesus stated in

**Luke 11:9 – 13 “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”**

According to the words of Jesus, all we need is the Holy Spirit to testify about Jesus and become a blessing to other people. If evil people are able to bless their children with gifts of houses, cars, monies and other properties, good schools and sponsor their education, then God gives the Holy Spirit, as of a better value, with eternal benefits to all who asks of Him. It means to say that Believing Christians who receive the Holy Spirit cannot keep the accompanied gifts to themselves but use them for the blessing and profit of all. Hallelujah.

**THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TOO STRONG A “SPIRITUAL KILOWATTS” TO KEEP IT IN YOUR POCKET. YOU CANNOT BUT USE IT TO SERVE CHRIST'S INTERESTS AND PURPOSES IN THE CHURCH AND KINGDOM OF GOD. AND LOVE MAKES IT BEAUTIFUL AND PERFECT.**

Talking about being members of the Body of Christ, the bible says of Believing Christians in

**Ephesians 4:7 & 8 – But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.**

Paul's message here is that the Church has received Christ's gift for service to fulfill His mission and vision. Having one spiritual gift or many of them is determined by the measure of grace released upon your life and ministry in the Church. Believing Christians are there loaded with spiritual gifts to make each one of us function effectively in the Church as part of our contribution to the Body of Christ. Hence we cannot fail God but confirm His message of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.

Now Paul revealed that the ascended Christ who was crucified and was buried in the grave but resurrected by the power of God gave gifts unto men. For He gained victory over the devil and his demons and with authority sitting by the right hand of God the Father distributed gifts to all people who believe in Him as the Christ. Hence these spiritual gifts are proof of Christ's victory, power and reign and proof of the love of God. Believers are therefore to express God's love in Christ and be led by the Holy Spirit to use these spiritual gifts to seek the interests of other members of the Church and Christ's Body and all other people. Hallelujah.

**KNOW THAT RECEIVED SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE A MEASURE OF CHRIST'S GIFTS WHICH SERVES AS PROOF OF HIS ASCENSION TO HEAVEN. THIS ACT OF GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST IS TO BE RECIPROCATED IN LOVE BY USING THESE SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE AND MAKE THEM BELIEVE AND FOCUS ON CHRIST FOR ETERNAL SALVATION, LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RECEIPT OF ETERNAL BLESSINGS AND TREASURES.**

Christians are to have the mind of Christ and be in service to the Lord Jesus Christ to achieve His mission beyond personal ambitions. When the disciples argued over who was great among them, the bible states Jesus' response in

**Mark 10:42 – 45 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**

For the bible to say that Jesus called the disciples unto Himself means that He prayerfully, thoughtfully and carefully gathered them for a divine purpose just like when He first called them to be His twelve disciples **(Luke 6:12 – 16)**. It reveals that His message to them was borne out of revelation and truth beyond the sanctity of the law.

Jesus' message emphasized on the process and procedures to greatness in the sight of God. Life is not about selfishness for greatness associated with worldly strategies like serving in the highest positions, exercising authority, and rudeness sometimes. However, it is about being like Him to serve in any good capacity as a Christian in service to God, the Church, Body of Christ and humanity.

The message revealed that greatness in Christ and before the Father is measured by one's humility and service; being a servant of all. Yet being the greatest. If Christ came to serve and not to be served, then having received His Spirit and nature, we are to serve people with the spiritual gifts and not to be served. This is what I call the paradox of greatness; how amazing.

**HAVING A SERVANT SPIRIT IS THE STEP TO GREATNESS IN CHRIST. SO ALSO IS THE USE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE PROFIT OF ALL IN LOVE. USING IT THE LORD'S WAY IS THE EVIDENCE OF LOVE BEYOND SELF – WILL TO PEOPLES BASED. THIS IS WHAT I CALL THE PARADOX OF GREATNESS; HOW AMAZING.**

It affirms the need to improve the lives of people spiritually and physically in areas of prayers, bible studies, counseling, singing, preaching, teaching, ushering, musical instrumentalists, administration, financially, helps and supports. Yes we should use our ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit to help and support one another. Earlier Paul adopted a master strategy of winning souls for the Lord when he became a servant to all; Jews, people under the law, people without the law (Gentiles), the weak and vulnerable **(1 Corinthians 9:19 – 23)**. Love is appreciable in God's sight if it makes people like Jesus Christ, populate heaven and depopulate hell. Truly, love does not seek its own but selflessly and sacrificially seeks the interests of other people.

**IN AS MUCH AS THE HOLY SPIRIT DISTRIBUTES THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH, GOD EXPECTS US TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF LOVE AND ACHIEVE EXCELLENT AND PERFECT RESULTS WHEN WE USE AND ADMINISTER THEM TO ALL. LOVE DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN BUT THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS IN CHRIST.**

The bible says in

**John 21:15 –18 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.**

Peter's leadership role was finally endorsed by Jesus before ascension to heaven. He was awakened to the prime responsibility of feeding His sheep with the green pasture of the gospel of salvation. The message in the form of three questions and answers and emphasis revealed also that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not self – seeking but serves the interests of other people. In other words, Church and Christian leaderships are to serve the people and not to be served. It is also important to note that there is no true

leadership without service to the people. For there is no leadership without people based and focused in the Christian faith, Church and Kingdom of God.

**HOW GREAT IS YOUR LOVE? IF YOU KEEP GOD'S INVESTMENTS IDLE IN YOU, THE DEVIL'S AGENDA WOULD BE ACHIEVED. IF YOU PUT THEM TO GOOD USE, GOD'S LOVE WOULD BE EXTENDED TO THEM AND HIS DIVINE AGENDA OF ETERNAL SALVATION AND WORKS WOULD BE ACHIEVED. THIS IS LOVE IN ACTION TO THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS' COMMAND.**

We read

**Hebrews 1:14 – Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**

**IF GOD CAUSES HIS HOLY ANGELS TO MINISTER TO BELIEVING CHRISTIANS AS HEIRS OF SALVATION, THEN CHRISTIANS MUST ALSO MINISTER GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PEOPLE.**

Find out what is lacking in the lives of Christians and the Church, and then fill the gaps by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The bible says in

**Acts 19: 1 – 7 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all.**

If Apostle Paul identified the lack of the Holy Spirit in the lives of twelve (12) converts of John's baptism and prayed with them to receive the Holy Spirit, then Christians should also identify and fill all the gaps in the Church and Body of Christ. This was about fulfilling his apostolic mandate to preach Christ and help new converts be baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit. This was far beyond selfish ambitions but seeking and serving the interests of the Churches and other people.

**A GOOD MINISTER OF CHRIST DOES NOT EMBRACE SELFISH AMBITION BECAUSE HE OR SHE SERVES THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BLESS PEOPLE.**

My favourite scripture in the bible is

**John 3:16 & 17 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

Truly God loved the world even before the foundations of the world. His love was however perfected when Jesus was born, fulfilled His ministry and culminated it in His death, resurrection and ascension. This joy of the LORD is evident in the lives of Christians doing the works of God in Christ before the foundations of the world (**Ephesians 2:8 – 10**). This is love in action and not just mere talk or paper work. Jesus recognized the need for love to be made practical in the lives of His disciples having set a perfect example for us.

**IF THE LOVE OF GOD MAKES US DO HIS RIGHTEOUS WORKS IN CHRIST BEFORE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD, WE CANNOT BE SELFISH BUT SELFLESS IN SEEKING THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.**

The bible says in

**John 13:34 & 35 – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

A new commandment indicates a new order and approach to Christian relationships that would make the world know that we are truly Christians who practice the Christian faith. We are to express the agape kind of love, beyond the law, which is selfless and sacrificial to make Christ known and help and support each other. In times of mistakes, sufferings and challenges in life and ministry, love is to cushion us and ensure restoration, spiritual growth, maturity and unity of the Church and Body of Christ.

**THE NEW COMMANDMENT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND MAKE THE WORLD KNOW US AS CHRIST’S DISCIPLES IS TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER IN A SACRIFICIAL WAY. SELFISH AMBITION IS NOT THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BUT FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION AS A CHURCH.**

The call of people into ministry by our Lord Jesus Christ always has a specified audience. Just as Apostle Peter’s ministry was to the Jews, likewise Apostle Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles and this reflected in their missions and scope of operations in which we are beneficiaries (**Galatians 2:7 & 8**). This reveals God’s love to save both the Jews and Gentiles. It confirms God’s determined purpose to call people into ministry for specific assignments in countries, nations, communities, organizations, institutions in different languages and local dialects. Yes people must hear and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to prove God’s love for humanity.

**MINISTRY IS ABOUT DOING THE LORD’S WORK TO BLESS PEOPLE IRRESPECTIVE OF JEWISH ORIGIN OR GENTILE ORIGIN. YOU CAN FOLLOW THE**

ORDER OF APOSTLE PETER OR THAT OF APOSTLE PAUL AS THE LORD PERMITS AND LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. WHICHEVER WAY, IT IS ABOUT CHRIST'S VISION AND MISSION, AND NOT SELFISH AMBITIONS O CHILD OF GOD.

### PRAYER

We pray O God that Your word, to love without being selfish, awakens us to do Your will in Christ other than our personal will.

Let not selfish ambitions rule our hearts and minds to belittle people but let us have the mind of Christ to value other people beyond ourselves.

Help us to not to think of ourselves more than other people because love does not seek of its own but edifies the Church and other people.

Let Your Holy Spirit remind us of the application of spiritual gifts in our Christian duties and services to other people for the profit of all.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LOVE IS THE MASTER KEY TO OPEN ALL DOORS AND GATES TO OUR MINISTRIES AND USAGES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS. ONCE LOVE DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN BUT THAT OF OTHER PEOPLE TO EDIFY THEM, WE ARE ON THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FULFILLING OUR MINISTRIES. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

LOVE IS BEST EXPRESSED IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. WHEN THIS IS ACHIEVED, LOVE FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS IS ALSO ACHIEVABLE TO PROMOTE RIGHTEOUSNESS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED; THE CHURCH (1)

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5c – Love...is not provoked**

The dictionary meaning to provoke is induced to action or anger. It means that one must be moved from a quiet and stable state to a troubled and shaky situation. Provocation is always in response to a forced change of disposition.

Also it means to stimulate or give rise to (a reaction or emotion, typically a strong or unwelcome one) in someone. It is a deliberate attempt to make someone angry or react for a different purpose.

The bible definition of “**provoke**” in a literal sense means “**to call forth**”. That is to excite or stir up, whether in a good or bad sense. We know of provocation to anger **(Deuteronomy 4:25)**. Moses' reminder of his righteous intervention to the Israelites when they were about to cross the Jordan; fasted forty days and forty nights to petition God to show mercy in place of provocation of anger because of the backsliding of the Israelites with the molding of the golden calf **(Deuteronomy 9:18)**. Prophet Ahijah revealed to king Jeroboam's wife his sin of evil and wickedness in the sight of God; going after other gods and molding images as gods to provoke Him to anger **(1 Kings 14:9, 15)**. The sins of Jerusalem linked to their tongues and doings which provoked the anger of the LORD; apparently God's judgment against them **(Isaiah 3:8)**.

**UNDER THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW, THE BREAKING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT TO WORSHIP OTHER GODS PROVOKED GOD AND ATTRACTED HIS ANGER AND JUDGMENT. BE INFORMED.**

This is the first time that Paul stated clearly that love does not provoke the Corinthians Believers to sin. It does not incite one to think, say and do evil. In other words, provocation should not come from the Church with regards to abundance and usages of spiritual gifts and ministries to save many people and achieve Christ's mission and vision. For even if we partake of food and drinks in thanksgiving to God, we must do it all to the glory of God **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**.

In this truth and revelation, we cannot be angry and be in a competitive spirit over the distribution of spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit in the Church. For its varieties is for the profit of all **(1 Corinthians 12:4 – 7, Ephesians 4:7)**. By this truth, he emphasized that the excellent way of love perfects usages of the spiritual gifts and ministries through the processes of complementary and coordination for the profit of all.

**IF THERE ARE PROVOCATIONS FROM THE CHURCH AGAINST ONE ANOTHER'S GIFT, THEN CARNALITY INSTEAD OF SPIRITUALITY IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS SPIRITUALITY, LOVE IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS CARNALITY, PROVOCATIONS ARE AT WORK. BE DISCERNING.**

Earlier, Paul had rebuked the Corinthians Believers for provoking the Lord to jealousy with the desecration of the Lord's Table; drinking the cup of the Lord and drinking the cup of demons; partake of the Lord's Table and partake also of the table of demons through idol worship **(1 Corinthians 10:21 & 22)**. This was necessitated when some of the Corinthians Believers were found to be dining with the devil through idol worship and eating food sacrificed to idols. At the same time, they partook of the Lord's Table in sin provoking the Lord Jesus Christ.

**TO PROVOKE THE LORD TO JEALOUSY BY DESECRATING THE HOLY COMMUNION IS NOT AN ACT OF LOVE. YOU CANNOT DINE WITH THE LORD AND THE DEVIL AT THE SAME TIME. BE HOLY; BE RIGHTEOUS.**

**UNDER THE NEW COVENANT, IDOL WORSHIP AND EATING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS IS STILL A SIN AGAINST GOD. FOR THE LORD IS PROVOKED TO ANGER WHEN THESE SINS ARE EVIDENT IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES AND YET WE PARTAKE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION. BE WARNED; STOP IT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.**

In this revelation, it meant that whatever the Corinthians Believers did contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ was provocation to the Lord such as idol worship and idol fellowship, contentions, strife, and divisions and they provoked the Lord to jealousy. Likewise any exaltation in the Church over the Lord Jesus Christ is a clear provocation and an act of war against God. For Christ is the Head of the Church who appoints Ministers, Church and Christian leaders to shepherd His people in righteousness and integrity of their hearts **(Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18)**. No wonder Paul questioned and provoked the Corinthians righteously whether there were stronger than the Lord **(1 Corinthians 10:22b)**.

**LOVE DOES NOT PROVOKE AND THEREFORE ANY PERSON WHO EXALTS HIMSELF OR HERSELF OR IS EXALTED ABOVE CHRIST AND GOD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH IS A CLEAR DECLARATION OF WAR. THIS IS NOTHING BUT PROVOCATION IN HATRED.**

Love does not provoke to hurt and destroy lives, spiritual gifts and unity of the Church like the way Herod was provoked to great fear with the revelation of the birth of the Messiah as king of the Jews **(Matthew 2:1 – 8)** and killing of all two year olds and below in Bethlehem **(Matthew 2:16 & 17)**; fulfilled prophecy **(Jeremiah 31:15)**. Rather, love is concerned about people and works to improve their interests. It reveals the physical and inner beauty admired and enjoyed by lovers. Here there is no provocation but love and admiration, helps and supports.

**WHEN LOVE DOES NOT PROVOKE BUT ADMIRE, HELPS AND SUPPORTS, IT IS SO BEAUTIFUL AND LOADED WITH BLESSINGS; COOPERATION AND UNITY.**

It is like the beauty and glory between the Groom, Jesus Christ, and His Bride the Church in the imagery of love between Solomon and the Shulamite woman.

We read

**Song of Solomon 1:7 – Tell me, O you whom I love, Where you feed your flock, Where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself By the flocks of your companions?**

**THIS IS LOVE FROM THE WOMAN TO HER BELOVED TO SHOW CONCERN ABOUT HIS PLACE OF WORK AND SERVICE. THE CHURCH MUST HAVE A SEEKING HEART TO KNOW THE WAYS OF THE LORD IN DEEP FELLOWSHIP.**

We read

**Song of Solomon 1:8 – 10 If you do not know, O fairest among women, Follow in the footsteps of the flock, And feed your little goats Beside the shepherds' tents. I have compared you, my love, To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots. Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, Your neck with chains of gold.**

**THIS IS LOVE FROM THE MAN TO THE BELOVED THAT HER BEAUTY SUPERSEDES THE BEST OF PHARAOH'S CHARIOTS. CHEEKS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SMILES AND NECK WITH TURNS AND MANNERISM TO REFLECT BOTH PHYSICAL AND INNER BEAUTY. LIKewise, THE LORD ADMIRES AND CHERISHES THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH AS A RESULT OF OUR FAITH IN HIM. COMPARATIVELY, NO OTHER GROUP OF PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH MEETS THIS REQUIREMENT. KNOW THIS TRUTH.**

Love does not provoke people to react negatively and sin. The thoughts and desires of righteous people and the Holy Spirit promotes love, peace, prosperity other than

provocation to anger and sin. Provocation is the act of arousing anger, emotions, passions, and unfriendly behaviour to make you think, say and do things in a sinful and evil way. It can even be in songs and writings through a subtle way such as the adaptation of a chameleon to changing colours and environment.

### **DECEPTIVE LOVE PROVOKES**

Deceptive love is hidden until it comes out openly for people to see. Yes love does not provoke and yet the prostitute Delilah provoked Samson three (3) times to have knowledge and usage of his awesome strength until she accomplished her assignment for the Philistine Generals **(Judges 16:4 – 21)**.

A case study of Ammon and his half-sister Tamar is also a deceptive love story with provocations to anger and judgment by their brother Absalom **(2 Samuel 13:1 – 39)**. Truly deceptive love seeks to destroy your anointing and stop you in your Christian faith and works by the Holy Spirit.

**GENUINE LOVE IS BEAUTIFUL AND PLAYS A MELODIOUS MUSICAL SOUND PLEASING TO THE EARS AND HEARTS. BUT DECEPTIVE LOVE ONLY LEADS TO PROVOCATIONS OF ANGER AND JUDGMENTS.**

A critical study of deceptive love between Samson and Delilah reveals four provocative areas for our understanding and preparedness to discern and overcome in life, ministry and the Church.

### **1// PROVOCATION AND RESPONSE – ENTICEMENT: WHERE LIES YOUR STRENGTH?**

We read

**Judges 16:5 & 6 – And the Lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.” So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.”**

Like the prostitute Delilah, they are male and female prostitutes, idol worshipers, friends of demons, normal friends, family members, and all manner of people hired to determine your strength area and source of strength just to make your backsliding and downfall a reality. That is why love for one another should be guided by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and leading of the Holy Spirit and the bible to escape the traps of deceptive love.

Many people are on the payroll of the devil to bring you down because your righteous works are confirming that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord, and expanding the church and the kingdom of God. Do you remember jezebel and her prophets of Baal **(1 Kings 18:19)**?

We read

**Judges 16:7 – 9 And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” So the Lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.**

The love battle begins between Samson and Delilah; for birds of the same feathers flock together. However, the whole drama was designed and engineered by God to break the bondage of the philistines. But the nature, habits and character of Samson and Delilah fitted into God’s perfect plan **(Judges 14:1 – 4)**.

Samson lied to Delilah about what would break up his strength; for tying him up with seven fresh bowstrings in his deep sleep did not work at all though provoked. For the Lord has to give you up to your enemies at the right time to fulfill His plans and purposes in life, ministry and the Church.

**IF YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS SOMEBODY OUT THERE LOOKING FOR YOUR STRENGTH AREA IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, YOU WOULD BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND WORKS. YES WE LOVE WITH OUR HEARTS AND WITH OUR HEADS AS WELL TO OVERCOME LIES AND DECEIT IN RELATIONSHIPS. BE DISCERNING AND FIT INTO THE PERFECT PLAN OF GOD.**

**2// PROVOCATION AND RESPONSE – MORE PERSISTENCE IN DECEPTION – “GIVE IT TO ME BABY”**

**Judges 16:10 – 12 Then Delilah said to Samson, “Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with.” So he said to her, “If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.**

Delilah mounted pressure on Samson to reveal his secret of physical strength and victories in battle. I believe that Delilah must have offered Samson sex to satisfy him and make him reveal his secret of strength to her. Hey the devil knows what you want in life and can bargain with you. The devil and your enemies never give up on you. If they came against you the first time, they will come against you the second time. Watch out!

Samson lied again to Delilah about what would break up his strength; for tying him up with new ropes in his deep sleep did not work at all. He remained very strong as the

anointed of the Lord though provoked. For the Lord has to give you up to your enemies at the right time to fulfill His plans and purposes in life, ministry and the Church.

**LIES AND DECEPTION GALORE OF SUGARCOATED WORDS IN LIFE. THIS CAN TAKE THE FORM OF MONEY AND CERTAIN FAVOURS. PREPARE FOR ROUND TWO OF THE DEVIL AND ENEMIES ATTACK TO WEAKEN AND OVERCOME YOU. BUT THE ANOINTING GIVES THE VICTORY OVER THEM.**

**IN TRUTH, THE BARGAINING POWER OF THE DEVIL INCREASES WITH OFFERS TO REPLACE THE ANOINTING. NO MATTER WHAT, KEEP UP YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST AS A CHILD OF GOD.**

### **3// PROVOCATION AND RESPONSE – INCREASED PERSISTENCE IN DECEPTION**

**Judges 16:13 & 14 – Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom”— So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.**

At this stage, the pressure on Samson was very great and tormenting his soul. Delilah came close to winning because Samson talked about his hair locks but in a different and deceptive way. The secret was indeed in his hair locks but not disclosed though provoked.

Lies and deception galore of sugarcoated words with both personalities at a higher level. Delilah realized that Samson lied on two occasions. Again she got lies in return of her deception and this meant that her strategies had failed miserably. For weaving the seven locks of his hair into a web of a loom in deep sleep did not work at all. He remained very strong as the anointed of the Lord when he awoke from sleep. For the Lord has to give you up to your enemies at the right time to fulfill His plans and purposes in life, ministry and the Church.

**IN LIFE, THIS CAN TAKE THE FORM OF GIVING HINTS AND CLUES TO PEOPLE WHO DISGUISE THEMSELVES TO GATHER AND ANALYZE GIVEN INFORMATION. BESIDES, BIG MATERIAL GIFTS OF CARS, LANDS, HOUSES, POSITIONS, MONEY, AND OTHER GIFTS TO MAKE US COMPROMISE OUR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. YOUR ENEMIES CAN ONLY COME SO CLOSE TO DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTH AS LONG AS YOU HAVE NOT COMPROMISED YOUR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

### **4// PROVOCATION AND RESPONSE – BREAKTHROUGH FOR DELILAH**

**Judges 16:15 – 17 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies. ” And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily**

**with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, that he told her all his heart, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.”**

Clearly, Samson underwent pestering from Delilah for many days until he succumbed to her pressures in the name of love and trust. Provocations pestering with sweet romantic words over days is like forty days rainfall in Noah’s generation with the power to flood areas of life and breakdown all strongholds.

The secret was revealed that no razor had touched Samson’s hair from birth because he was a Nazirite to God from birth. If his hair was cut, he would be weak like any ordinary man. In other words, he was a prophetic child with a prophetic destiny to save the Israelites from the bondage of their enemies.

Who knows? More caressing and stimulation of sex organs and perhaps one long crazy sex with multiple orgasm broke the defense of Samson. She made him reveal his strength that was a secret over a period of time; the appointed time. This must have been the last sex reward of Delilah to Samson because mission was accomplished. Wow was this love at work? Truly sex here was no longer a reward of love but a weapon of destruction.

Sometimes the soothing words of a lover or under the influence of alcohol when drunk or receiving great help in times of great need can be used by enemies and friends to squeeze out secret information from you knowingly or unknowingly. Watch out!

**DELILAH’S FINAL STRATEGY WAS SO POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE BECAUSE IT WAS BASED ON LOVE; FOR SHE KNEW THAT SAMSON LOVED HER. BUT LOVE DOES NOT PROVOKE. BETRAYAL OF TRUST IN THE NAME OF LOVE IS EASILY ACHIEVABLE. WATCH OUT FOR OTHER INFLUENCES LIKE ALCOHOL AND TRUSTED PEOPLE AS CONFIDANTS; FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS, WORK COLLEAGUES AND IN CASES PASTORS. BUT IF YOU ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT; WHY NOT.**

**BEWARE, THE DEVIL KNOWS YOUR PLEASURABLE AREAS IN LIFE. BEWARE OF WORLDLY OFFERS BY THE DEVIL AND ENEMIES TO IDENTIFY DIVINE STRENGTH AND WISDOM, AND HAS THE AGENDA TO BREAK UP THE ANOINTING. THE MORE PRESSURES COME FROM YOUR LOVER TO ENTICE YOU IF HE/SHE IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEVIL. MONEY, PROPERTIES, POSITIONS AND SEX ARE THE DEVIL’S WEAPONS TO LURE AND FORCE SOME CHRISTIANS TO COMPROMISE THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRINCIPLES.**

We read

**Judges 16:18 – 22 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the Lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart.” So the Lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the**

money in their hand. Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” So he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison. However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

Don't underestimate the power of a woman to discern the heart of a man. Delilah managed to squeeze up all the secret information about Samson's strength and gave it all to the lords of the Philistines. They came with “big money” that can make you a billionaire in today's money currency. Now Delilah put up her best show and performance romantically and seductively and made Samson sleep on her tantalizing and glowing knees. Who knows? Hot sex rounds must have taken place to satisfy Samson and caused him to sleep as a tired person.

This time round, when Samson's hair was cut, the Spirit of the LORD departed from him and he lost the anointing; strength. It's amazing how the barber did not kill Samson in his sleep but patiently cut off his hair of dreadlocks. I tell you the truth that the devil and your enemies are not only interested in your death but the secret of your anointing to win the battle of faith in Christ. Never trust the devil and his demons and enemies even if they do not kill you when you fall into their trap. His evil nature remain the same.

Samson shook himself as usual from sleep when Delilah shouted that the Philistines were present to attack him. For the first time in his life, he felt weak as a normal person because the LORD had left him. This is how the Philistines managed to overpower Samson and bound him up with iron and fetters like a prisoner of war. For Delilah's provocation paid off to reveal deep secrets about himself.

The devil and your enemies can enter easily into your life and ministry if you permit them through compromise, unfaithfulness and worldly living. Do not reveal God's plans and promises to them; for they seek to know and strategize with their friends against their fulfillment. Don't let them take the place of spiritual activities that strengthen your Christian faith and works by the Holy Spirit. Yes the time of prayer and sharing the word of God; the gospel, should not be taken over by even family members and friends.

**NO MATTER YOUR ANOINTING LEVEL, IF YOU COMPROMISE IN THE THINGS THAT STRENGTHEN YOU IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, YOU ARE BOUND TO BE WEAK AND OVERPOWERED. IF DELILAH'S PROVOCATIONS OVERCAME SAMSON, THEN YOU CAN ALSO BE VULNERABLE. WATCH OUT!**

When Jesus was busy preaching, his mother and brothers wanted his attention at the same time.

We read

**Matthew 12:46 – 50 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”**

Know that family interferences are not to be tolerated in ministry. This is not about family visits to the home outside ministrations times but putting aside ministry and preaching appointments for the attention of your family. Provocations of this kind to mess up family relationships should be averted in the name of love. Since provocations are usually deliberate decisions and actions, it means that they can be averted when the Holy Spirit leads us.

**BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OVERCOME PROVOCATIONS OF THIS KIND IN LIFE AND MINISTRY LIKE JESUS CHRIST. KNOW THAT LOVE DOES NOT PROVOKE, ENCOURAGES AND CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE TO INCITE AND AROUSE PEOPLE TO BE ANGRY OR RUSH INTO SIN. BE WISE.**

### PRAYER

We thank You O God for the power of Your word and Holy Spirit to overcome temptations in our lives, ministries and the Church.

We pray that provocations to anger and sin will not emanate from the Church because of envy and selfish ambitions and interests.

Help us to overcome all these temptations and make the Church a better place to love, help and support one another even with the abundance and manifestations of ministries from the Lord and spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Help us to overcome the provocations of Delilah in the Church through discernment and love to be one another's keeper.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**PROVOCATIONS TO ANGER OF THE WORKS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE NOT ACTS OF LOVE; FOR LOVE IS NOT PROVOCATIVE IN NATURE.  
NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**TO BE PROVOCATIVE IS CARNALITY. DECEPTIVE LOVE IS ANTI-PROGRESS IN NATURE. TO BE LOVING IS SPIRITUAL. AGAPE LOVE OVERCOMES ALL PROVOCATIVE TEMPTATIONS AND MAKES ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL IN OUR LIVES, MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED; THE CHURCH (2)

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5c – Love...is not provoked**

The dictionary meaning to provoke is induced to action or anger. It means that one must be moved from a quiet and stable state to a troubled and shaky situation. Provocation is always in response to a forced change of disposition.

Also it means to stimulate or give rise to (a reaction or emotion, typically a strong or unwelcome one) in someone. It is a deliberate attempt to make someone angry or react for a different purpose.

The bible definition of “**provoke**” in a literal sense means “**to call forth**”. That is to excite or stir up, whether in a good or bad sense. We know of provocation to anger **(Deuteronomy 4:25)**. Moses' reminder of his righteous intervention to the Israelites when they were about to cross the Jordan; fasted forty days and forty nights to petition God to show mercy in place of provocation of anger because of the backsliding of the Israelites with the molding of the golden calf **(Deuteronomy 9:18)**. Prophet Ahijah revealed to king Jeroboam's wife his sin of evil and wickedness in the sight of God; going after other gods and molding images as gods to provoke Him to anger **(1 Kings 14:9, 15)**. The sins of Jerusalem linked to their tongues and doings which provoked the anger of the LORD; apparently God's judgment against them **(Isaiah 3:8)**.

**UNDER THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW, THE BREAKING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT TO WORSHIP OTHER GODS PROVOKED GOD AND ATTRACTED HIS ANGER AND JUDGMENT. BE INFORMED.**

This is the first time that Paul stated clearly that love does not provoke the Corinthians Believers to sin. It does not incite one to think, say and do evil. In other words, provocation should not come from the Church with regards to abundance and usages of spiritual gifts and ministries to save many people and achieve Christ's mission and vision. For even if we partake of food and drinks in thanksgiving to God, we must do it all to the glory of God **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**.

In this truth and revelation, we cannot be angry and be in a competitive spirit over the distribution of spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit in the Church. For its varieties is for the profit of all **(1 Corinthians 12:4 – 7, Ephesians 4:7)**. By this truth, he emphasized that the excellent way of love perfects usages of the spiritual gifts and ministries through the processes of complementary and coordination for the profit of all.

**IF THERE ARE PROVOCATIONS FROM THE CHURCH AGAINST ONE ANOTHER'S GIFT, THEN CARNALITY INSTEAD OF SPIRITUALITY IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS SPIRITUALITY, LOVE IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS CARNALITY, PROVOCATIONS ARE AT WORK. BE DISCERNING.**

Earlier, Paul had rebuked the Corinthians Believers for provoking the Lord to jealousy with the desecration of the Lord's Table; drinking the cup of the Lord and drinking the cup of demons; partake of the Lord's Table and partake also of the table of demons through idol worship **(1 Corinthians 10:21 & 22)**. This was necessitated when some of the Corinthians Believers were found to be dining with the devil through idol worship and eating food sacrificed to idols. At the same time, they partook of the Lord's Table in sin provoking the Lord Jesus Christ.

**TO PROVOKE THE LORD TO JEALOUSY BY DESECRATING THE HOLY COMMUNION IS NOT AN ACT OF LOVE. YOU CANNOT DINE WITH THE LORD AND THE DEVIL AT THE SAME TIME. BE HOLY; BE RIGHTEOUS.**

**UNDER THE NEW COVENANT, IDOL WORSHIP AND EATING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS IS STILL A SIN AGAINST GOD. FOR THE LORD IS PROVOKED TO ANGER WHEN THESE SINS ARE EVIDENT IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES AND YET WE PARTAKE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION. BE WARNED; STOP IT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.**

In this revelation, it meant that whatever the Corinthians Believers did contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ was provocation to the Lord such as idol worship and idol fellowship, contentions, strife, and divisions and they provoked the Lord to jealousy. Likewise any exaltation in the Church over the Lord Jesus Christ is a clear provocation and an act of war against God. For Christ is the Head of the Church who appoints Ministers, Church and Christian leaders to shepherd His people in righteousness and integrity of their hearts **(Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18)**. No wonder Paul questioned and provoked the Corinthians righteously whether there were stronger than the Lord **(1 Corinthians 10:22b)**.

**LOVE DOES NOT PROVOKE AND THEREFORE ANY PERSON WHO EXALTS HIMSELF OR HERSELF OR IS EXALTED ABOVE CHRIST AND GOD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH IS A CLEAR DECLARATION OF WAR. THIS IS NOTHING BUT PROVOCATION IN HATRED.**

Love does not provoke to hurt and destroy lives, spiritual gifts and unity of the Church like the way Herod was provoked to great fear with the revelation of the birth of the Messiah as king of the Jews **(Matthew 2:1 – 8)** and killing of all two year olds and below in Bethlehem **(Matthew 2:16 & 17)**; fulfilled prophecy **(Jeremiah 31:15)**. Rather, love is concerned about people and works to improve their interests. It reveals the physical and inner beauty admired and enjoyed by lovers. Here there is no provocation but love and admiration, helps and supports.

**WHEN LOVE DOES NOT PROVOKE BUT ADMIRE, HELPS AND SUPPORTS, IT IS SO BEAUTIFUL AND LOADED WITH BLESSINGS; COOPERATION AND UNITY.**

Love does not provoke. Rather, love is concerned about people and works to improve their interests. It reveals the physical and inner beauty admired and enjoyed by lovers. Here there is no provocation but love and admiration.

**WIVES OF ELKANAH: PENINNAH VERSES HANNAH**

The love song between Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah, had a sweet melodious sound of provisions, care and protection. In times of offering, he gave gifts to Peninnah and all her children. For Hannah, she received a double portion of the gifts because he loved her despite her barrenness.

We read

**1 Samuel 1:5 – 7 But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb. And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.**

**LOVE IN MARRIAGE IS THE BACKBONE OF THE COUPLES' RELATIONSHIP AS BETWEEN ELKANAH AND HANNAH. LACKS IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH CANNOT SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.**

Hannah went through a state of irritation, torment and instability of mind because of consistent provocations from her rival Peninnah. These provocations were in two fold. Hannah was barren; childless. Hannah was provoked consistently year by year at the time of sacrifice. Since love does not provoke, the actions of Peninnah cannot be said to be love but hatred based on rivalry and attention. This deepened Hannah's need for a child and made her cry to the LORD at the Shiloh temple to save her from the taunt of her rival Peninnah. The devil likes provoking and harassing children of God to take their peace

and joy from them. This explains why all the years of no child, Peninnah consistently provoked Hannah. It stopped only when God answered Hannah's desire with the birth of Samuel and eventually the birth of seven sons. Yet Hannah believed in God as the One to change her story.

### **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TORMENT OF HANNAH WAS EQUIVALENT TO THE NUMBER OF PROVOCATIONS FROM HER RIVAL PENNINAH.**

This is what the bible says:

**Are not mockers with me? And does not my eye dwell on their provocation? (Job 17:2)**

Job's prayer to God for relief from the laughter, insults, accusations and mockery of his friends and enemies was necessary because He believed in God even in his sorrowful moments in life. Besides, mockers are people who tease, laugh, and say nasty things to you in a scornful or contemptuous way. When they are close to you or around you, be ready for provocations. Peninnah was a mocker and Hannah knew it. This was part of their rivalry where one's weakness was taken advantage by the other person.

### **THE SPIRIT OF MOCKERY IS ACTIVE IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF COMPETITION AND RIVALRY. PRAYERS AND THE WORD OF GOD ARE FORMIDABLE AND PROVEN SPIRITUAL WEAPONS TO KEEP YOUR MIND STRAIGHT IN CHRIST AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER.**

You may have a need like Hannah with mockers near and far, and around you. It can be a physical need for a child, husband or wife, job, promotion, contract, money, accommodation. If you will be faithful in your Christian faith and continuously pray to God, that needed answer and blessing would be received in the name of Jesus. I pray that God surprises you with a mega blessing. Amen in Jesus' name.

You may have a spiritual need of God's favour and gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life or ministry or both. If the Holy Spirit is at work in you as a faithful Christian, God can increase you and the Church to become fruitful like other Churches. Be prayerful, obedient, faithful, loving, caring and diligent by the Holy Spirit.

### **THE SPIRIT OF PENINNAH CAN WORK EASILY IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO DO NOT LOVE YOU AND HAVE THE BLESSINGS AND THINGS LACKING IN YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY. IT IS MORE EFFECTIVE IN RIVALS AT ALL LEVELS IN LIFE. WHERE THE AGAPE KIND OF LOVE IS NOT THERE, EVEN PASTORS OF BIG CHURCHES CAN PROVOKE FELLOW PASTORS WITH SMALL CHURCHES TO MAKE THEM LOOK NOT ANOINTED AND FAVOURED BY GOD.**

**LIKewise PASTORS OF SMALL CHURCHES CAN EASILY ACCUSE PASTORS OF BIG CHURCHES FOR USING DEMONIC, MATERIAL AND OTHER WORLDLY STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT PEOPLE INSTEAD OF THE ANOINTING.**

**LIKE DR. LAWRENCE TETTEH, GHANA WILL SAY: THIS NONSENSE MUST STOP. THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT PROVOKE CHRISTIANS TO BE ANGRY AND HAVE NEGATIVE REACTIONS TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER. RATHER, HE ENCOURAGES LOVE, CARE, SUPPORTS AND UNITY IN THE CHURCHES AND BODY OF CHRIST.**

We read

**Philippians 4:6 & 7 – Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

This scripture teaches the Church to use inevitable anxious moments in life, ministry and the Church to pray to God because He is able to change our stories for blessings. Therefore in prayer and supplication and with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. Yes we can easily pray all kinds of prayers and make supplications but it takes another level of grace to offer thanksgiving to God when we are being mocked and provoked to anger and sin. Mockers will always be around us to dampen our spirits but prayer makes our faith in Christ and trust in God strong and rewarding.

We have the assurance of being rewarded with the peace of God for He is our peace; Jehovah Shalom. Now the peace of God quietens our minds beyond human understanding. Here we stop lamenting and complaining to people even to the amazement of our enemies and mockers. We perform our normal chores as if we have all the things we need in life, ministry and the Church. We open up to all people and say it is well and we are blessed when people ask us about our feelings for the day. In this state, the bible tells us that the peace of God will guide our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Our faith in Christ makes the peace of God work in our hearts and minds to maintain our spiritual and physical balance and equilibrium as Believing Christians. Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers. God protects our minds from negative thoughts and influences that mitigate against our Christian faith because He loves us.

**GOD HAS GIVEN HIS PEACE TO GUARD OUR HEARTS AND MINDS; PREVENT OR REPLACE WORRIES AND NOT BE UNDER THE BONDAGE OF THE DEVIL. THEREFORE BE PRAYERFUL AND FAITHFUL TO GOD AS A CHRISTIAN EVEN IN THE MIDST OF PROVOCATIONS.**

In the spirit of love, pray for all people who suffer mockery and provocations in the hands of enemies to have the peace of God. This is far better than joining the band or squad of mockers to provoke people in need of certain blessings. Truly, love is not provoked to sin and therefore prayers make the Holy Spirit lead us to make righteous decisions.

**WHERE THERE IS LOVE, YOU WILL FIND PRAYERS AT WORK AND NOT MOCKERY AND PROVOCATIONS. I TELL YOU THE TRUTH THAT WHEN YOU ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRIST, YOU CANNOT PRAY PEOPLE AND MOCK THEM AT THE SAME TIME. BE WISE.**

## PRAYER

Dear God, give us Your grace to love and pray in challenging times of our lives, ministries and the Church.

Help us not to join the band of mockers like Peninnah and Job's friends, and make provocative statements to dampen the spirits of people.

Let Your Holy Spirit lead us to pray and have Your peace guide our hearts and minds like Hannah.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WHEN THE DEVIL ENTERS INTO THE CHURCH, HE SEEKS TO STEAL, KILL AND DESTROY. LIKEWISE MOCKERS PROVOKE PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH TO DISCOURAGE, SIN AND BACKSLIDE BUT DISCERNING CHRISTIANS PRAY TO HAVE THE PEACE OF GOD AND STAY OUT OF TROUBLED HEARTS AND MINDS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

MOCKERY AND PROVOCATIONS ARE AS REAL IN THE CHURCH AS IT IS IN THE WORLD. BUT WE HAVE THE SPIRITUAL WEAPONS OF PRAYERS, PETITIONS, AND REQUESTS TO INVITE GOD'S PEACE FOR THE PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS. FOR LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED TO ANGER AND SIN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RIGHTEOUS WORKS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED; THE CHURCH (3)

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

Love does not provoke people to react negatively and sin. The thoughts and desires of righteous people and the Holy Spirit promotes love, peace, prosperity other than provocation to anger and sin. Provocation is the act of arousing anger, emotions, passions, and unfriendly behaviour to make you think, say and do things in a sinful and evil way. It can take the form of religious, responsibility and intelligent questions through a subtle way such as the adaptation of a chameleon to changing colours and environment.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5c – Love...is not provoked**

The dictionary meaning to provoke is induced to action or anger. It means that one must be moved from a quiet and stable state to a troubled and shaky situation. Provocation is always in response to a forced change of disposition.

Also it means to stimulate or give rise to (a reaction or emotion, typically a strong or unwelcome one) in someone. It is a deliberate attempt to make someone angry or react for a different purpose.

The bible definition of provoke in a literal sense means **“to call forth”**. That is to excite or stir up, whether in a good or bad sense. We know of provocation to anger **(Deuteronomy 4:25)**. Moses fasted forty days and forty nights to petition God to show mercy in place of provocation of anger because of the backsliding of the Israelites with the molding of the golden calf **(Deuteronomy 9:18)**. Prophet Ahijah revealed to king Jeroboam's wife his sin of evil and wickedness in the sight of God; going after other gods and molding images as gods to provoke Him to anger **(1 Kings 14:9, 15)**. The sins of Jerusalem linked to their tongues and doings which provoked the anger of the LORD; apparently God's judgment against them **(Isaiah 3:8)**.

## **UNDER THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW, THE BREAKING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT ATTRACTED GOD'S ANGER AND JUDGMENT. BE INFORMED.**

In this context, Paul used the phrase to depict a negative perspective of life. Therefore provoked love should not come from the Church with regards to abundance and usages of spiritual gifts and ministries to save many people **(1 Corinthians 10:31)**. We cannot be angry over the distributions of spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. For its varieties is also for the profit of all **(1 Corinthians 12:4 & 5, Ephesians 4:7)**.

**IF THERE ARE PROVOCATIONS FROM THE CHURCH AGAINST ONE OTHER'S GIFTS, THEN CARNALITY INSTEAD OF SPIRITUALITY IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS SPIRITUALITY, LOVE IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS CARNALITY, PROVOCATIONS ARE AT WORK. BE DISCERNING.**

### **FOUR (4) CONSECUTIVE PROVOCATIONS OF JESUS**

Jesus went through four (4) consecutive provocations intended to make Him lose focus and make Him unpopular among the religious leaders and groups in His messianic ministry.

#### **1// PROVOCATION – CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS; AUTHORITY QUESTIONED**

**Matthew 21:23 – 27** Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?” But Jesus answered and said to them, “I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus and said, “We do not know.” And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Jesus had just performed an amazing miracle of removing money changers from the temple (**HOUSE CLEANING**). His authority was questioned during teaching by the Chief priests and Elders who were jealous and envious of Him and therefore provoked Him to anger. The Holy Spirit must have directed Jesus to turn the situation round and battle them about authority in relation and comparison to John the Baptist's authoritative ministry of water baptism. The gift of word of wisdom and the gift of discerning spirits manifested in Jesus' response to them.

This revealed the corrupt hearts and minds of these religious authorities. Love was not at work in them but hatred. Since they could not answer Jesus whether John's baptism was heavenly or earthly, Godly or ungodly, because of unbelief, fear and hypocritical living, their provocation failed and He was strengthened in His messianic mission.

Earlier Paul had stated that his ministry words were not of human wisdom but what the Holy Spirit taught them. He compared spiritual things with the spiritual to the Corinthians; speaking spiritual things to spiritual people **(1 Corinthians 2:13)**. Truly those who are filled, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit preach, teach and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ comparing spiritual things with the spiritual.

**FOLLOWING THE LAW WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS DEATH TO THE LIFE AND WORKS OF GOD. THE BEST ANTIDOTE TO PROVOCATIONS FROM THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IS THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. PRAYERS AND FAITH ARE NECESSITIES TO OVERCOME THEM. SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE BEST EXPLAINED USING RELATED SPIRITUAL THINGS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

## **2// PROVOCATION – CONFLICT WITH PHARISEES AND HERODIANS; TRAPPED WORDS?**

**Matthew 22:15 – 22 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”**

The plan of the Pharisees was to trap Jesus in His words that conflict with state economy and state security. They wanted an occasion to pin Jesus to the wall and stop Him in His messianic ministry. Therefore the combine forces of the Pharisees and the Herodians questioned Jesus in a very subtle way. First, they praised Him as a good Teacher of the word with deep knowledge and insight about the scriptures. Second, they questioned Him whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

The bible says that Jesus perceived their wickedness for He discerned that they wanted trap Him in His words and make Him an enemy of the state. They wanted to use state power to prosecute Him. Physically, the Pharisees looked innocent and interested in the ministry of Jesus but inwardly they were like predators looking for opportunities to make Jesus fumble in words and use them against Him. The provocation was in the form of payment of taxes. The Pharisees thought that they could make Jesus unpopular with the Roman Authorities. They wanted to cut short His messianic ministry.

However, the Holy Spirit gave Jesus wisdom to ask for a denarii to demonstrate the Christian’s responsibility the state and to God; making state and Christian responsibilities a reality. Hence perform your civic responsibilities and vote in elections to elected good leaders, and also perform your Christian responsibilities to expression faith in Christ and

having the Holy Spirit in you in worshiping God. This brings to light also state and Church relationship to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When the Pharisees and the Herodians heard the answer of Jesus to pay taxes to Caesar as civic responsibility and worship God as the Creator and personal relationship and belief in Him, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

**WORDS ARE POWERFUL WITH MEMORIES; YOUR ENEMIES ARE LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAP YOU IN THEM. CREATE A BEAUTIFUL BALANCE BETWEEN SPEAKING FOR AND AGAINST STATE POLICIES AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

**THE CHRISTIAN MUST SPEAK BY THE WISDOM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ENCOURAGE STATE BUILDING IN DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY, PEACE AND ORDER, AND POLICIES THAT INCREASES THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE PEOPLE AND ALSO BOOSTS LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMAGES.**

**KNOW WHEN AND WHERE TO SPEAK WISELY WHEN THE LAWS OF THE STATE ARE NON – CHRISTIAN AND PORTRAYS A NEGATIVE CULTURE OF THE WORLD LIKE LEGAL ENDORSEMENT OF PROSTITUTION AND SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGE LIKE HOMOSEXUALS AND LESBIANS.**

### **3// PROVOCATION – CONFLICT WITH SADDUCEES; THE SUBJECT OF RESURRECTION**

**Matthew 22:23 – 33 The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.” Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’ ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.**

The provocation of the Sadducees to make Jesus offend the religious was the subject of resurrection from the dead; a clear disbelief by the Sadducees unlike the Pharisees. Therefore they wanted Jesus to state His position on this matter before they could believe in Him and perhaps support Him. But this was not love at work but hatred for Him because of His words and works.

The story of a woman having seven husbands in life because the sixth husband died just like the other five was the measure of their test to Jesus. Eventually the seventh husband died and the woman in question also died. The big question was who was going to be the husband of the woman if there is the resurrection of the dead?

Truly, ancient tradition allowed a man to marry his deceased brother's wife and therefore both the Sadducees and Jesus had positions on this matter. For the former, they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead but the latter believed in the resurrection of the dead. Who was to be considered the husband of the woman in eternity?

The Holy Spirit directed Jesus to use this opportunity to explain spiritual truths and principles to break the strongholds of the devil in the lives of the Sadducees. He made it plain that there is resurrection of the dead and that all Believers; the Christians would become like angels of God in heaven and would not be subject to human standards, traditions, cultures and laws.

The Christian faith believes in the resurrection of the dead to be judged for good or bad lifestyles as Christians or sinners on earth. When you are provoked with human standards, negative traditions and cultures, pray for the Holy Spirit to use you to explain spiritual truths and serve as knowledge for change or warning for change or judgment.

**KNOWING THE EVIL INTENTIONS OF YOUR ENEMIES IS A FORM OF PROVOCATION TO REACT IN ANGER AND SILENCE THEM RIGHTEOUSLY OR WICKEDLY. USING THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD TO TEMPT THE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER IS A CLEAR ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT YOUR NAME AND MINISTRY, AND MAKE YOUR DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWERS LOSE TRUST IN YOU AND AT MOST ABANDON YOU. BE DISCERNING; BE WATCHFUL.**

#### **4// PROVOCATION – "COME BACK PHARISEES' SPIRIT" AND LAWYERS; THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**

**Matthew 22:34 – 40 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**

These Pharisees were more determined than the other religious sects to accomplish their assignment to stop Jesus because all previous efforts had failed. They gathered together again with an evil agenda to silence Jesus and they used a prominent lawyer to question Him about the greatest commandment in the law. For them, this was necessary to confirm their fears of Jesus' deviation from the law. Clearly this was not love at work but hatred.

Jesus quoted the Old Testament scripture in the Shema which is about one's confession of faith to God **(Deuteronomy 6:4 & 5, 11:13 – 21)** to answer the Pharisees since they were well vexed in the Law.

The Holy Spirit made Jesus use this opportunity to affirm their faith and trust in God first. Also they were to believe Him as One from God to preach and demonstrate practically the gospel of salvation. Second, we are to demonstrate God's love to people considered as neighbours.

Truly love for God and humanity is the work of God's Spirit throughout the generations of the Prophets and the Law. The revelation of Jesus is to show that our relationships with God must be based on love revealed in Him towards humanity.

**FOR EVERY PROVOCATION ABOUT YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVEAL GOD'S TRUTH IN CHRIST TO THE PEOPLE. WITH JESUS' PROVOCATION FROM THE PHARISEES AGAIN, IT REVEALED THAT LOVING GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE BEING MUST HAVE A RIGHTEOUS AND ETERNAL INFLUENCE ON HUMANITY AT ALL FACETS OF LIFE. IT IS ABOUT PRACTICING YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH BEYOND KNOWLEDGE AND THEORY LEVELS.**

#### **4// PROVOCATION – ACCUSED OF USING THE DEVIL'S SPIRIT IN MINISTRY WORK**

The worst form of provocation is to attribute your Christian faith and works to the devil and human standards other than the love for God. Jesus was accused of using the demonic spirit of Beelzebub to cast out devils from people. But His reply was that every kingdom or city divided against itself shall fall even if it is Satan himself.

Also Jesus revealed that He was not the first Person to cast out devils in Israel as known to the children of Israel. Hence the children of Israel would be their judges for their error in judgment. More importantly, Jesus stated that if He cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God had come to them in power **(Matthew 12:25 – 28)**. By this truth, Jesus meant the presence of God and manifestation of His kingdom among them.

It reveals that those Pharisees blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. Truly to deny the works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit and attribute it purposely to the spirit of the devil is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and would not be forgiven **(Matthew 12:31)**. Only repentance from sin and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ to have the Holy Spirit can save you eternally and make you appreciate eternal works by the Holy Spirit.

This kind of provocation is meant to discourage your passion, distract and stop you in your mission. You will also observe it in people who have a bad and negative perception about other people. They think that you don't deserve the spiritual gifts like other people because of societal status, family background, poverty, no or low academic certificate, and stigmatization.

Provocation to make our Christian faith and works worldly and have the form of human or demonic rules should be stopped with God's love in Christ by the Holy Spirit. In truth the Holy Spirit is our Helper to prove that our Christian faith and works are based on love.

We read

**Proverbs 26:18 & 19 – Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, Is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, “I was only joking!”**

Provocation has a hidden agenda to deceive you from the cause and direction of Christ to self and the devil. Just as a mad man does things in a state of confusion without knowing the harm caused, likewise demonic and human deceptions produce evil results even with generational consequences. Indeed "I was only joking" with "words of lies and deception" has made life and situations difficult for people and cost them their good reputation. Some women, girls, men and boys lost their virginities; or trapped into prostitution; monies have been misdirected; lost jobs, travelling and job seeking opportunities found to be false, broken marriages, stolen documents and contracts, transferred properties through falsified signatures, people are wrongly in prisons, all because of lies and deceptions of people who said they were just joking.

Following the example of Jesus Christ and righteous Ministers like Paul to overcome provocations is the way of righteousness by the Holy Spirit **(1 Corinthians 11:1)**. Therefore let us not allow provocations to munch and leave us in a state of regrets and hopelessness. If our enemies cannot love us, we have the Holy Spirit to love them in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ **(Matthew 5:44 – 48)**.

Later Paul laid emphasis on the righteous position of the Church in his second epistle to the Church in Corinth that they could not do anything against the truth but for the truth **(2 Corinthians 13:8)**. Yes we cannot but bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit in and outside the Church.

## **PRAYER**

**Our All Knowing and All Powerful God, we pray to overcome all forms of provocations against our Christian faith; authority, words, resurrection, hatred, and accusation of works by the spirit of the devil and the religious spirit that makes us apply rules and regulations without the love of Christ.**

**In our Christian faith, Christian relationships, ministries, Church works and services, help us not to be agents of provocations against the Ministers, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Believing Christians.**

**Help us to follow the examples of Christ and all Genuine Ministers like Paul and Peter to show forth love in all relationships, even under provocations, to achieve excellent and perfect results.**

With the leading and guidance of Your Holy Spirit, we pray to overcome and win the battle of faith in the name of Jesus. Amen.

A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT IS PROVOCATIVE IN NATURE BUT BRINGS UP THE WISDOM AND POWER OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ALL BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS. TRULY, LOVE IS THE KEY TO UNLOCK CLOSED DOORS EVEN THROUGH PROVOCATIONS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT IS A STRONGHOLD ENEMY OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY WORK AND MANIFESTATIONS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS. BUT THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD IS STRONGER TO OVERCOME IN LOVE AND WIN THE BATTLE OF FAITH LIKE THE CORINTHIANS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

PROVOCATIONS TO QUESTION AUTHORITY, TRAP YOU IN WORDS, RESURRECTION AND ETERNAL LIFE AND ATTRIBUTE YOUR MINISTRY WORKS AND CHURCH TO THE SPIRIT OF THE DEVIL ARE INEVITABLE BECAUSE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST. BUT THE SUPERIOR WEAPON OF LOVE IS THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OVERCOME THEM ALL THROUGH TRUST IN GOD, FAITH AND CONFESSIOIN IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED (4)

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### INSPIRATION

#### **A// JESUS OVERCAME THE DEVIL'S PROVOCATIONS**

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

#### **1 Corinthians 13:5c – Love...is not provoked**

The dictionary meaning to provoke is induced to action or anger. It means that one must be moved from a quiet and stable state to a troubled and shaky situation. Provocation is always a response to a forced change of disposition.

Also, it means to stimulate or give rise to (a reaction or emotion, typically a strong or unwelcome one) in someone. It is a deliberate attempt to make someone angry or react for a different purpose.

The bible definition of provoke in a literal sense means “**to call forth**”. That is to excite or stir up, whether in a good or bad sense. We know of provocation to anger (**Deuteronomy 4:25**). Moses fasted forty days and forty nights to petition God and show mercy in place of provocation of anger because of the backsliding of the Israelites with the molding of the golden calf (**Deuteronomy 9:18**). Prophet Ahijah revealed to king Jeroboam's wife his sin of evil and wickedness in the sight of God; going after other gods and molding images as gods to provoke Him to anger (**1 Kings 14:9, 15**). The sins of Jerusalem linked to their tongues and doings which provoked the anger of the LORD; apparently God's judgment against them (**Isaiah 3:8**).

**UNDER THE OLD COVENANT OF THE LAW, THE BREAKING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT ATTRACTED GOD'S ANGER AND JUDGMENT. BE INFORMED.**

In this context, Paul used the phrase to depict a negative perspective of life. Therefore provoked love should not come from the Church with regards to abundance and usages of spiritual gifts and ministries to save many people (**1 Corinthians 10:31**). We cannot be angry over the distributions of spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit. For its varieties is also for the profit of all (**1 Corinthians 12:4 & 5, Ephesians 4:7**).

**IF THERE ARE PROVOCATIONS FROM THE CHURCH AGAINST ONE ANOTHER'S GIFTS, THEN CARNALITY INSTEAD OF SPIRITUALITY IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS SPIRITUALITY, LOVE IS AT WORK. WHERE THERE IS CARNALITY, PROVOCATIONS ARE AT WORK. BE DISCERNING.**

Call them temptations but these were also provocations from the devil to make Jesus react negatively and have a weak foundation before the onset of His messianic ministry.

### **B// WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU**

**Matthew 4:1 – Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**

God is love and therefore introduced Jesus early to his arch enemy the devil. This was to make Jesus know about the devil's strategies in the lives of people; temptations that usually take the form of provocations. This explains why the Spirit of God directed Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. It was like go and experience the nature of the devil; his make-up and ways of doing things. And Jesus obeyed without questioning God because He trusted Him as Jehovah Tsikenu; the LORD our righteousness.

Therefore if God permits temptations in your life, ministry and the Church, they are blessings in disguise as long as you trust God in Christ and is led by the Holy Spirit to overcome them. Though they are provocations in nature, you are not supposed to employ the same strategies because it is not love but meant to make you backslide into sinful habits and destroy you. Truly, love does not tempt and provoke people to sin.

**THE WAYS OF GOD ARE PERFECT AND HE HAS GOOD REASONS FOR DIRECTING US TO CERTAIN PEOPLE AND PLACES TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR WAYS FOR THE MAKING OF WISE DECISIONS IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. HENCE OBEDIENCE TO GOD ALWAYS IS AN AFFIRMATION OF ABSOLUTE IN HIM.**

### **C/ FASTING AND PRAYERS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Matthew 4:2 – And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.**

Jesus denied Himself of food and water, separated Himself from people and other distractions to spend time in God's presence. He prayed all these days to know the mind

of God and be filled with the knowledge of His will. Jesus was so much in the Spirit that He felt hunger only after breaking the fast: **...afterward He was hungry.**

**YOUR DESIRES FOR PHYSICAL THINGS CAN MANIFEST AND INCREASE AFTER A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE. IT CAN BE NATURAL AND RIGHTEOUS LIKE FOOD AND WATER, AND SOMETIMES WORLDLY LIKE WATCHING TELEVISION MOST OF THE TIME OTHER THAN PRAYING AND READING YOUR BIBLE. KNOW THAT ANY NEGATIVE DESIRE TO SIN IS PROVOCATION FROM THE DEVIL.**

### **1//FIRST PROVOCATION; OVERCOME WITH SCRIPTURAL WEAPON**

**Matthew 4:3 & 4 – Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”**

The tempter who is the devil knew that the Son of God, Jesus, on earth was human and not a spirit. Knowing Jesus' hunger and thirst, he provoked Him to use His anointing to turn stones into bread. The devil wanted to manipulate the anointing and make Jesus perform a miracle outside the will of God. Jesus' victory was quoting scripture: **Deuteronomy 8:3** to show that life is beyond the eating of food to trusting and obeying God's word.

**DO NOT ALLOW PHYSICAL NEEDS OR OTHER NEEDS TO TRAP YOU INTO SIN. RATHER HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED SCRIPTURES MUST BE USED TO INCREASE YOUR FAITH AND OVERCOME THE DEVIL'S PROVOCATIONS AND BE IN GOD'S WILL AND NOT THE DEVIL'S WILL. SPEAK THE LOGOS AND RHEMA WORD OF GOD.**

### **2//SECOND PROVOCATION; OVERCOME WITH SCRIPTURAL WEAPON**

**Matthew 4:5 – 7 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ” Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’ ”**

The devil changed his strategy and took Jesus to the highest point of the temple. This provocation was to make Him display spiritual power for public display and popularity other than the way of righteousness by the Spirit of God. How easy it was for the devil to quote scripture (**Psalms 91:11 & 12**)? It reveals that the devil uses scripture to do evil unlike God evident in the ministry of Jesus for the promotion of righteousness.

Jesus' victory was quoting scripture: **Deuteronomy 6:16** that we should not tempt our God as the Israelites did in Massah for water through rebellion and complaint. This means

that Jesus did not succumb to the devil's provocation in temptation but learnt another strategy of him.

Know that some of the devil's temptations to sin are in the Church or Christian environment using scripture to justify any action or inaction, obedience or disobedience, even sexual immoralities, rebellion, witchcraft, occult and other demonic practices as revealed through Church history and some Churches in present day. Hence the need and importance of the Five Fold ministries of the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and the Teacher in all the Churches.

**BE CAREFUL OF HUMAN PROJECTIONS AND SHOWMANSHIP IN SPECTACULAR WAYS EVEN AT THE PERIL OF YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRINCIPLES. NEVER BELIEVE AND USE SATANIC AND DEMONIC POWERS FOR ACCEPTANCE OF MINISTRY, CHURCH NUMERICAL GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF MIRACLES.**

**DO NOT FALSELY AND BLINDLY COPY OTHER MINISTERS FOR EVERY MINISTER OF GOD IN CHRIST AND CHURCH IS ANOINTED IF CALLED AND ESTABLISHED BY GOD. REMEMBER GOD IS ALL POWERFUL AND CAN DO ALL THINGS IN HIS WILL BUT NEVER DO THINGS TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE HIS WILL.**

### **3// THIRD PROVOCATION; OVERCOME WITH SCRIPTURAL WEAPON**

**Matthew 4:8 – 10 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "**

The third strategy and provocation of the devil was to take Jesus to the highest mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of this world and glory. What the devil wanted was submission and worship but Jesus refused to do it. It did not make sense: How can the created being tell the One in whom all things in heaven and on earth was created to bow to him before He can receive them? It was like the devil telling Jesus that you are going to need my help and accomplish Your mission on earth because I am in charge of all the systems, governments, institutions, religions, traditions, cultures and people who promote sin and evil **(1 John 5:19)**. Satan offered Jesus a crown without a cross which warns us about certain offers that would not make us experience God's ways in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' victory was quoting scripture: **Deuteronomy 6:4 & 5, 13 & 15** that only God is to be submitted and worshipped in their covenantal relationship. This provocation was so strong that Jesus rebuked the devil for asking worship and attempting to change divine order of righteousness.

**WATCH OUT FOR THIS PROVOCATION OF THE DEVIL DISGUISED IN VARIOUS FORMS FOR SUBMISSION AND WORSHIP. SUBMIT TO GOD ALL THE TIME; NOT**

**THE DEVIL. ALL GOOD THINGS ARE FROM GOD AND HE IS DETERMINED TO FULFILL HIS PROMISES TO US IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY, AND CHURCH WILL SHINE WITHOUT THE HELP AND SUPPORT OF THE DEVIL IF WE HAVE GOD'S PRESENCE AND FAVOUR ON US AND THE ATTRIBUTES OF LOVE ARE FOUND IN US.**

### **D/ VICTORY OVER TEMPTATIONS; ANGELIC MINISTRATIONS**

**Matthew 4:11 – Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.**

The Spirit of the Overcomer is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. When Jesus rejected the devil's worship and support, angels came and ministered to Him as assurance of God's presence. If Christians would affirm their Christian faith to reject Satan's deceptive and diabolic support of demonic powers and angels, true angels of God would minister to us all the time as promised in **Hebrews 1:14**.

We read

**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.**

Apostle Peter encourages us to resist the devil for the sustenance of our individual Christian faith, Churches and unity of the Body of Christ. The devil is moving and roaring like a lion looking for Christians and provoking them to be angry, showmanship of power, desire for submission and worship, and even using scriptures deceptively and wrongly as against Jesus in His forty (40) days fast.

Do not cooperate with the devil and his demons because their aim is to destroy you; neither make them your bodyguards because angels of God protect Christians all the time. Remember that fallen angels once upon a time saw how beautiful the daughters of men and came down and slept with them, and gave birth to giants and increased wickedness on earth (**Genesis 6:1 – 4**).

You have the spirit of the overcomer because the Holy Spirit is in you and the word of God is in your heart.

**KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN ANY CHALLENGING SITUATION IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. GOD LOVES YOU AND MAKES HIS ANGELS MINISTER TO YOU BECAUSE HE CONSIDERS YOU AN HEIR OF SALVATION. HE PROTECTS AND GUIDES YOUR STEPS IN LIFE SO THAT YOU QUALIFY FOR ENTRY INTO HEAVEN. THEREFORE OVERCOME THE TENDENCY TO BE PROVOKED AND GET ANGRY TO SIN. IF ANGELS MINISTERED TO JESUS AFTER OVERCOMING PROVOCATIVE TEMPTATIONS, KNOW THAT IT IS AN EXPRESSION**

## OF LOVE FOR JESUS AND MARK OF SPIRITUAL PROMOTION WHEN YOU OVERCOME AS A CHRISTIAN.

We agree also with the Hebrew writer about the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ: That He was flesh and blood like us who was tempted in every way and yet without sin; for He overcame. And He is able to help those who are being tempted to overcome (**Hebrews 2:14, 18**).

## WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS CHRISTIAN JOURNEY BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS OUR HELPER HAVING EXPERIENCED AND OVERCAME TEMPTATIONS.

Let us remind ourselves of the words of Jesus: **If you love Me, obey My commandments (John 14:5)**. Anytime, anywhere you choose to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God, you have expressed your love to Jesus. Anytime, anywhere you reject satanic worship as God's word, you expressed your love to Jesus Christ. Therefore let us abide in God's grace to overcome all provocative temptations.

## ABIDE IN GOD'S GRACE AND LOVE TO OVERCOME ALL PROVOCATIVE TEMPTATIONS.

### PRAYER

Fill our hearts with love O God.

We pray for Your strength O Lord to overcome all provocative temptations against our Christian faith, the gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God.

We pray also that we will not be victims through anger and overreaction but victors through love, knowledge and discernment of these provocations.

May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself by our Helper; may Your Holy angels also minister to us as heirs of salvation.

LET LOVE LEAD THE WAY IN OUR QUEST TO OVERCOME ALL PROVOCATIVE TEMPTATIONS THAT THE LORD PERMITS INTO OUR LIVES, MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

UNTIL YOU LOVE AS GOD LOVES, AND AS CHRIST LOVED US AND STILL LOVES US, YOU CANNOT OVERCOME EVEN THE LEAST PROVOCATIVE TEMPTATION THAT COME AGAINST YOU. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE THINKS NO EVIL; HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5d – Love thinks no evil**

From the day that sin entered into Adam, evil took its form in the minds, words and works of people (**Romans 3:23**). Since the day that man fell short of the glory of God, sin and evil took control of humanity. Whenever love is replaced with hatred and envy, evil thoughts fill the minds of people and they plan and work to hurt, disgrace and even kill.

Love has its source from God (**1 John 4:7**) and therefore it is not associated with evil from the devil. Love is always associated with sweet thoughts and wellbeing of a person; like between husband and wife. Besides, the Holy Spirit promotes lovely thoughts in the lives of Christians towards their fellow Christians.

Therefore the Apostle Paul is emphatic that love thinks no evil. From the beginning of his first epistle to the Corinthians, he expressed joy in their Christian faith, acquisition of spiritual gifts and unity of faith and purpose (**1 Corinthians 1:4 – 9**). Besides, he instructed them to be like minded to speak and make the same confession and judgment in their Christian faith without divisions (**1 Corinthians 1:10**). In this truth, division breeds evil thoughts like the way stagnant water breeds mosquitoes. In other words, Paul's interest was in their unity of faith and purpose in Christ unto God.

### **LOVE THINKS NO EVIL WHEN IT IS NOT INSPIRED BY DIVISIONS BUT UNITY OF FAITH AND PURPOSE IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE CHURCH.**

With Christian relationships and the manifestation of the spiritual gifts and the five – fold ministries, love edifies, achieve excellent results and makes them perfect in God's will. It

does not think evil because even in offences, we have the mind of Christ to forgive **(1 Corinthians 2:16)**.

### **HAVING THE NATURE OF CHRIST AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST TO FORGIVE OFFENDERS IN LOVE.**

This reveals the nature of God and the devil in the affairs of humanity. Like the Corinthians Believers, we are born of God in Christ and has received the gift and baptism of the Holy Spirit as a Church. Therefore the love nature of God is to manifest in us **(John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 8:3, 1 John 4:7 – 10, 12, 16, 20 & 21)** and not the father of all evil who is the devil **(John 8:44)**.

### **LOVE THINKS NO EVIL BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS BECAUSE IT IS FULL OF THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT IS THE EPITOME OF GODLY AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS THAT LEADS TO OTHER VIRTUES BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

The bible says in

**Proverbs 12:5 – The thoughts of the righteous are right, But the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.**

The thoughts of the righteous are from the Holy Spirit and good with scriptural basis but that of the wicked are from the devil with no agreement of scripture towards people. It is important to note that righteous thoughts result in righteous counsels just as the counsels of the wicked known to be deceit come from unrighteous and sinful thoughts.

A simple analogy is a bottle filled with water. The shape and size of the bottle determines the level of the water. Likewise the love nature of God in Christ makes us have righteous thoughts by the Holy Spirit as long as there is connection and union. It is also true that the evil nature of the devil always causes divisions to corrupt thoughts and think evil of one another. Hence the word of God is true and verifiable in the lives of Believing Christians, backsliding Christians, sinners and the unbelieving.

### **RIGHTEOUS THOUGHTS ARE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT BECAUSE OF OUR NEW NATURE IN CHRIST BY GOD. BUT EVIL THOUGHTS ARE FROM THE CORRUPT SPIRIT AND NATURE OF THE DEVIL.**

We read

**Proverbs 12:2 – A good man obtains favor from the Lord, But a man of wicked intentions He will condemn.**

The person with the right spirit to think and does good things towards people expresses God's love and therefore have His commendation and approval for blessing. But the man of wicked intentions has a corrupt mind and would do evil to people. Such a person, God's judgment is against to stop him from destroying people like the devil.

**GOD HONOURS AND BLESSES PEOPLE WITH RIGHTEOUS THOUGHTS AND GOOD CONSCIENCE. GOD CONDEMNS PEOPLE WITH EVIL INTENTIONS AND BAD CONSCIENCE.**

One of the righteous things that David did and his kingship and kingdom was established is linked to the decision he made concerning the distribution of the booty from their victory over the Amalekites **(1 Samuel 30:9 – 19)**. That those who stayed at the Brook of Besor because of extreme tiredness and weakness would receive the share of booty as those who went in strength with David to fight the Amalekites and recovered all **(1 Samuel 30:20 – 25)**. Apart from David's men who benefited from the spoil despite their stay at the Brook of Besor, this kind gesture was extended to the elders of Judah. Besides, David blessed his friends with the share of the booty in the towns of Bethel, Ramoth in the South, Jattir, Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, Rachal, cities of Jerahmeelithes and Kenites, Hormah, Chorashan, Athach, Hebron, and other familiar places that David and his men frequented **(1 Samuel 30:20 – 31)**.

Confidently, I testify of David that he had good thoughts towards all his men as well as the whole of Israel. Hence his righteous decision and ordinance to make all team players and members enjoy the blessing of the booty anytime Israel won her battles; beginning with the booty in victory over the Amalekites. This is one of the hallmarks of leadership to seek the welfare of all members and ensure and maintain the unity of all the people.

It affirms Paul's revelation of truth that love thinks no evil. Indeed it took the word of a righteous man like David to prevail over wicked and worthless men (with no love) in his camp for an ordinance of equal distribution to be established in Israel.

Indeed love thinks no evil and the Holy Spirit is our Helper to remind us of the word of God and set righteous examples in life, ministry and the Church.

**THE MIND OF A RIGHTEOUS PERSON THINKS GOOD TOWARDS PEOPLE AND NOT EVIL. THINK AND ACT RIGHTEOUSLY AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER. HAVE THE HEART AND MIND TO SHARE THE BLESSINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS. THIS IS ALSO THE MARK OF GOOD LEADERSHIP.**

We read

**Acts 5:1 – 11 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and**

**buried him. Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.**

We can learn from the lessons of the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira who lied to the Holy Spirit over a parcel of land. They conspired to test the Spirit of the Lord. They lied in the Church and not outside the Church. They lied to Holy Spirit, anointed and empowered Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This story reveals corrupted human thoughts and intentions manipulated by the devil. It looks like God was too quick to pass judgment but their actions reveals conscious thoughts and strategies in planning of this evil act. If God had not killed them, they would have set a bad foundation for the Church and make her the playground of the devil. Even in the Church, there was no fear of God. Indeed, it would have been less wicked by unbelievers outside the Church to harden the hearts of potential believers.

**GOD DOES NOT TOLERATE WICKED AND EVIL THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH PURCHASED BY HIS SON JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY. THE CHURCH MUST BE FULL OF HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRED CHRISTIANS WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST AND RIGHTEOUS THOUGHTS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND RIGHTEOUS WORKS. NOT THOUGHTS THAT AGREE WITH THE DEVIL TO SABOTAGE CHRIST'S WORKS AND MINISTRY WORKS. BE ONE OF THE KIND BUDDY.**

We read

**Jeremiah 17:9 & 10 – "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.**

The heart that is not born again can easily be predicted to show forth sinful ways such as deceitfulness and all forms of wickedness beyond human knowledge and comprehension as evident in all countries of the world. This is because the love of God is not in the hearts of sinful people. God's role is to search the heart and test the mind of people and judge them according to each one's work. Truly, the wicked hearts of Ananias and his wife Sapphira and their judgment fulfilled after being found guilty by the courts of heaven **(Jeremiah 17:9 & 10).**

**HARD SAYING BUT THE TRUTH: THE HEART THAT IS NOT BORN AGAIN IS FULL OF DECEIT AND WICKEDNESS THAT REFLECTS IN EVIL THOUGHTS UNLIKE THE BORN AGAIN HEART.**

We read

**Proverbs 10:7 – The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.**

God loves the thoughts of the righteous and blesses them and their families and Churches such that people remember them of their goodness, have joy and emulate them all the time even in the generations. However, the memory of the wicked brings sorrow and pain and their evil works are discouraged and discontinued because they cannot be emulated by those called by the name of Christ.

**THE MEMORIES OF THE RIGHTEOUS OUTLIVED THEM UNLIKE THE MEMORIES OF THE WICKED; YES GOD IS AT WORK IN EACH OF THEM.**

We read

**Joshua 1:8 – This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**

Joshua charged the Israelites to practice the Ten Commandments and other laws religiously through constant meditation; day and night. The promise of prosperity in life and an achiever in the works of God meant that they were bound to be blessed in this righteous prescription.

Truly it is the knowledge of God, people, things and the devil and his demons that fill our minds and shapes our habits and character. The more the knowledge of God in Christ fill our hearts and minds, the more the Holy Spirit helps us to have righteous thoughts, ideas and works. The more we are filled with worldly and demonic knowledge, the easier the devil is able to fill our minds with sinful, evil and wicked thoughts and works.

**THE MIND IS THE BANK OF KNOWLEDGE AND IS FILLED DAILY BY WHAT WE SEE, HEAR AND READ. THEREFORE, THE BIBLE AND THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOULD FILL OUR MINDS FOR MEDITATION AND PRACTICE UNTO FRUITFULNESS AS CHRISTIANS.**

We read

**Philippians 4:8 & 9 – Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**

Having the mind of Christ as a Christian is the best way to escape the corruption of the mind from the human and satanic worlds **(1 Corinthians 2:16)**. Since life is ongoing, our minds are always being filled either for a righteous or evil cause. We are Christians and therefore we are to obey the command and counsel of Apostle Paul to meditate on good and righteous things in life and ministry and the Church **(Colossians 1:9)**. This is to build our Christian faith and spiritual life with the correct spiritual materials given to us by God and not with the wrong building materials by worldly and satanic standards.

Like Pastor Chris of Christ Embassy: The things we watch on television such as films and programs, see daily, hear from people and frequency modulation (FM) stations and do daily are our teachers in disguise. They communicate to us just like the telephones and mobile phones and computers and laptops. Whether audio or video, our lives are shaped and influenced by them. This makes it important to grow spiritually like Apostle Paul to speak and perform righteous works in the power of the Holy Spirit in life and ministry.

Love makes our Christian faith and works beautiful and perfect in Christ to God. We need the likes of Apostle Paul in Churches, communities, nations and countries for Christians and all people to learn and receive, and emulate their righteous examples. Do not think evil of family members, friends, Church, Ministries and generally people just because of a little offense. But rather think righteously. Let your marriage work with positive thoughts. The bible says that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he **(Proverbs 23:7)**.

**ALL YOU NEED AS A CHRISTIAN TO SEE, HEAR, LEARN AND RECEIVE, AND MEDITATE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY GOD IN CHRIST WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AS YOUR HELPER. IS THIS NOT LOVE? PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: DO NOT LIE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. SPEAK THE TRUTH; BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.**

Know that the Holy Spirit needs a positive mind in Christ to help think and meditate on the word and works of God in Christ for revelation, understanding and obedience. Truly the use of the spiritual gifts to edify the Church and reveal Christ to people and establish them in the Christ grace of God with a positive mind. For love thinks no evil as Paul continued to show the excellent way of love.

## PRAYER

**Thank You God for teaching us that love thinks no evil. As a Church, we pray that we will always have a mind that that thinks righteously as children of God.**

**We pray that You fill us with the word of God so that we can meditate on it for strength and obedience and renewal of vitality with a clear conscience.**

**With the mind of Christ, help us to do Your will in Christ and not waste our time with evil thoughts and provoke one another to sin.**

Let our counsels from righteous thoughts promote the cause of Christ and the Church and not the cause of the devil and evil doctrines.  
And let Your Holy Spirit lead us in Jesus' name. Amen.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN; THE THOUGHTS OF THE RIGHTEOUS ARE PURE AND LOVED BY THE LORD. THIS ONE THING IS ALSO CERTAIN; THE THOUGHTS OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS ARE EVIL AND THE LORD HATES THEIR COUNSELS. WHERE THERE IS LOVE, THE FORMER IS STRONG THE LATTER WEAK. BUT WHERE THERE IS NO LOVE, THE LATTER IS STRONG AND THE FORMER WEAK. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

HAVING THE MIND OF CHRIST MAKES YOU THINK AND MEDITATE ON THE WORKS OF GOD RIGHTEOUSLY BUT THE MIND OF THE WORLD AND OF THE DEVIL IS A BREEDING GROUND FOR EVIL THOUGHTS AND COUNSELS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:6 – Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth**

Two eternal packages have been presented to humanity to choose one in the spirit of heavenly democracy. The choice of sin of the devil or the choice of truth about God's eternal salvation and righteousness in His Son Jesus Christ. But to the Church, this is no longer a choice but a righteous command to love one another just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed His life for our salvation. Hence Apostle Paul's continuous teaching focused on one of the attributes of love as not to rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth.

### **THE WORLD HAS A CHOICE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SIN AND CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS BUT THE CHURCH IS COMMANDED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER IN THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

What does it mean? That love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It is important to define what rejoice means to a person or in a situation. It is a descriptive term for a person or people who are celebrating an event or occasion. It also means the joyful action of a person or people upon hearing good news or in an amusement place such as park, party, marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies and receipt of awards, with friends and family members.

Truly the Church of Corinth was a two faced Church with abundance of spiritual gifts and sinful practices. Apostle Paul knew of the abundance of spiritual gifts in the Church of Corinth and their benefits to the Church and Body of Christ in promotion of the Lord's vision and mission. True to his promise, he continued to show them the more excellent way of love to make their works excellent, perfect, eternal, satisfying, blessing and rewarding **(1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:1 – 4)**.

## **THE EXCELLENT WAY OF LOVE CANNOT FAIL BUT EDIFY THE CHURCH IN THE USAGE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

Truly, love cannot and must not rejoice in sin but in the truth as long as it does not envy, think of evil and parade itself, behave rudely and seek its own, and is not puffed up, evil and provoked, as well as suffers long and is kind with other good attributes. It reveals not just the spirit and letter of love not to celebrate and reward sin, but also confers on the Church not to be partakers of sin **(1 Corinthians 13:4 – 6)**. For those in Christ must not sin **(1 John 3:6, 9, 5:18)**. That is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians earlier about those who misbehaved towards their virgins: That those who take action to marry their virgins who had passed the flower of age have not sinned but acted righteously **(1 Corinthians 7:36)**.

## **THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS BLESSED WITH SPIRITUAL GIFTS BUT ALSO NOTED WITH SEASONS OF CARNALITY THAT REQUIRED RIGHTEOUS INTERVENTIONS AND THE EXCELLENT WAY OF LOVE. GOD'S NATURE OF LOVE MUST BE RECIPROCATED WITH ACTS OF LOVE TO ENSURE AND MAINTAIN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

With all the problems that Apostle Paul had solved in the Church of Corinth such as strife, divisions, sexual immoralities, idolism and eating food sacrificed to idols, abusing the Lord's Table and pride, it was obvious that he did not condone iniquity and therefore could not rejoice in them. Clearly, his letters showed great concern for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the Corinthians believers. Hence his corrective measures as righteous interventions to make the Church maintain its standard of spirituality and not backslide into carnality. This was love at work not to rejoice in sin but in the truth.

## **EVERY MINISTER AND CHURCH LEADER AND CHRISTIAN LEADER MUST MAKE RIGHTEOUS INTERVENTIONS TO CORRECT ALL NOTED ERRORS AND REJUVENATE THE CHURCH TO SPIRITUALITY FROM CARNALITY.**

Truly, God's nature of love did not rejoice in the sin and death of a sinner even under the Old Testament and Covenant of the Law **(Ezekiel 33:1 – 10 & 11)**. The trumpet blower in Israel was the man chosen to watch over the gates and walls and windows for any adversary and warn the people about it. Spiritually, it signified the priest, prophet, Levites as the spiritual watchman whom the people knew and acknowledged in Israel, and now in the Church. Such was the given task of the Prophet Ezekiel as the word of the LORD.

## **THE SPIRITUAL WATCHMEN OF ISRAEL; PROPHET EZEKIEL CHOSEN TO WATCH, BLOW THE TRUMPET AND WARN JUST LIKE THE PHYSICAL WATCHMEN. FOR LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN SIN. THIS IS THE MANDATE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT AND NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Truly, love rejoices in the salvation of the sinner through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ with heavenly angels rejoicing **(Luke 15:7, 10)**. The heavenly host

mentioned here is the angels of God who rejoice at the salvation of a sinner in any given situation and place. In these two parables of the lost sheep and lost coin, Jesus taught the disciples not only to value the soul of a person but also to rejoice in his or her salvation.

**IF ANGELS OF HEAVEN REJOICE IN THE SALVATION OF A SOUL, THEN IT IS AN IN – DEPTH EXPRESSION OF GOD’S LOVE. YES GOD REJOICES IN THE WORK OF ETERNAL SALVATION THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.**

Believing that love has its source from God (**1 John 4:7**) is a righteous way not to be associated with sin from the devil. Love is always associated with sweet thoughts and wellbeing of a person; like between husband and wife, between Solomon and the Shulamite woman (**Song of Solomon 1:2**). Besides, the Holy Spirit promotes lovely thoughts in the lives of Christians towards their fellow Christians (**Philippians 4:8**).

Therefore the Apostle Paul is emphatic that love does not rejoice in iniquity but the truth; Christ’s righteousness. Yes I agree with him perfectly. Indeed God’s love for humanity shown in Christ and the Holy Spirit is achieving its mark because the father of all evil who is the devil has no share in it (**John 8:40, 41, 44, 1 John 3:8**).

**THE DEVIL IS A CONDEMNED CRIMINAL ETERNALLY ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. WHY WON’T HE REJOICE IN SIN BUT NOT IN CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS?**

We read

**John 17:3 – And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

What then is the truth? Jesus revealed the truth to the disciples when He explained what it means to have eternal life. That is to believe and have a relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ who had come in the Person of the Messiah and the Christ; the Anointed One. It revealed also the relationship between the Father and the Son as well as connecting the mission of the Son to the work of the Father.

**KNOWING THE TRUTH OF ETERNAL SALVATION AS THE WORK OF THE FATHER THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST SAVES YOU FROM SINFUL LIFE AND MAKES YOU NOT REJOICE IN SIN BUT REJOICE IN CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

We read

**Psalms 69:7 – 13 Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother’s children; Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, And I am**

**the song of the drunkards. But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.**

This is a Psalm of David with a strong messianic touch about His emotional and ministry sufferings. Being the sin bearer in fasting, prayer, teaching, counseling, and judging righteously besides persecutions and bad public perceptions, he spoke of the sufferings of the Messiah which was a kind of his own sufferings as a result of enemies. Yet his prayer was to God who would save him in the season of salvation.

The Spirit of righteousness does something to change a sinful cause in the lives of people. David the Psalmist – love and zeal for God was so strong that he discouraged sin and disobedience to God by people in all respects. He could weep, pray, fast and wore sackcloth to depict his sorrow for God’s intervention in the lives of people. This was so much that sackcloth became his garment of dressing. Also he suffered shame, disgrace and insults from the very people he denied himself of food, water and other pleasures to help them. This was love at work to draw people to God and have meaningful relationships with him. Do you have the spirit of David? The Spirit of righteousness and the fear of the LORD?

**THE MESSIANIC SUFFERINGS IN THE PSALM OF DAVID REVEAL AND TEACH US TO HAVE A STRONG POSITION AND STANCE TO TRUST GOD EVEN IN SUFFERINGS. THAT IS MAINTAIN YOUR RIGHTEOUS POSITION TO GOD AND KEEP AWAY FROM SIN. THE EXAMPLES OF DAVID AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

With regards to rejoicing not in sin but in the truth, the Holy Spirit is our Helper **(John 16:7)**. His functions of conviction of the world of sin, righteousness and judgment makes His testimony of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord justifiable **(John 16:8 – 11)**. Yes the Holy Spirit helps us to testify of Jesus Christ as the Messiah and rejoices in this truth **(John 15:26)**.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER TO LOVE AND TESTIFY OF THE TRUTH IN CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NEVER IN SIN AND OF SIN.**

Truly, the gospel of Jesus Christ saves and does not condemn us from the beginning. For it does not rejoice in sin but righteousness. We read

**John 3:14 – 17 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

When Jesus made this eternal statement, it was into the beginning of His messianic ministry. Now we can confidently and boldly testify of Him as the resurrected Christ who was crucified for our sins on the cross. He was lifted up on the cross. Besides, He ascended into heaven as proof of His resurrection from the dead.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has been stated clearly as to who qualifies for forgiveness of sins. That is the sinner who repents of his or her sins and believes in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. You must believe to be saved. Also having believed, you must remain in Christ. Hallelujah. This is the message of the Church to the world and to remind ourselves and ensure a spiritual balance in Christ to God by the Holy Spirit.

In truth, Jesus' mission was fulfilled to die and save the world of sin and not to condemn us. However, those who hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and disbelieve it would be judged and condemned to hell fire.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPENTANCE AND CHANGE ARE EXPRESSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE AND PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. CONDEMNATION AND JUDGMENT ARE IN THE HANDS OF GOD AND JESUS CHRIST AND WOULD BE CLEAR TO US ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. KNOW THAT THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WE REIGN WITH HIM.**

Know that the purpose of scripture is to save us as evident in the letters of Paul. We read

**2 Corinthians 7:8 – 12 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.**

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians seems to be a confirmation of the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Truly anytime we sin, we become like the world which the Holy Spirit convicts.

**WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, SIN IRRITATES, MAKES US UNHAPPY AND SORROWFUL BUT REJOICES OF REPENTANCE AND CHANGE FOR GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST. IT IS JUST LIKE THE ANGELS OF GOD WHO REJOICE IN HEAVEN BEFORE GOD AT THE REPENTANCE OF A SINGLE PERSON. THIS IS LOVE AT WORK.**

Apostle Paul did not rejoice in the sins of the Corinthian Christians but the truth of repentance and change as a result of his interventions; counsels, warnings and rebukes. The Holy Spirit had worked on them unto conviction, revelation and a turnaround from satanic activities. People perceived Apostle Paul to be too strict and overreacting but he stood his grounds to promote God's righteousness in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

**SPEAK AND WRITE AGAINST SIN. IT WOULD ATTRACT CRITICS FROM THE CHRISTIAN AND WORLDLY ENVIRONMENTS BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AT WORK TO CAUSE REPENTANCE AND CHANGE THEM. FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY; IF YOU LOVE ME, FEED MY SHEEP.**

He had no regrets because he had the mind of Christ and his actions produced Godly sorrow unto repentance from sins and embraced change for good Christian living. Besides, it was temporary and not long or permanent. This was better than worldly sin and sorrow that leads to death. Critically, the Corinthian Christians benefitted more from the interventions and rebukes than their perceived image and pride. They became better Christians by being diligent, innocent, holy, bold, confident and bore the fruit of the Spirit; self – control and faithfulness.

**GOD IS BETTER THAN THE DEVIL; THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST BETTER THE DOCTRINES OF THIS WORLD; ALSO THE REBUKES OF SIN IN THE CHURCH AND TEMPORARY SORROWS BY MINISTERS OF JESUS CHRIST ARE BETTER THAN ENJOYMENT OF SIN AND SORROW IN HELL FOREVER.**

Once again the fatherly role of Apostle Paul is revealed to make sure that his epistle straightened the lives and ministries of the Corinthian Christians **(1 Corinthians 4:15)**. His motive was not to condemn them of their weaknesses but to help overcome them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**I, APOSTLE PAUL, WAS A TRUE FATHER OF THE CHURCH AND USED THE WEAPON OF LOVE AND NOT CONDEMNATION TO BRING POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.**

The Church, therefore, cannot rejoice in sin but only in the truth of Christ's righteousness. Therefore amend your ways if your habits and character are contrary to the word of God.

### **THE VOICE OF THE SPIRITUAL WATCHMAN; HEAR IT**

We shall continue to preach against sin. We cannot have fellowship with sin and encourage other people to emulate. You are to expose all fruitful works of darkness as the bible commands us **(Ephesians 5:11)**. This is love to set the captives free from the influences and grips of the devil. The bible says that open rebuke is better than love that is carefully concealed **(Proverbs 27:5)**. Therefore encourage the Ministers, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Believing Christians to speak against sin and to turn the hearts of the people to God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Church must be filled with God's love to abide in Christ. For love does not rejoice in iniquity even with abundance of

spiritual gifts in the Church but rejoices in the truth. Remember he who loves is of God because God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11). Amen!

**THE CHURCH HAS THE DIVINE MANDATE TO ENSURE THAT LOVE AS A FORMIDABLE WEAPON IS USED TO PROMOTE CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS BUT DISCOURAGE SIN OF ANY MAGNITUDE. BE HOLY; BE RIGHTEOUS.**

### PRAYER

Dear God, we pray as a Church to be led by the Holy Spirit and encourage and promote Christ's righteousness but discourage sin and evil.

You have called us not to rejoice in iniquity but rejoice in the truth in love.

Let love lead us as the spiritual watchers of the Church, families and the nations.

Give us the grace to fulfill this divine mandate and perfect Your Church in Jesus' name. Amen.

**LOVE DISCERNs THAT SIN WILL SEND PEOPLE TO HELL AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, AS GOD'S WORD, WILL SEND PEOPLE TO HEAVEN. HENCE LOVE DOES NOT AND CANNOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY EVEN WITH THE ABUNDANCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE CHURCH BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**IF THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN ME CONVICTS THE WORLD OF SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGEMENT, AS WELL AS THE CHURCH TO THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEN HE DOES NOT AND CANNOT INSPIRE ME TO REJOICE IN SIN BUT ONLY IN THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS; EXPECT RIGHTEOUS AND ETERNAL RESULTS**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:7a – Love bears all things**

The agape kind of love has the tenacity to contain all things even in discomfort for the sake of Jesus Christ and His gospel of salvation. The amplified version of the bible says that: Love bears all things (regardless of what comes). It is therefore the ability to face people and situations to champion the cause of righteousness and truth irrespective of challenges and problems. This is the kind of love that Apostle Paul desired for the Corinthian Church and the Body of Christ. It does not give up easily to lose but endures to win. It believes in the slogan: **WINNERS NEVER QUIT AND QUITTERS NEVER WIN.**

To bear something means to help, carry, suffer with or endure. Therefore if love bears all things, it means that Paul encouraged the Corinthians to help and carry fellow Believing Christians along in the Christian faith and also suffer and endure with their weaknesses. It is synonymous with tolerance where one uses this formidable Christian weapon to pray, teach, counsel and help in every righteous way to establish fellow Believing Christians in the Christian faith as well as bring people in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**TO THE BURDEN CARRIER IN THE CHURCH DOES NOT MEAN MERE RHETORIC BUT TO PRAY AND INTERCEDE, PREACH AND TEACH, COUNSEL AND REBUKE, AND INSTRUCT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS TO MAKE THEM OBEDIENT AND ESTABLISHED IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

In other words, Paul's righteous counsel revealed that the Corinthians Believers were to bear the fruit of love and the fruit of longsuffering as he had done with them since the formation of the Church of Corinth. The challenges were there but his proactive measures

to correct all their errors was in the spirit and letter of forbearance. Instead of closing down the Church, he prayed, wrote letters to state the gospel position on identified errors and instructed them in righteousness.

**THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS A TYPE OF CHURCH THAT NEEDED THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF FORBEARANCE TO CORRECT ALL ERRORS. BEARING THE FRUIT OF LONGSUFFERING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS INEVITABLE.**

In this truth, Paul's summary of making the usages of the spiritual gifts meaningful, excellent, perfect and rewarding is to bear the fruit of love. If the Corinthians Believers could bear all things in love with patience and longsuffering, it would give them opportunity to correct and solve all their problems and establish them in the Christian faith.

**USAGES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS NEED LOVE TO BEAR ALL THINGS IN PATIENCE AND SUFFERING AND ESTABLISH BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. KEEP PRAYING FOR THEM.**

That is why he stated clearly manifestations of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues but without love is like a sounding brass and a clanging cymbal **(1 Corinthians 13:1)**. Having the gift of prophecy to understand mysteries and all knowledge but without love is imperfection **(1 Corinthians 13:2a)**. Having all faith to even move mountains and do the impossible and unthinkable but without love is nothing **(1 Corinthians 13:2b)**. Also physical manifestations that makes one gives all his goods to feed the poor but without love is self – praise and popularity; fruitless venture. Likewise giving yourself to be burnt in fire sacrificially but without love is nothing **(1 Corinthians 13:3)**. For love is the excellence and perfection of all the spiritual gifts.

**LOVE IS THE EXCELLENCE AND PERFECTION OF ALL THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN WHICH ONE BEARS ALL THINGS TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND BE IN GOD'S PERFECT WILL.**

If love bears all things, then there is hope for the Church despite weaknesses. It is important to note here that this is not about endorsement of sin but doing something righteous to correct all sinful things of people in the Church. Strategically, it is about doing something righteous at the right time before it is too late to change it. And love makes us responsive and action oriented. The bible says that it is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth **(Lamentations 3:27)**. According to the New King James Bible Commentary, youth here refers not to age but the sense of unbroken strength as opposed to diminished vitality. As we say a stitch in time saves nine.

**LOVE RESPONDS TO THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES AND HABITS OF STUBBORN CHRISTIANS TO CORRECT THEM AS PAUL ENVISAGED IN THE CHURCH OF CORINTH. THIS IS THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF FORBEARANCE IN A TIMELY WAY.**

The challenging part of the gospel of Jesus Christ needs love that can tolerate people and situations until they become obedient. The Holy Spirit is the Personality and power in Christians to pursue righteousness and truth in the midst of the devil and enemies provocations and diabolic strategies. Once you have the Holy Spirit, God expects you to become like Jesus Christ to bear all things for the sake of truth.

**EVERY CHALLENGING SITUATION TO SEND THE CHURCH BACKWARDS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW FORTH LOVE AND BEAR ALL THINGS TILL CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FORMED IN THEM.**

We can learn from these biblical examples.

### **1// DAVID BEARS WITH SAUL'S DIABOLIC ACTIVITIES**

The book of **1 Samuel chapters 24 & 26** shows how David had two opportunities to kill Saul and become king of Israel in fulfillment of Prophet Samuel's prophecy. However, the love and fear of God made him overlook and opted for waiting years to be crowned king of Israel. He was able to persuade his army generals to spare the life of King Saul for those two occasions. All those years, he was a fugitive in his own land running from King Saul, and also as a foreigner in the land of the Philistines. He did not live in the comfort of his home but in the wilderness and caves and mercy of villagers.

**LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS TO WAIT FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY IN A RIGHTEOUS WAY. THE JOURNEY TO KINGSHIP, STARDOM AND LEADERSHIP IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF LOVE AND THE FRUIT OF FORBEARANCE IN MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS.**

### **2// JOSEPH PROTECTS MARY'S IMAGE**

Love bears all things and protects the image of people. That was the story of Joseph and Mary after angel Gabriel's visit and divine announcement of pregnancy and the messianic birth. Neither was it easy for Mary to tolerate the gossips of her pregnancy by the Holy Spirit as a virgin, nor the fear of being stoned, nor the fear of divorce, but waited patiently for Jesus to be born before having sex with Mary (**Matthew 1:20 – 25**). How Joseph fathered Jesus throughout his Childhood years to Egypt and return to Nazareth (**Matthew 2:12 – 14, 15 – 23**) was the spirit of forbearance having understood the messianic vision of God to save humanity through his wife Mary.

**JOSEPH AND MARY ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF HOLY SPIRIT FILLED CHRISTIANS WHOSE FAITH IN GOD ENABLED THEM TO ACCEPT PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS IN THE WILL OF GOD. THIS WAS NOTHING BUT THE SPIRIT OF FORBEARANCE IN LOVE. WHEN YOU LOVE GOD, YOU PROTECT HIS VISION IN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT.**

### **3// JESUS TRAINED THE TWELVE DISCIPLES**

Jesus selected twelve disciples to work with them. He trained them in the standard of righteousness and not worldliness. Therefore, He invested prayers, teachings, discipleship training, and impartation of gifts of the Holy Spirit to them. They came from different backgrounds but He patiently endured their gradual progress with show of worldly zeal sometimes. He had to bear them in prayers all the time and teach them the way of righteousness by the Holy Spirit. This was leadership by example where Jesus exhibited all the righteous traits before imparting them to His disciples.

Read **Matthew 4:18 – 21 & Luke 5:27 & 28**

**IT TAKES AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN LEADER TO RECRUIT SIMPLE PEOPLE, TRAIN AND EQUIP THEM IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ETERNAL RESULTS AS APOSTLES; FRONTLINE APOSTLES IN THE CHURCH.**

**TELL ME AND I FORGET, TEACH ME AND I REMEMBER, INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN – BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

### **4// JESUS PRAYED FOR THE RESTORATION OF PETER'S FAITH**

**Luke 22:31 – 34 And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”**

Denial and restoration was noted in Jesus' messianic ministry on earth and relationship with His disciples. Jesus knew that Peter could become the leader of the Apostles after completion of His earthly mission. Jesus had to bear with the betrayal of Peter who was to become the leader of the disciples and the Church. Yes He gave Peter the opportunity to come back through the process of repentance and restoration.

Many of us would sack such caliber of people from our lives and ministries but Jesus had to bear with him, prayed for his faith and restored him because He was led by the Holy Spirit. We worship and serve the God of the second chance who gives us the opportunity to repent of our backsliding and be restored to Him fully in Christ.

**CONSISTENT PRAYERS, TEACHING AND PARTICIPATORY TRAINING FOR YOUR TEAM MEMBERS ARE THE PROCESSES TO BEAR AND HELP THEM GROW, AND BE MATURED AND USEFUL FOR SERVICE TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. FOR WE WORSHIP AND SERVE THE GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE.**

## **5// SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN MINISTRY**

Church leaders must have the patience of the Holy Spirit to groom Church members for spiritual growth unto maturity. What is your reaction when you call for Church meetings like prayer meetings and bible studies and evangelism and participation is low? Do you get angry or use other righteous strategies by the Holy Spirit to change the status quo? Let us apply God's knowledge and wisdom in Christ and the Holy Spirit to facilitate the spiritual and numerical growth of the Church **(Acts 2:1 – 4 & 2 Peter 3:18)**.

We read

**Acts 2:40 – 42 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter spoke by the inspiration and revelation of the Holy Spirit to the crowd that gathered and heard them speak in diverse tongues. Having provided direction to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he exhorted them to be saved from this wicked generation. By the time that Peter finished his apostolic sermon, about three thousand people had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and saved eternally. Not only this truth but also the formation of the Church where the new and old disciples were taught by the Apostles to grow spiritually and numerically.

All these righteous works and experiences did not happen on a silver platter but times and seasons of forbearance on the part of Jesus with his young disciples, and also on the part of the Apostles with their young disciples.

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF CHURCH MEMBERS IS NOT AUTOMATIC BUT THE EFFORTS AND PATIENCE OF CHURCH LEADERS IN A RIGHTEOUS MANNER. LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

## **6// DEVELOPMENT OF GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Jesus assigned His disciples work to do **(Luke 10:1 – 11)**. The disciples returned with testimonies **(Luke 10:17 – 20)**. Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit **(Luke 10:21 – 24)**.

**OBEDIENCE TO UNDERTAKE THE LORD’S MISSION COMES BACK WITH TESTIMONIES AND COMMENDATION AND SOMETIMES REBUKES. LOVE MUST BEAR ALL PEOPLES AND THINGS EXPERIENCED FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST.**

We read

**Acts 14:21 – 28 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls**

of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

**MINISTERS MUST REVISIT PEOPLE AND PLACES WHERE THEY FIRST PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO STRENGTHEN THE BRETHREN'S FAITH. IF LACKING AREAS MAKE IT NECESSARY TO STAY AND FILL THE GAPS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADING, WE SAY AMEN TO ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

Learning from these biblical examples, be patient to bear all things in Christian, marital, family and other relationships as led by the Holy Spirit. This is a mark of Christian maturity by the Holy Spirit to obey God and perform His will as Christians.

**TOLERANCE AND ENDURANCE OF PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS BUT WISDOM AND STRENGTH. BE FAITHFUL FOR LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS.**

### PRAYER

Teach us daily O God to bear all people and things in love for the sake of Christ.

Give us the grace to help and support one another in love and to pray, fast, counsel, teach, instruct in righteousness and rebuke to establish them in the Christian faith.

Give us the grace to see the weaknesses of the people as opportunities to correct and change them for Your glory.

And may the Holy Spirit lead us in Jesus' name. Amen.

**WHEN WE REALIZE THAT WEAKNESSES IN THE CHURCH ARE NOT SUBJECTS OF COMPLAINTS BUT OPPORTUNITIES TO CORRECT AND CHANGE THEM IN CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEN LOVE IS AT WORK IN US TO BEAR ALL THINGS. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS. STOMACH THE NONSENSE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IF YOU WANT TO CORRECT AND CHANGE THEM WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR SOME OF THEM WILL BECOME THE MINISTERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND BELIEVING CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:7b – Love believes all things**

The amplified version of the bible gives us a better understanding: Love believes all things; looking for the best in each one. On this premise, the Holy Spirit helps and make Christians to believe God and the gospel continually and perform Christian works. If you are a Christian, the expression of your love is to believe in God and His works in Jesus Christ and Christians unto perfection by the Holy Spirit. We are to encourage and not discourage other Christians to be perfect in their Christian faith. Here we see Apostle Paul to have explained to the Corinthians Believers the form and nature love should take in Christian relationships.

The Apostle Paul revealed another attribute of love to believe in all things based on the gospel of Jesus Christ, promises of God, prophecies and the work of the Holy Spirit to change, correct and straighten people. With the Corinthians, the ups and downs of the Church did not discourage him in ministry at all but was always encouraged because he believed in the work of salvation and the ministry that the Lord Jesus Christ had entrusted into his hands. He believed that the word of God would stand supreme over all worldly and the devil's works, and challenges in the Church. Once love was the perfection of the Christian faith, it meant that love believes all things to make faith work and achieve great and eternal results.

### **WHEN LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS, THE UPS AND DOWNS OF THE MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH CANNOT DISCOURAGE BUT ENCOURAGE YOU.**

After Paul's salutation's message to the Christians in his first epistle, his first focus and interest was on the spiritual gifts imparted on them as a Church. His prayer of thanksgiving

was the grace of God given them by Christ Jesus for the purpose of enrichment in all knowledge and utterance **(1 Corinthians 1:4 & 5)**. Also his prayer focused on the confirmation of the testimony of Jesus Christ to them **(1 Corinthians 1:6)**. Furthermore, he prayed that the Corinthians did not lack any spiritual gift but manifests abundantly in all the spiritual gifts for eternal blessings **(1 Corinthians 1:7)**. He wrote and informed them also that the waiting period was not for carnal living but revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ with the opportunity to experience Him themselves **(1 Corinthians 1:8)**.

**LOVE BELIEVES IN PROPHECIES, THE TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, PROMISES OF GOD AND BAPTISM AND LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO CHANGE THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF PEOPLE TOWARDS GOD. LOVE BELIEVES IN THE ENRICHMENT AND MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE CHURCH.**

It means to say that Paul believed in the spiritual growth unto maturity of the Corinthians Believers from the very beginning of planting the Church in Corinth despite the corrupt and idolized and sexually immoral Corinthian society. If love bears all things, then love believes all things because it thrives on the word of God and testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as the promises of God.

**WHEN THE FOUNDATION IS BASED ON LOVE THAT BELIEVES ALL THINGS, BE ASSURED OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE OF THE CHURCH.**

Truly if love is the most excellent way besides the best gifts **(1 Corinthians 12:31)**, then love believes all things to make the gospel of Jesus effective and results oriented eternally. Therefore when the going got tough, he told the Corinthians Believers to imitate him just as he imitated Christ **(1 Corinthians 11:1)**. His personal involvement in the Church of Corinth as their spiritual father seemed to have gotten deeper for personal emulation. He seemed to be the mediator between the Church of Corinth and the Lord Jesus Christ. This was love at work believing that it would perfect the works of God and usages of the spiritual gifts among the Corinthian Believers and the Church of Corinth as a whole.

**LOVE BELIEVES IN PRAYER, INTERCESSIONS, WORD OF GOD, PREACHING, TEACHING, COUNSEL, LETTERS, REBUKES AND INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS TO OVERCOME WEAKNESSES AND PERFECT THE CHURCH.**

Let us study some righteous examples of faith synonymous with love to believe all things.

### **1// KNOW THIS GOSPEL TRUTH; GOD OF ALL POSSIBILITIES**

**Matthew 19:25 & 26 – When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”**

The conversation between the Jesus and the rich young ruler revealed the perfection of the former and the imperfection of the latter with the need to sell all that he had and then come and follow Him. When the disciples of Jesus heard the sayings of Jesus about the kind of person to enter heaven, they expressed doubt about their qualification. Yet Jesus defended His position that this is possible with God unlike people. That is God is in His own class of possibilities because He is bigger and mightier than all His creation. It means to say that love believes all things as long as it is the word of God and of the Holy Spirit.

**GRACE IS TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD AS A CHRISTIAN TO LIVE AND PRODUCE FRUITS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. PEOPLE WHO DEPEND ON SELF CANNOT ATTAIN GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT JESUS WANTS FOR US. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE LOVE OF GOD TO DO THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

### **2A// WHEN THERE IS LOVE, FAITH ALSO BELIEVES ALL THINGS**

**Hebrews 11:1 – Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Love believes all things because faith is at work to receive God's blessings, and believe God for people and situations to change positively in the name of Jesus. Indeed the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of faith in belief and receipt of spiritual gifts. Hence faith is synonymous with love to bring to light excellence and perfection.

**WHEN THERE IS LOVE, FAITH BELIEVES ALL THINGS TO ATTAIN ETERNAL RESULTS AND PERFECTION.**

### **2B// FAITH IN GOD PRODUCES RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**Hebrews 11:6 – But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

Whenever the Christian shows faith to receive the promises and blessings of God in the name of Jesus, it activates the power of the Holy Spirit and makes God happy for commendation. It puts God in a strong and strategic position to bless us according to His word. Since faith is connected to believing God and His Christ as the Saviour and Lord, we grieve the Holy Spirit in unbelief and lack of faith makes our obedience questionable anytime as Believing Christians.

**OUR LOVE FOR GOD MAKES OUR FAITH RECEIVES COMMENDATION AND RECEIPT OF BLESSINGS.**

### **2C// FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD; CREATION**

**Hebrews 11:2 – By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.**

Hearing from the Holy Spirit is good and shows expression of God's love in Christ. We believe the word of God in creation and this shapes our mindset that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are involved in our lives and ministries. If the things that exist were formed from non – visible things because God spoke them into reality in six (6) days (**Genesis 1:1 – 31**), then we have to express faith in love to believe God for all things eternally beneficial to our lives and ministries, and edifying to the Church. For we must believe just as the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**IF FAITH IN CREATION WAS THE EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE; THEN OUR FAITH IN CHRIST TO GOD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR EXPRESSED LOVE TO HIM.**

### **3C// FAITH OF THE PATRIARCH'S; RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLES**

**Hebrews 11:17 – 22** By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

**LEARNING FROM THE FATHERS OF FAITH REVEALS OUR LOVE TO KNOW GOD BETTER IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WELL AS MAKES IT EASY TO FOLLOW DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS. FAITH BELIEVES INTO THE FUTURE JUST AS LOVE BELIEVES TO PERFECT THE BLESSING AND PROMISES OF GOD IN CHRIST.**

### **3// THE BELIEVERS LIFE AND MINISTRY; MIRRORING JESUS CHRIST**

**Hebrews 12:1 & 2** – Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**FAITH BELIEVES JUST AS LOVE BELIEVES, DESIRES AND CLAIMS FOR THE BEST IN CHRIST. THEREFORE THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO FOCUS ON JESUS CHRIST; THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. INDEED A DETERMINED BELIEVING CHRISTIAN OVERCOMES SIN TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY TO GOD.**

#### **4// FAITH TO RECEIVE THE PROMISES OF GOD**

**2 Corinthians 1:18 – 20 But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.**

**LOVE BELIEVES IN THE PROMISES OF GOD TO BE CLAIMED IN FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT. SINCE THEY ARE YES AND AMEN, WE BELIEVE AND RECEIVE THEM AS GOD HAS PRESCRIBED FOR US.**

#### **5// FAITH TO BELIEVE MINISTERS OF GOD**

**2 Chronicles 20:20 – So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”**

Under the Old Testament and Old Covenant of the Law, there were true Prophets as spoken by King Jehoshaphat to the people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this inspired them to win the battle against the people of Moab, Ammon and others.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT TELLS US THAT THERE ARE TRUE PROPHETS AND MINISTERS IN EVERY COUNTRY OF THE WORLD. IT IS UP TO YOU TO SEEK AND FIND AND BELIEVE IN THE TRUE MINISTERS OF CHRIST AND YOUR LIFE WOULD BE A BLESSING AND FRUITFUL.**

We read

**Hebrews 12:13 – By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, And by a prophet he was preserved.**

**PRAY FOR YOUR PROPHETS AND PROPHETESSES AS WELL AS OTHER MINISTERS AS PROOF OF YOUR BELIEF IN THEIR PROPHETIC MINISTRY, AND DESIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO INSPIRE AND LEAD THEM.**

Under the New Testament, Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ lead Believing Christians in the Churches just like way the Prophets gave vision and leadership to the Israelites. We read

**Ephesians 4:11 – 16 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the**

trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

RESPECT AND HONOUR THE MINISTERS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; PRAY AND SUPPORT THEM TO GROW THE CHURCH SPIRITUALLY AND NUMERICALLY TO ATTAIN MATURITY AND PERFECTION. YES BETTER TO PRAY THAN TO CRITICIZE AND CONDEMN THEM. BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT; SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND FRUIT FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

### 6// THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST; I WILL BE BACK

The testimony of the two angels to the apostles and disciples of Jesus after His ascension to heaven was that: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” **(Acts 1:9 – 11)**

The bible says that there is only one time opportunity given to man and live and die, and thereafter appears before the judgment of God **(HEBREWS 9:27)**.

JESUS IS COMING BACK TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND NOT AS A SACRIFICIAL LAMB. KEEP BELIEVING AND LIVE A RIGHTEOUS LIFE. KNOW ALSO THAT GOD’S WORD IS TRUE BECAUSE DEATH IN THE HUMAN BODY MARKS THE END OF OPPORTUNITY TO BE SAVED ETERNALLY.

THOUGH THE WORLD OF UNBELIEVERS AND SINNERS DOES NOT HAVE ANY SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS PROOF OF IT, THE CHURCH OF BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS BELIEVE THE PROMISE OF JESUS AND TESTIMONY OF THE TWO ANGELS TO RETURN AND REDEEM HIS PEOPLE AND JUDGE THE WORLD.

### 7// POWER OVER THE DEVIL IN THE NAME OF JESUS

**1 John 3:8 – He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**

JESUS CHRIST CAME TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL AND ESTABLISH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RULE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES AND MINISTRIES. KEEP BELIEVING FOR YOUR FREEDOM.

We read

**Mark 16:17 & 18 – And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”**

**KEEP BELIEVING THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS GIVEN YOU AUTHORITY OVER THE DEVIL AND ALL FORMS OF EVIL SPIRITS IN YOUR LIFE, MARRIAGE, CHILDREN, FAMILY, INSTITUTION, ORGANIZATION, CHURCH, AND BLESSINGS IN LIFE AND MINISTRY. EXERCISE YOUR CHRIST-LIKE AUTHORITY TO EDIFY THE CHURCH.**

### **8// KEEPING BELIEVING; THE CHRISTIAN FAITH HAS GOD’S APPROVAL AND RESPECT**

**John 3:18 – 21 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**

**YOU BELIEVED IN JESUS TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN, AND THEREFORE YOU ARE NOT AND CANNOT BE CONDEMNED. YOU ARE RIGHTEOUS AND ACCEPTED BY GOD; THEREFORE BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND ENCOURAGE OTHER CHRISTIANS. IF YOU HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR. FOR WITH GOD, THERE IS NO PARTIALITY BECAUSE HIS WORD OF SALVATION STANDS SUPREME OVER ALL AND THE STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SAME FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.**

We read

**Romans 8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

**DO NOT ALLOW THE NEGATIVITIES OF PEOPLE TO DISCOURAGE YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT CONDEMNED. FOR THE LOVE OF GOD IS AT WORK FULLY IN CHRIST.**

We read

**Romans 8:16 – The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.**

**GOD WANTS YOU TO KEEP THE FLAME OF LOVE SHINING AND ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD AS YOU HAVE THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

## **BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AS A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE YOU HAVE THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

We read

**2 Corinthians 4:13 & 14 – And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.**

**LOVE SPEAKS THE TRUTH AT ALL TIMES IRRESPECTIVE OF LEVEL OF RECEPTION. THEREFORE WE SPEAK WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE US AND PEOPLE AND DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL. INDEED THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES US LIVE THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

What does the bible say? **Many waters cannot quench love. Nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love All the wealth of his house, It would be utterly despised (Song of Solomon 8:7).** Again the bible asked the question of **what can separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword (Romans 8:35)?**

**LOVE IS SO POWERFUL THAT IT CAN WITHSTAND AND OVERCOME ALL CHALLENGES IN LIFE, FAMILY, MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. FOR THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST FOR THE CHURCH IS STRONGER THAN ALL THINGS THAT FIGHT AGAINST US. KNOW ALSO THAT WHERE THERE IS LOVE, THERE IS PROVISION, PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION.**

Indeed love believes all things when the Holy Spirit is at work to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and prove God's word to be true in the lives of Believing Christians, Church leaders, Ministers, and Christian leaders **(1 John 5:5, 10)**. The bible says that Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him as righteousness **(Romans 4:3, James 2:23)**. Likewise the bible has examples of many people who believed God and received their miracles and blessings and have been described as heroes of faith **(Hebrews 11:1 – 40)**.

**LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS BECAUSE IT FLOURISHES IN GOD AND HIS SON JESUS CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Like the Church of Corinth, we must believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ to change people in the world and perfect the Church. Hence the need to pray always and counsel with the word of God. No matter the challenges, love believes all things knowing that the promises of God, prophecies of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and baptism and leading of the Holy Spirit are changing and perfecting people. Be encouraged and never be discouraged.

**AS LONG AS THE CHURCH KEEPS BELIEVING IN GOD AND HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER TO PERFECT US; SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MINISTRIES, AND CHURCH WORKS DESPITE WEAKNESSES.**

### **PRAYER**

**Our prayer to You O God is that Your Holy Spirit encourages us to believe all things because our faith is in You and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**We do not trust in our strength but love to perfect the word of God, promises of God, prophetic word, and the gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives, ministries and the Church.**

**As we trust in You, make the manifestations of the spiritual gifts excellent and perfect for achievement of eternal blessings in all relationships because we love and believe in all things to be in accordance of Your perfect will.**

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

**THE CORE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS OUR BELIEF IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. HENCE BEARING THE FRUIT OF LOVE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST ALSO LEAD TO BELIEVE IN ALL THINGS AND MAKE ALIVE THE WORD OF GOD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO CORRECT AND PERFECT THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU****

**LOVE BELIEVES IN ALL THINGS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US WHEN WE FOCUS ON HIM AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND NOT IN OUR STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN LIFE. LET YOUR CREDENTIALS BE SPIRITUAL AND NOT CARNAL. **NANA KWAKU DUODU****

## **LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS; EMULATING JOSEPH AND MARY**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:7b – Love believes all things**

The role of biological family members especially Believing Christians is very important in shaping the life, destiny and ministry of a child. Their thoughts, words and works can encourage or discourage you to express their love towards you. Only family members who believe in your Christian faith and ministry will encourage and follow you. Obviously witches and wizards, idol worshippers, fetish priests and priestesses and those in the occult cannot follow you because they do not believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

### **A// THE SPIRITUAL PERSON BELIEVES**

A true Israelites believed and loved God because he or she has been taught the commandment of Moses to have a relationship and place of worship in the heart: **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:5)**. This run through the generations that it became one of the early teachings to a Jewish child. Jesus quoted this same scripture to the Pharisees who questioned Him on the greatest commandment: **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37)**. By this truth, the Israelites were noted to believe and love God as spiritual people.

### **A1// THE RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLE OF MARY**

Divine encounter of angel Gabriel, pregnancy of the Holy Spirit (**Luke 1:26 – 38**), encounter with Elizabeth (**Luke 1:39 – 56**) and being mother of Jesus (**Luke 2:7**), visit and words of the shepherds (**Luke 2:8 – 20**), visit, words and gifts of the three wise men

(**Matthew 2:1 – 12**), dedication at the Jerusalem temple (**Luke 2:21 – 24, & 39**) with encounters with Simon the righteous man (**Luke 2:25 – 35**), and Anna the Prophetess (**Luke 2:36 – 38**) prepared Mary to believe in Jesus throughout His ministry even from the beginning.

We read

**John 2:1 – 5 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”**

The wedding at Cana of Galilee portrays the discourse between Mary and Jesus that revealed her belief in Jesus’ ministry. This resulted in the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Indeed, it was a continuation of Mary’s love for Jesus (to continue believing) in the fulfillment of eternal salvation plan prophesied over His life. Mary’s role was to bring up the best in Jesus and attain perfection. It was too early for Jesus to perform the miracle of turning water into wine for He said that **“Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”** It was like Mary was jumping the gun but her thoughts was good and righteous based on the meditative words of angel Gabriel, three wise men, prophetess Anna and the righteous man in the temple during Jesus’ dedication as well as being with Him for a long time and seeing Jesus as a leader and matured person with disciples.

Besides, Mary’s concern was to help perfect God’s will in His life and ministry and not for destructive purpose. Mary believed Jesus so much that she told the disciples to obey everything Jesus tells them to do (**John 2:25**). This was love at work believing and encouraging other people to also believe in Him.

**LOVE KEEPS BELIEVING AS SHOWN BY MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS WHERE THOUGHTS, WORDS AND WORKS WERE TOWARDS RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE CHRISTIANS TODAY. BESIDES, FAMILY MEMBERS WHO TELL AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN YOUR MINISTRY AND OBEY INSTRUCTIONS FROM YOU HAVE THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THEM.**

## **A2// THE RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLE OF JOSEPH**

Joseph is also remembered for believing the counsel of God to take Mary as his wife and protect the mission and vision of God for humanity (**Matthew 1:18 – 25**). The three wise men believed in baby Jesus and presented gifts to Him but were warned in a dream not to return to wicked Herod and disclose His location (**Matthew 2:12**). Also Joseph is remembered for believing the warning of the angel in a dream to escape with Jesus and Mary to Egypt. Again Joseph believed the word of the angel in a dream to escape to Egypt (**Matthew 2:13 – 15**). Again Joseph obeyed the angelic word in the dream to return to

Israel after the death of Herod, and wisely relocated to the region of Galilee, and precisely the city of Nazareth, when he realized that Herod's son Archelaus was the reigning king **(Matthew 2:19 – 22)**.

**KNOW THAT GOD LOVES US AND PROTECTED HIS VISION TO SAVE TO SAVE THE WORLD EVEN THROUGH BABY JESUS. YES LOVE BELIEVES TO PROVIDE, PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE VISION AND MISSION OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH.**

**DIVINE ENCOUNTERS AND EXPERIENCES ENABLE THE SPIRITUAL TO BELIEVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE MARY AND JOSEPH. IF YOUR PARENTS, SIBLINGS AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS ARE CHRISTIANS AND IN MINISTRY, AND HAVE DIVINE REVELATIONS, YOU WILL HAVE THEIR LOVE AND PRAYER, FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT WITH ENCOURAGEMENTS.**

### **A3// PARENTAL BELIEF**

**John 7:1 – 9 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him. Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.**

This story shows the brothers of Jesus trying to emulate the example of Mary but for the wrong reasons. They wanted Him to display His power to other disciples in Judea too like in Galilee. For Jesus, it was not time for Him to be in Judea and prove His ministry. Besides, the Jews wanted to kill Him there. Jesus' brothers were yet to know Him very well and therefore their belief of Him was questionable and incomplete. As a result, Jesus remained in Galilee and did not go to the feast of Tabernacles to the disappointment of His brothers.

They wanted to be popular with Jesus as characterized with the lives and attitude of some Christians towards certain ministers of Jesus Christ. They sing along and dance with you if only your Church has big congregation, and ministry works are big with performance of miracles, signs and wonders. Is this love? This is contrary to what we know and is true that love believes all things as long as it is righteous with the endorsement of the Holy Spirit in God's will.

**LOVE THAT BELIEVES IN ALL THINGS IN GOD'S WILL IS MARKED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND IS COMPLETE SCRIPTURALLY AND PROPHETICALLY. LOVE THAT BELIEVES IN ALL THINGS FOR THE WRONG REASONS IS PARTIAL**

**AND INCOMPLETE. YES BELIEVE THE MINISTRIES AND RIGHTEOUS WORKS OF MINISTERS OF JESUS CHRIST BEYOND HIS "KIND OF BROTHERS IN THEIR IMMATURITY STATE"; EVEN IF THEIR BEGINNING IS SMALL. PERFECT LOVE BELIEVES.**

#### **A4// JONATHAN BELIEVED DAVID'S PROPHECY TO BECOME KING OF ISRAEL**

Jonathan's encounter and relationship with David was not ordinarily but divinely orchestrated by God to fit into His plans and purposes in Israel and to save the world through the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy. The first time Jonathan met David when he was just seventeen (17) years old and fought and killed Goliath. This victory inspired Saul and his sons as Generals to lead the Israelites army to conquer the tormenting Philistines.

As their relationship grew with David's placement in Saul's army, Jonathan got to know that David was to be the king of Israel as prophesied by Samuel. Being the first son of Saul and heir to the throne, he did not take offence but loved David even more than his blood brothers and father King Saul. The bible says that Jonathan first had a strong liking for David after he introduced himself as the son of his servant Jesse. The bond was so strong that there was a friendship covenant between the duo. Jonathan even gave David his own robe, armour, sword, bow and belt. In other words, Jonathan gave David everything he had and prided himself as prince of Israel and heir to the throne because he loved him **(1 Samuel 12:57 & 58, 13:1 – 4)**.

Later in the years, Jonathan protected David from Saul's diabolic plan to kill him by leaking information and assisted him to escape into the wilderness **(1 Samuel 19:2, 20:3, 32)**. Also Jonathan was ready to help David in everything he desired **(1 Samuel 20:4)**. In death, David's lamentation of Jonathan was: **I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan. You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women (2 Samuel 1:26)**.

All these episodes of Jonathan and David's relationship revealed that love believes in the prophecies, visions and dreams of God as the word of God. For love that believes all things also shapes the righteousness of God to His people and the Church.

Therefore love is not rhetoric but believes all things in relationships such as parental, marital, family, friendship, Church, Body of Christ, and even at the institutional, organizational, company and national levels in society. It means to say that gifts and talents whether spiritual or physical should be encouraged to achieve maximum benefits for the good of people in society as mutual stakeholders. Jonathan and David's relationship teaches us to help and support one another and not to kill dreams and visions of people and the Church. At least let us pray for one another to reveal pure and sincere hearts and minds and not corrupt hearts and minds.

**WHEN LOVE IN RELATIONSHIPS BELIEVES ALL THINGS, THE OUTCOMES AND RESULTS ARE BEAUTIFUL TO ACHIEVE GOD'S PLANS AND PURPOSES IN LIVES, MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH. BEAR THE FRUIT OF LOVE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

### **B// LOVE BELIEVES EVEN WITH CHALLENGES AND SUFFERING**

**John 19:25 – 27 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.**

Naturally mothers love towards their children is superb and emulating. With Jesus, she followed Him to the cross of sin, pain, humiliation, shame and disgrace. Mary was there with her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene whom Jesus had cast out seven demons from her to become a close disciple.

There was a sharp contrast between Jesus' mother Mary and the Jews and some disciples. Whilst Mary loved Jesus and believed Him at the era of uncertainty on the cross, some of Jesus' disciples, the Jews, religious leaders and sects and the roman soldiers mocked and ridiculed Him in crucifixion. Here Mary kept on believing and she witnessed the fulfillment of prophecies about Jesus spoken by the angel Gabriel, and righteous people.

Jesus placed Mary under the care of John the beloved disciple whilst on the cross when He was about to complete His mission of eternal salvation for humanity. Truly love believes because Jesus believed the Father's will for Him even on the cross crucified. This increased the faith of Mary because it affirmed her belief in Jesus' ministry. This was love to the end and more powerful than human events because it was about Jesus and eternal salvation.

**IF LIFE AND MINISTRY ARE BASED ON REVELATION AND TRUTH, LOVE KEEPS BELIEVING TO THE END EVEN IF THE WAY IS NOT VERY CLEAR SOMETIMES. THAT WAS THE MARK OF DISTINCTION FOR MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS. BE HOPEFUL LIKE HER. BEING SPIRITUAL AS A CHRISTIAN IS THE BEST WAY TO EXPERIENCE REVELATIONS AND TRUTHS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. IN IT GOD'S GRACE ENABLES YOU TO BELIEVE FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END. BE PRAYERFUL, READ, MEDITATE AND OBEY GOD'S WORD, GO TO CHURCH, FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRISTIANS, USE THE GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PROVE THE SALVATION AND LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE WORLD.**

Indeed love believes all things when the Holy Spirit is at work to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and prove God's word to be true in the lives of Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and the Church **(1 John 5:5, 10)**. The bible says that Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him as righteousness **(Romans 4:3, James**

**2:23**). Likewise, many people believed God and received their miracles and blessings and have been described as heroes of faith (**Hebrews 11:1 – 40**).

**LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS FOR THE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN BECAUSE IT FLOURISHES IN GOD AND HIS SON JESUS CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Like the Church of Corinth, we must believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ to change people in the world and perfect the Church. We need to emulate the faith of Joseph and Mary to believe in the word of God and make its fulfillment a reality. Hence the need to pray always and counsel with the word of God. No matter the challenges, love believes all things knowing that the promises of God, prophecies of God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and baptism and leading of the Holy Spirit are changing and perfecting people. Be encouraged and never be discouraged.

**AS LONG AS THE CHURCH KEEPS BELIEVING IN GOD AND HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER TO PERFECT US DESPITE RECORDED WEAKNESSES.**

### PRAYER

**Our prayer to You O God is that Your Holy Spirit helps and encourages us to believe all things like Joseph and Mary to promote your vision and mission.**

**We do not trust in our strength but love to perfect the word of God, promises of God, prophetic word, and the gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives, ministries and the Church.**

**As we trust in You, make the manifestations of the spiritual gifts excellent and perfect for achievement of eternal blessings in all relationships because we love and believe in all things to be in accordance of Your perfect will.**

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

**WHEN YOU BELIEVE THE WORD OF PROPHECY AS THE WORD OF GOD, YOU AS THE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER WOULD BELIEVE GOD IN EVERY STAGE OF YOUR LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH DESPITE THE CHALLENGES. FOR LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**I TELL YOU THE TRUTH THAT GOD DOES NOT MAKE MISTAKES IN HIS CHOICE OF PEOPLE TO CARRY HIS MISSION AND VISION FOR HUMANITY AND THE CHURCH. IF THE CHURCH CAN LOVE AND BELIEVE ALL THINGS LIKE JOSEPH AND MARY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEN EXCELLENCE PERFECTION IN FAITH WOULD ALWAYS BE RECORDED IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RIGHTEOUS AND ETERNAL RESULTS. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS IN CHRIST; OUR GLORIOUS FUTURE**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:7c – Love hopes all things**

Hope is simply defined as a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen. It is also a feeling of trust in notable relationships such as Christian relationships marriages, families and friendships. It is associated with desire, expectation, wish, aspiration, ambition, aim, plan, dream, daydream, pipedream, longing, yearning, craving, hankering.

Love seeks for the best in people and therefore hopes for fulfillment in their lives and ministries. The process to fulfillment is the element of hope which places confidence in a person(s) or situation(s). It shows that love in relationships and service for the Christian should be perceived with optimism in hope of expectation of good results. The truth and good news are that the Holy Spirit is the One who quickens our hearts and minds to be hopeful in life and ministry. It means also that the spiritual person would be hopeful in spiritual things unlike the carnal person.

### **WHERE THERE IS LOVE, IT HOPES AND SEEKS TO FULFILL THE BEST IN PEOPLE.**

Indeed, the Christian faith is built and rests on the bible which provides hope for tomorrow and the future. This makes it a necessity for Christians to continue and show love in their Christian faith towards God, Body of Christ and people in the world depending on God's grace through the Holy Spirit.

### **THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS BASED ON THE BIBLE; NOT OTHER LITERATURE WRITINGS OF PEOPLE WHICH WERE NOT INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians Believers, love believes all things and therefore hopes all things as well. Truly, you cannot make sacrifices of time, energy, money, family and other profitable ventures for the sake of Christ and the Church and not be expectant of eternal and physical blessings. It is important to note that Paul made this statement in connection with **1 Corinthians 9:8 – 12** where his gospel of giving to support the work of the ministry was an expression of the love of God to Ministers. In his gospel analysis, he stated that those who plow do so in hope and those who threshes in hope must be partakers of the blessing. Clearly his emphasis is on expectation of being rewarded as a farmer in terms of harvest and is normal being the first to partake of the blessing.

**LIKE THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH, BELIEVE WITH EXPECTATION THAT YOUR RIGHTEOUS WORKS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD BE REWARDED BY GOD.**

It is in the light of this truth and revelation that he wrote to the Corinthians saying love hopes all things; good things. Why because love believes all things that pertain to life and righteousness. The Corinthians were to perfect their spiritual gifts and callings as a Church in the hope of eternal life and hope of Christ's second coming.

Simply put; if you believe in a good thing to happen and experience it, then you must hope for it. And love for Christ as the salvation of God makes it possible. The waiting period is a period of preparation to be praying, reading and meditating the word of God, enjoying the leading of the Holy Spirit, meeting and fellowshiping together as a Church and fulfilling the Great Commission.

**IF LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS; THEN IT HOPES ALL THINGS ESPECIALLY ON THE WORD AND PROMISES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. AND THE CHURCH IS AT THE FOREFRONT TO SET RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLES AS A SPIRITUAL ENTITY.**

Besides, Paul knew that the perfection of the spiritual gifts through love was not a nine day wonder but a gradual process. Hence in love, they were to hope for the achievement and fulfillment of the blessings and promises of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The challenges of the Church meant that as their spiritual father, he had to teach them that love hopes for all things in righteousness and not to use ungodly and unrighteous means to build their Christian faith, ministries and the Church.

**USE THE WAITING PERIOD TO DEVELOP YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IN HOPE AND PERFECT SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND CALLINGS OF GOD. FOR LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS.**

The Psalmist states that his soul waits silently for God alone, For his expectation is from Him (**Psalms 62:5**). Again the bible states that the hope of the righteous will be gladness but the expectation of the wicked will perish (**Proverbs 10:28**).

## **A// HOPE NUGGETS; BE ENCOURAGED**

There is no empty hope in the Christian faith because it thrives on the word and promises of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Therefore hope must be alive in the Church as New Covenant people just the Old Covenant people believed and had hope in God's promises.

The bible says that the faith of the people under the Old Covenant is only made complete when our faith in Christ is made whole. For the likes of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, and the Elders, and women who received their dead child alive, and others who were mocked and beaten and made destitute for their faith did not receive the promises of God to God's salvation plan but they saw them from a distance **(Hebrews 11:1 – 38)**. Though they died in faith, their hope was alive till fulfillment of the messianic prophecy through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the bible says that the Church of Believing Christians have received a better covenant to complement and fulfill the faith of the people under the Old Covenant; that they should not be made perfect apart from us **(Hebrews 11:39 & 40)**. Let these hope nuggets encourage you in the Christian faith.

## **1// HOPE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**1 Timothy 1:1 – Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.**

Apostle Paul believed His call to minister the gospel of salvation from God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ called Paul into ministry but He did not give him details. Yet Paul had great hope in the future and unknown because God's word had been spoken to him by the resurrected, ascended and victorious Christ. He believed that God's love shown in the work of Jesus Christ provides hope for good and effective Christian living with efficient and best results in life and ministry.

Like Apostle Paul, ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ have great hope in their callings and ministries because Jesus Christ lives forever. They do not know it all but the Holy Spirit makes them have great hope of the future and even the promises of God to be received in eternity. If the faith of the leader is strong, then the faith of team members would also be strong. Literally if your employer is healthy, then you are also healthy for  $1 + 1 = 2$ .

**THE PLACE OF BEING CALLED INTO MINISTRY IS THERE WITH BROAD DEFINED MINISTRY AREAS. LIKE PAUL AND ALL OTHER MINISTERS, THE PLACE OF HOPE IN GOD'S WORD AND PROMISES IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INEVITABLE BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS AND DIRECTIONS IN MINISTRY AND USAGE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE PERFECTED IN YEARS.**

## **2// PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

**Ephesians 1:18 – the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**

The holy desire of Apostle Paul was to pray for the Christians in Ephesus for their spiritual growth through revelation and wisdom so that they can appreciate the divinity of Jesus Christ and the riches of His inheritance in glory. He admonished them to be hopeful in their Christian faith because the riches and inheritance of Jesus Christ is not all experienced and known within a short period in ministry. For the attainment of spiritual growth and maturity are the work of the Holy Spirit in every Christian's life and ministry.

**KNOW THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS EVEREADY TO SHOW US REVELATIONS AND TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS TO US SO THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AND NOT DESTROYED; FAITHFULNESS TO THE END.**

## **3// FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS**

**Hebrews 12:2 – looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

If we have hope as Christians, then we must be using Jesus Christ as our mirror and emulating his life in love and not as a duty; for love is beyond duty because of Jesus Christ whom we have believed as Saviour and Lord. Indeed the life of the Christian without Jesus Christ is like any other religion that claims to know God. Absolutely impossible. Don't be religious but be Christ centred and focused. Christ in you; not the devil.

## **4// JESUS CHRIST OUR SURE ROCK OF SALVATION.**

**Colossians 1:27 – To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

God designed that the riches of his glory would be found in Jesus Christ and not in any other person or idol or knowledge or religion or demon or the devil. Only Jesus Christ is the knowledge and wisdom of God who fulfilled the messianic prophecy through the Patriarchs, Moses and the Law, Prophets and Priests, kings to the New Testament era of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore the extension of eternal salvation to all Christians even the Gentiles has the promise and assurance of seeing and experiencing glorious things of God by the Holy Spirit because of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**THE GENTILES ALSO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF SEEING AND EXPERIENCING THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN CHRIST BECAUSE OF THE HOPE WE HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS.**

#### **5// CHRIST IN YOU IS THE HOPE OF GLORY**

**1 Thessalonians 2:19 – For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**

The joy and crown of the Christian is the continuous reminder of the Holy Spirit to be faithful and receive the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ at his second coming. This hope must be kept alive in us as we go to church and attend other Christian programs, and perform our Christian and secular roles for the blessing of humanity.

**KEEP HOPE ALIVE IN THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST TO JUSTIFY OUR JOY, CROWN OF REJOICING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A CHURCH**

#### **6// BELIEVE; DEAD CHRISTIAN SOULS LIVE FOREVER**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13 – But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.**

Apostle Paul's message to the Thessalonian Christians was that Christians who had died would be with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. No worries at all. This truth corrected the confusion in the Church that they have missed the glorious second coming of Jesus; that was the hope of the season. Truly Jesus' second coming would be glorious just as Christians who die in hope of their souls to be with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the words of Jesus to the Sadducees who tested Him of a woman's marriage to seven men and who qualified to be the husband in eternity, His reply was that in the resurrection of the dead, we are like angels in heaven who do not marry. God is the God of the living and not the dead. Therefore He is the God of believing Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who are alive to God **(Mark 12:26 & 27)**.

**THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION IS SURE FOR GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD BUT THE LIVING; ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB.**

#### **7// THE HOLY SPIRIT ACTIVATES HOPE**

**Job 14:7 – 9 “For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, And that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, And its stump may die in the ground, Yet at the scent of water it will bud And bring forth branches like a plant.**

Hope in life and ministry is a necessity for the Christian because it assures and increases our faith to pursue holiness in the Holy Spirit. Without love in hope, the devil and our

enemies would discourage us along the way of righteousness and make us succumb to the pressures of this world to sin and backslide. Therefore learning from the book of Job, there is hope for the Christian who has the Holy Spirit in him or her, as water, to make alive and restore our faith and works for Christ and God. If there is hope for a tree cut down with withered stem, branches and leaves destroyed to bounce back at the scent of water, then any dead situation in the life of the Christian and the Church, can be corrected by the Holy Spirit in Christ's righteousness.

No Church should call it quits because the high level corruption of the Corinthian Church was corrected by the interventions of Apostle Paul in the Holy Spirit. The Churches can be holy if prayer precedes every activity to conform to God's will in Christ. Then knowledge and wisdom of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit would ensure corrections and spiritual growth and maturity, for hope to be alive tomorrow and the future unto eternity.

**HOPE IS THE MIND OF THE HEART TO KNOW AND BELIEVE THAT FAITHFULNESS IN LIFE AND MINISTRY, TO THE END, WOULD RECEIVE GLORIOUS BLESSINGS AND INHERITANCES AT THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. HOPE IS OPTIMISM FOR RECEIPT OF FUTURE REWARDS.**

**8// HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT; VERY PROMISING AND ASSURING.**

**Romans 5:5 – Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

Hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us as Believing Christians. This hope of being with God is our confidence to keep on believing in the love of God.

Hence the Holy Spirit is our constant reminder of this hope in God that just as Christ resurrected from the dead and ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand side of the Father, likewise our placement with Christ is guaranteed to make our hope live in Christ.

Hence hope does not disappoint us because it is always made alive by the love of God freely given to us in Christ and receipt of the Holy Spirit.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IS EVEREADY TO MAKE YOU HOPE IN THE WORKS OF GOD AS A CHRISTIAN. HOPE IN GOD CANNOT BE DISAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE HIS LOVE FOR US IS THE RESIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US TO LOVE AND BELIEVE ALWAYS FOR THE RECEIPT OF BLESSINGS AND INHERITANCE IN CHRIST.**

**PRAYER**

**Our prayer to You O God is that we have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with love to hope all things.**

Let our hope not be on frivolous things but in Christ and His second coming, the promises of God and perfecting of the Church, spiritual gifts and ministries.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

IF LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS, THEN IT MUST BE BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE PROMISES OF GOD, TO STRENGTHEN OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH NOW AND THE FUTURE, WITH ETERNAL RESULTS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

SEE A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER WHO CANNOT BE BROKEN TO PIECES WITH THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE, AND THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL IS THAT HIS OR HER CHRISTIAN FAITH IS LOVE THAT BELIEVES AND HOPES IN GOD'S WORD IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS; THE PROMISES OF GOD IN CHRIST**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:7c – Love hopes all things**

Hope is simply defined as a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen. It is also a feeling of trust in notable relationships such as Christian relationships marriages, families and friendships. It is associated with desire, expectation, wish, aspiration, ambition, aim, plan, dream, daydream, pipedream, longing, yearning, craving, hankering.

Love seeks for the best in people and therefore hopes for fulfillment in their lives and ministries. The process to fulfillment is the element of hope which places confidence in a person(s) or situation(s). It shows that love in relationships and service for the Christian should be perceived with optimism in hope of expectation of good results. The truth and good news are that the Holy Spirit is the One who quickens our hearts and minds to be hopeful in life and ministry. It means also that the spiritual person would be hopeful in spiritual things unlike the carnal person.

### **WHERE THERE IS LOVE, IT HOPES AND SEEKS TO FULFILL THE BEST IN PEOPLE.**

Indeed, the Christian faith is built and rests on the bible which provides hope for tomorrow and the future. This makes it a necessity for Christians to continue and show love in their Christian faith towards God, Body of Christ and people in the world depending on God's grace through the Holy Spirit.

### **THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS BASED ON THE BIBLE; NOT OTHER LITERATURE WRITINGS OF PEOPLE WHICH WERE NOT INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians Believers, love believes all things and therefore hopes all things as well. Truly, you cannot make sacrifices of time, energy, money, family and other profitable ventures for the sake of Christ and the Church and not be expectant of eternal and physical blessings. It is important to note that Paul made this statement in connection with **1 Corinthians 9:8 – 12** where his gospel of giving to support the work of the ministry was an expression of the love of God to Ministers. In his gospel analysis, he stated that those who plow do so in hope and those who threshes in hope must be partakers of the blessing. Clearly his emphasis is on expectation of being rewarded as a farmer in terms of harvest and is normal being the first to partake of the blessing.

**LIKE THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH, BELIEVE WITH EXPECTATION THAT YOUR RIGHTEOUS WORKS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD BE REWARDED BY GOD.**

It is in the light of this truth and revelation that he wrote to the Corinthians saying love hopes all things; good things. Why because love believes all things that pertain to life and righteousness. The Corinthians were to perfect their spiritual gifts and callings as a Church in the hope of eternal life and hope of Christ's second coming.

Simply put; if you believe in a good thing to happen and experience it, then you must hope for it. And love for Christ as the salvation of God makes it possible. The waiting period is a period of preparation to be praying, reading and meditating the word of God, enjoying the leading of the Holy Spirit, meeting and fellowshiping together as a Church and fulfilling the Great Commission.

**IF LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS; THEN IT HOPES ALL THINGS ESPECIALLY ON THE WORD AND PROMISES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. AND THE CHURCH IS AT THE FOREFRONT TO SET RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLES AS A SPIRITUAL ENTITY.**

Besides, Paul knew that the perfection of the spiritual gifts through love was not a nine day wonder but a gradual process. Hence in love, they were to hope for the achievement and fulfillment of the blessings and promises of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The challenges of the Church meant that as their spiritual father, he had to teach them that love hopes for all things in righteousness and not to use ungodly and unrighteous means to build their Christian faith, ministries and the Church.

**USE THE WAITING PERIOD TO DEVELOP YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IN HOPE AND PERFECT SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND CALLINGS OF GOD. FOR LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS.**

The Psalmist states that his soul waits silently for God alone, For his expectation is from Him (**Psalms 62:5**). Again the bible states that the hope of the righteous will be gladness but the expectation of the wicked will perish (**Proverbs 10:28**).

## **A// HOPE NUGGETS (ADDENDUM); BE ENCOURAGED**

There is no empty hope in the Christian faith because it thrives on the word and promises of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Therefore hope must be alive in the Church as New Covenant people just as the Old Covenant people believed and had hope in God's promises.

The bible says that the faith of the people under the Old Covenant is only made complete when our faith in Christ is made whole. For the likes of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, and the Elders, and women who received their dead child alive, and others who were mocked and beaten and made destitute for their faith did not receive the promises of God to God's salvation plan but they saw them from a distance **(Hebrews 11:1 – 38)**. Though they died in faith, their hope was alive till fulfillment of the messianic prophecy through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the bible says that the Church of Believing Christians have received a better covenant to complement and fulfill the faith of the people under the Old Covenant; that they should not be made perfect apart from us **(Hebrews 11:39 & 40)**. Let these hope nuggets encourage you in the Christian faith.

## **1// PROMISE THROUGH FAITH; NOT THE LAW**

**Romans 4:13 – 18 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."**

Truth and revelation in Christ is by the Holy Spirit. Apostle Paul points out clearly that the promise of God through Abraham is to be received through faith and not the law. Faith goes with grace to include all people, Jews and Gentiles, irrespective of country, tribe and tongue, education or class. The law restricted the inclusion Gentiles unlike the Jews, practitioners of the Mosaic Law.

We have been told to emulate the righteous example of Abraham's faith in believing God concerning the promise of being the father of many nations. The promise of his seed of male child came at a time where hope was gone in terms of human reproductive system. Both Abraham and Sarah's sex and reproductive organs were dead but their belief in God made them hope in Him for results. This promise of a male child through whom the whole world would be blessed became a reality with the birth of Isaac. It is of this same spirit

that Christians must believe God's promises in Christ and hope beyond human expectation to receive them. This is to all Christians who hope for the promises of God and inheritance in Christ; knowing and believing that God calls those things which do not exist as though they exist.

**THE PROMISE OF GOD IS ALL FOR ALL PEOPLE THROUGH FAITH LIKE ABRAHAM AND NOT THE LAW. BELIEVE IN JESUS AS SAVIOUR AND LORD AND KEEP HOPING IN HIS GOODNESS.**

**THERE IS A POINT IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH WHERE HOPE IN THE PROMISES OF GOD THROUGH FAITH BECOMES THE ONLY WAY TO CHANGE FROM DEAD SITUATIONS TO LIFE SITUATIONS.**

### **2// FAITH WORKS; HOPE BELIEVES**

**Galatians 3:13 & 14 – Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

Apostle Paul's message to the Church was the assurance of the Christian's faith as blessed beyond the curse of the law. The good news is that Christ took our place of sin and became a curse so that entering into the promise of God in Christ is only belief in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Now salvation is by faith under the New Covenant everywhere and not by the law under the Old Covenant. The intention of God is clear to transfer the blessing of Abraham to all peoples beyond the Jewish origin. Faith in Jesus is response to the Spirit desire to enter into the line of inheritance in Christ.

This is the reason why many people in different countries have become Christians in response to the preaching of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore hope in Christ with heavenly blessings and inheritance should be our mindset as we worship God and serve the Lord in love. It should dictate more in our prayers and line of action as obedience to God's word than the troubles of this life and challenges of the ministry.

**THE LAW BECAME A CURSE SO THAT THE PROMISE OF ABRAHAM THROUGH FAITH WORKS TO RECEIVE THE BLESSING AND MAKE HOPE BELIEVE IN THE PROMISES OF GOD UNTO FULFILLMENT. LOVE HOPES IN ALL THINGS AS WE AWAIT THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES OF GOD THROUGH FAITH.**

### **3// HOPE IN THE BLESSINGS OF GOD**

**Ephesians 1:3 – 6 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons**

**by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.**

Knowing that your parents have properties for you to inherit makes life meaningful and hopeful. In the same way, every Christian must know and be mindful of prepared blessings and inheritance in Christ. This is to assure us of our divine selection as a result of God's love and favour to us before the foundation of the world.

This means that you are marked for blessings and inheritance in Christ. For God, His will is at work and all we have to do is to be holy and pure like Jesus in this corrupt world. Nobody forced the hands of God to choose us because He did it in His good pleasure with joy for His praise and glory in His Beloved; Jesus Christ. Acceptance must therefore ensure confidence in our Christian faith to facilitate and promote holiness and righteousness.

**KNOWLEDGE AND REVELATION OF GOD'S BLESSINGS IN CHRIST ARE ENOUGH MOTIVATION FOR WORSHIP AND SERVICE IN LOVE; OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH, HOPE AND SERVICE IN GOD'S WILL. LOVE HOPES FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES.**

#### **4// GLORIOUS HOPE**

**Colossians 1:3 – 8 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.**

Apostle Paul's joy for the Christians in Colosse was as a result of the Christian faith and service in the Church and to humanity. He prayed fervently for them to be effective by the Holy Spirit and maintenance of their Christian faith so that the hope of eternal blessings and inheritance for them in heaven would be guaranteed.

For Apostle Paul, the grace of God; the gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them and also to the world with righteous fruits needs to be experienced as blessings and inheritance in Christ. This should be the hope of every Christian like the Colossian Christians. It is also true that ministers like Epaphras declared the same message in the spirit of love to them and have hope in the Lord.

**OUR GLORIOUS HOPE TO RECEIVE ETERNAL BLESSINGS AND INHERITANCE IN HEAVEN MUST BE SUSTAINED THROUGH PRAYERS, HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. PRAYERS FOR MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL AND CHURCH MEMBERS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED WITH 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 – PRAY**

**WITHOUT CEASING. LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS; BLESSINGS LAID UP FOR THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN.**

### **5// LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN – SPIRITUALITY**

**Matthew 6:19 – 21 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

Jesus made the distinction between heavenly and earthly blessings to connect with spirituality and carnality. The former cannot be stolen and destroyed by earthly and demonic beings unlike the latter. It reveals the power of God to provide, protect and preserve eternal treasures for us in heaven.

Hence the righteous counsel to be wise and choose heavenly treasures over earthly treasures. For one’s choice is the determination of your hearts interests, taste and passion.

**SPIRITUALITY IN CHRIST WORKS FOR TREASURES IN HEAVEN KEPT SECURELY BY THE POWER OF GOD. THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN IS TO ATTAIN ETERNAL SALVATION AND RECEIVE HEAVENLY TREASURES KEPT FOR HIM/HER. CARNALITY WORKS FOR ONLY TREASURES LAID ON EARTH LIKE THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL. LOVE SAYS BE WISE AND HOPEFUL.**

### **6// PURITY OF HEARTS AND DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL ARE NON – NEGOTIABLE**

**1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**

To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and defend it without sin is to be pure and holy in our Christian relationships. The Holy Spirit makes it possible to explain your hope of being with Christ to people all the time through humility and trust in God. This is very effective in evangelism to win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ. In this truth, love speaks of the hope of the Christian faith to people in any given opportunity.

**LIVE THE GOOD CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO INCREASE CONFIDENCE AND BOLDNESS IN THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. IN THE SAME WAY THAT HOLINESS TO GOD IS NON – NEGOTIABLE, GIVING AN ANSWER IN RESPECT TO ONE’S HOPE IN CHRIST WITH HUMILITY AND REVERENCE IS NON – NEGOTIABLE TOO.**

## **7// HOPE TO BE LIKE JESUS IN HEAVEN**

**1 John 3:1 – 3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

Having a picture about us being in heaven and with our Lord Jesus Christ is righteous because it helps to sustain our Christian faith by the Holy Spirit. How we will look like keep ringing bells in the ears of Christians; being angels or like Jesus on earth. Whether angels or Jesus, the apostle John says that we shall be like Christ in nature when He is revealed because we resemble Him on earth in faith and works in love.

Indeed, the hope of being with Christ and looking like Him in eternity makes us make a conscious decision to be holy. To attain to Christ's level is to live holy lives by the Holy Spirit as Christians. If you really want to go to heaven and be like Jesus Christ; Be holy. Hallelujah!

**WHEN WE ARE FILLED WITH LOVE, THEN SHALL WE RESEMBLE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH AND ETERNITY. BE HOLY AS HE IS HOLY BECAUSE OF THE HOPE OF RAPTURE AND RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.**

These biblical examples reveal the richness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Church based on God's promises of eternal life, spiritual blessings and treasures, and holiness. We are to bear the fruits of love and faithfulness by the Holy Spirit if we are to inherit the blessings of the Lord. We are to love and perfect the spiritual gifts that God has blessed the Church to become great Ministers of Christ.

Love hopes all things in Christ given to us to fulfill Christ's vision and mission as well as inherit the spiritual blessings of God prepared for us in heaven. Be wise like the Corinthian's Believers because the promises of God are yes and amen **(2 Corinthians 1:20)**. Know that God's divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ. For the righteous intent of God is to make us partake of the divine nature in exceedingly and precious promises, and escape the corruption of this world; lust **(2 Peter 1:3 &4)**.

**YOU HAVE THE DIVINE POWER TO LOVE AND HOPE IN ALL THINGS; THE PROMISES, BLESSINGS AND GOODNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST. ONCE LOVE AT WORK IN YOU HOPES ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS, YOU SHALL BEAR THE FRUIT OF LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER, CHRISTIAN LEADER AND MINISTER.**

## PRAYER

Dear God, give us the grace to love and hope all things as we show commitment and faithfulness in our calls, ministries and the Church.

Since Your promises are yes and amen, help us to inherit them in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We pray against any form of deceit through worldly lifestyles and doctrines and influences, and demonic practices and doctrines and influences.

We pray for grace in prayer, watchfulness, holiness, righteousness in commitment and faithfulness through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that our confidence in Christ would prepare us spiritually in our Christian faith and works, usage of spiritual gifts, preaching, teaching and defense of our faith in Christ.

In Jesus' name we attain and overcome. Amen.

**GOD NEVER DENIES ANYBODY IN CHRIST THE HEAVENLY AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN PREPARED FOR HIM. BUT YOU CAN DENY YOURSELF IN YOUR LACK OF DISCERNMENT TO MAINTAIN YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST AND LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE YES AND AMEN AND ATTAINING THEM MEANS THAT WE HAVE FULFILLED ALL RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENTS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT MEANS THAT WE HAVE FULFILLED CHRIST'S VISION AND MISSION. LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS EVEN THE PROMISES OF GOD PREPARED FOR US IN HEAVEN. YES OUR GLORIOUS FUTURE IN CHRIST. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **ENDURING SPIRIT; QUITTERS DON'T WIN AND WINNERS DON'T QUIT (1)**

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)**. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 7d – Love endures all things.**

Love does a lot of wonders in life with the achievement of remarkable results. Indeed, where there is love, there is possibility. Therefore, Paul showed the Corinthians Believers another way to excel in love in Christian relationships and usage of the spiritual gifts. Since love does not fail, Paul meant that love that endures has the reward of achieve righteous and eternal results by the Church. Hence the Corinthians Believers were charged to endure all challenges and sufferings for the sake of Christ and emulation of him in the apostolic ministry. If the Church was to be successful in ministry works and Christian relationships, they needed to endure in the name of love.

If Jacob was able to endure 14 years of waiting for his beloved wife Rachel, then the love of God for humanity in Christ is greater and more powerful with amazing results all over the world. The bible says that we are now ambassadors of Christ charged with the divine mandate to preach the gospel and reconcile humanity to God. Hence we read that: **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21)**. Hence Christ's sacrificial death on the cross that saved humanity is the depth of His love for us to worship God, maintain our faith in Him and do all things in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is also in us to strengthen our Christian faith and make us overcomers like metals that undergo a certain level of heat to make its value visible without melting away. It is also like a pregnant woman who goes through the nine (9) months gestational period to carry a baby, labour period and gives birth in pain but rejoices afterwards.

All these examples show that there are certain innate things that make endurance possible with good results. For Christians, our belief and works in faith hang on God's word and the Holy Spirit. When they are in us fully unto righteous works, then challenging situations and persecutions become springboards unto success and achievements, and not for complaints and quits in worship and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. The enduring spirit becomes active because knowledge of the end results is known to be glorious and rewarding. For we endure when hope tells us that the future is bright and rewarding eternally.

Earlier, Paul had written to the Corinthians Believers reminding them about the foundation of the Church and the building blocks, and the spirit of endurance that produced righteous and eternal results.

We read

**1 Corinthians 3:14 – If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.**

The Apostle Paul stated emphatically that only Christian works that survive the vicissitudes of life; challenges and problems, in righteousness would qualify for eternal rewards. The fire of God's word and Holy Spirit will test the quality of each man's work in and outside the Church. If our works are not the doctrines of the devil, self – centredness and pride but building blocks on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will come forth as gold. For fire brings out the pure gold as with other precious minerals; silver and others.

It means therefore that we must depend on the Holy Spirit to lead us in our service, in love, to God and humanity. It means also that you are not to use the spirit of the devil and other unrighteous ways to do the works of God. Don't try to help God with evil spirits and sinful human strategies in the name of Jesus Christ or under the guise of a Church or Minister or Church Leader or Christian Leader or Believing Christian. For cursed is the one who does the work of God deceitfully (**Jeremiah 48:10**) and handles the word of God craftily (**2 Corinthians 4:2**). If you do it Christ way, love is at work to endure. But if it is of self, there is no love. Know that God gives the increase as we enjoy His grace whether we plant or water (**1 Corinthians 3:7**). Amen.

**HUMAN RESULTS MUST HAVE THE COMPLEMENT AND COMPLIMENT OF DIVINITY; I MEAN GODLY RESULTS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY WORK, OUR WORKS MUST PASS THE TEST OF GODLY EVALUATION AND QUALITY TO BE PERFECT WITH ETERNAL RESULTS. FOR LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS.**

How are you building your life as a Christian? Whose word is building your life and ministry? Which spirit is behind your thoughts, words and works? As Christians, we are to emulate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the leadings of the Holy Spirit. Not the spirit of the devil, demons, occult and all forms of evil spirits as reported in some

Christian circles. Throughout the generations, God's word has been tried and tested to make its obedience non – negotiable in this new dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

We read

**1 Peter 1:24 & 25 – because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.”**

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. Comparatively, the Word of God has survived sin and temptations of the devil in the lives of people like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judges, Moses, Aaron, the Prophets, Kings and leaders. Indeed the word of God has proved and confirmed the lies and deceptions of the devil, worldliness in education, riches, properties, and pride of humanity in this corrupt world since the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The many rise of men and women to power, riches, fame and popularity ended after their demise to become just historical figures. However, only the word of God necessitated obedience, transformation and change in the lives of people as proved in the lives of the Israelites and now through the gospel of Jesus Christ in all who believe as the Church **(Hebrews 1:1)**.

**DO NOT FADE AWAY IN YOUR TEMPORARY GLORY LIKE A FLOWER OR FIZZLE AWAY LIKE A VAPOUR BUT LET THE ENDURING WORD OF GOD INCREASE YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST TO WORSHIP AND WORKS, SHAPE AND DIRECT YOUR LIFE, AND ENDURE TO ATTAIN ETERNAL LIFE AND REWARDS.**

We read

**James 1:22 – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

Who does not know that  $1 + 1 = 2$ ? Likewise, knowledge, wisdom and obedience of God's word produce righteous results. This explains why the Apostle James emphasizes on practicing God's word to produce results oriented Christians instead of just being hearers. Do not be like people who delight in receiving prophecies without doing anything about them. You must show forth your faith by your works; at least be praying on them.

**OBEDIENCE PRODUCES GODLY RESULTS BUT DISOBEDIENCE PRODUCES REBELLION AND SIN. THERE IS ENDURANCE IN WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT; THERE IS NO ENDURANCE IN LACKADAISICAL ATTITUDE AND LAZINESS. LOVE MAKES ENDURANCE ACCEPTED AND TOLERABLE IN OUR OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

We read

**1 Corinthians 4:9 – 13 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to**

**angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.**

The irony of life revealed in ministry especially for the Apostles is listed as the first of the five (5) fold ministries; yet the most recorded sufferer in ministry. The Apostle Paul revealed that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is for love in service and not for showmanship of divine power and authority like our Lord Jesus Christ. It shows that the Apostle Paul, like other ministers of the gospel, was made to face the full rigours of public ridicule, shame and disgrace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You are like the donkey that carried Jesus; the carrier of blessings into the lives of people. Yet people will judge you wrongly, criticize and condemn you like a criminal. Besides, the devil will frustrate you at all levels and people would make life and ministry difficult. Truly, the basic necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter will be lacking in your life and ministry sometimes. You bless and help needy people all for the sake of Jesus Christ but they curse and fight you.

**THE FACT THAT YOU LOVE TO HELP AND SUPPORT THE NEEDY DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY WILL RECIPROCATE IN A POSITIVE WAY. O WHAT AN IRONY OF LIFE.**

The challenges in life and ministry enumerated by Apostle Paul are so serious and damaging to one's reputation that the description is the filth and refuse dump of the world. No wonder he said that Apostles have become fools for Christ sake **(1 Corinthians 4:9 – 13)**. The blessing of this irony is that all the challenges and sufferings produce eternal blessings in the lives of Christians, Church and humanity in general. Therefore in love, we endure so that others would be blessed forever. Hallelujah!

**THE APOSTOLIC MANTLE IS THE HIGHEST OF ALL MINISTRY MANTLES AND IS VOCAL WITH WORKS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT INVOLVES MINISTRY WORKS IN DIFFERENT TERRITORIES AND ENVIRONMENTS. IT IS ASSOCIATED WITH STIFF OPPOSITION, TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS, PERSECUTIONS AND SUFFERINGS FOR CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL OF SALVATION. SHOWING FORTH LOVE IS THE BEST SACRIFICE TO PREACH AND PROVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS SAVIOUR AND LORD.**

We read

**2 Corinthians 8:9 – For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.**

The irony about Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, was that He was rich but became poor for love sake to be at our level and make us attain eternal salvation and inherit the promises and blessings of God in Him. To be rich but live a poor life and suffer to save people as an Apostle of Jesus Christ is the grace of God to endure in the power of the Holy Spirit. He prayed, preached, taught, trained and enriched people not in the status of a wealthy person but in simplicity of an ordinarily person with a poor background.

Walking in Christ's footsteps is not just about Christian rights but also Christian duties in the power of the Holy Spirit. For in these truths, endurance in love achieve excellent results and attain perfection.

**WHEN GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON IN LOVE TO CHANGE THE WORLD, HE MADE HIM WEAR THE CLOTHE OF HUMILITY AND SIMPLICITY. ONCE ENDURANCE IN HIS MESSIANIC MINISTRY OVERCAME ALL WORKS OF EVIL, THE CHURCH MUST ALSO ENDURE THE CHALLENGES OF THIS LIFE AS WE EXPRESS LOVE FOR CHRIST. TRULY, LOVE TO ENDURE ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST IS INEVITABLE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; SACRIFICIAL LIVING FOR OTHER PEOPLE TO BE BLESSED.**

We read

**Philippians 1:29 – For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.**

There is no easy way in the Christian faith especially for those in ministry with gifts of the Holy Spirit. You have to look unto Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith. You have to pray unceasingly, fast, preach, teach, counsel, heal the sick, cast out devils, and fulfill your ministry. Yes you cannot and must not jump the gun for the process is the same though the procedures vary slightly depending on existing conditions.

The bible says that we must go through many persecutions to enter into the kingdom of heaven **(Acts 14:22)**.

**KNOWING THAT SUFFERING IS PART OF THE CHRISTIAN PACKAGE IS ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE OF STRENGTH TO ENDURE AND ACHIEVE RIGHTEOUS RESULTS IN LOVE.**

To the Church, we must emulate Christ's example and Paul's example to love and endure all things because of the hope of eternal life and the hope of being rewarded eternally and the betterment of the lives of other people. Once we believe all things, there is no turning back on our Christian faith. For love empties us of self and pride to fill the lives and ministries of Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers. The Holy Spirit is our Helper to love and endure all things. The Church needs you to endure in order to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. For love makes us abide in the gospel of Jesus Christ; our faith. Yes in love we endure and overcome all challenging situations because our joy is in the Lord and His word of salvation.

**ENDURING SPIRIT; QUITTERS DON'T WIN AND WINNERS DON'T QUIT. LOVE EMPTIES US OF SELF AND PRIDE TO FILL THE LIVES AND MINISTRIES OF BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS.**

### **PRAYER**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of His sufferings make us endure all things in love and build His Church in righteousness.**

**May God's grace cause us to submit to His will and obey His word in Christ even in times of persecutions and sufferings to build His Church.**

**May God's grace help us to use the right building blocks that would endure His fire of purification like gold, silver and other precious minerals and not wrong building blocks that would be burnt like wood, straw and stubble.**

**Let love be our portion to endure all things as a Church in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**LOVE EXCELS IN ALL THINGS AND THEREFORE ENDURES ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND THE PERFECTION OF THE CHURCH. YOUR ROLE IS INEVITABLE AND NON – NEGOTIABLE. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**IF YOU WANT THE EASY WAY OUT IN LIFE AND MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, THEN GOD'S WORD REMINDS YOU TO LOVE AND ENDURE ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST. IF APOSTLE PAUL ENDURED ALL THINGS FOR THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE FORMED IN THE CHURCH OF CORINTH, THEN LET LOVE MAKE YOU ENDURE ALL THINGS TO MAKE YOUR LOCAL CHURCH PERFECT AND BLESSED THROUGH EDIFICATION. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## ENDURING SPIRIT; QUITTERS DON'T WIN AND WINNERS DON'T QUIT (2)

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### INSPIRATION

Having declared that the most excellent gift is love, Apostle Paul went a step further to show what love is or not in human relationships, human works and especially at the Church level to the Corinthians Believers. His emphasis was on the agape kind of love; the love of God and His Son Jesus Christ towards the existence of humanity that culminated in creation of Adam and Eve, the relationship and works of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Mosaic law, Aaronic priesthood, Judges, Prophets, Kings, the work of eternal salvation and Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit. This love is agape, sacrificial and unconditional without erotic and sexual feelings, desires and action.

Simply defined agape love is the selfless and sacrificial love of one person for another without sexual connotations; especially love that is spiritual and pure in nature. Christians are to show this kind of love in our worship of God and make meaningful results in Christian and human relationships. The Holy Spirit promotes this kind of agape love in the lives and ministries of all Believing Christians; fruit of love by the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22a**). Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 7d – Love endures all things.**

Love does a lot of wonders in life with the achievement of remarkable results. Indeed, where there is love, there is possibility. Therefore, Paul showed the Corinthians Believers another way to excel in love in Christian relationships and usage of the spiritual gifts. Since love does not fail, Paul meant that love that endures has the reward of achieve righteous and eternal results by the Church. Hence the Corinthians Believers were charged to endure all challenges and sufferings for the sake of Christ and emulation of him in the apostolic ministry. If the Church was to be successful in ministry works and Christian relationships, they needed to endure in the name of love.

If Jacob was able to endure 14 years of waiting for his beloved wife Rachel, then the love of God for humanity in Christ is greater and more powerful with amazing results all over the world. The bible says that we are now ambassadors of Christ charged with the divine mandate to preach the gospel and reconcile humanity to God. Hence we read that: **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21)**. Hence Christ's sacrificial death on the cross that saved humanity is the depth of His love for us to worship God, maintain our faith in Him and do all things in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is also in us to strengthen our Christian faith and make us overcomers like metals that undergo a certain level of heat to make its value visible without melting away. It is also like a pregnant woman who goes through the nine (9) months gestational period to carry a baby, labour period and gives birth in pain but rejoices afterwards.

All these examples show that there are certain innate things that make endurance possible with good results. For Christians, our belief and works in faith hang on God's word and the Holy Spirit. When they are in us fully unto righteous works, then challenging situations and persecutions become springboards unto success and achievements, and not for complaints and quits in worship and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. The enduring spirit becomes active because knowledge of the end results is known to be glorious and rewarding. For we endure when hope tells us that the future is bright and rewarding eternally.

Earlier, Paul had written to the Corinthians Believers reminding them about the foundation of the Church and the building blocks, and the spirit of endurance that produced righteous and eternal results.

We read

**1 Corinthians 3:14 – If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.**

The Apostle Paul stated emphatically that only Christian works that survive the vicissitudes of life; challenges and problems, in righteousness would qualify for eternal rewards. The fire of God's word and Holy Spirit will test the quality of each man's work in and outside the Church. If our works are not the doctrines of the devil, self – centredness and pride but building blocks on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will come forth as gold. For fire brings out the pure gold as with other precious minerals; silver and others.

It means therefore that we must depend on the Holy Spirit to lead us in our service, in love, to God and humanity. It means also that you are not to use the spirit of the devil and other unrighteous ways to do the works of God. Don't try to help God with evil spirits and sinful human strategies in the name of Jesus Christ or under the guise of a Church or Minister or Church Leader or Christian Leader or Believing Christian. For cursed is the one who does the work of God deceitfully (**Jeremiah 48:10**) and handles the word of God craftily (**2 Corinthians 4:2**). If you do it Christ way, love is at work to endure. But if it is of self, there is no love. Know that God gives the increase as we enjoy His grace whether we plant or water (**1 Corinthians 3:7**). Amen.

**HUMAN RESULTS MUST HAVE THE COMPLEMENT AND COMPLIMENT OF DIVINITY; I MEAN GODLY RESULTS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY WORK, OUR WORKS MUST PASS THE TEST OF GODLY EVALUATION AND QUALITY TO BE PERFECT WITH ETERNAL RESULTS. FOR LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS.**

How are you building your life as a Christian? Whose word is building your life and ministry? Which spirit is behind your thoughts, words and works? As Christians, we are to emulate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the leadings of the Holy Spirit. Not the spirit of the devil, demons, occult and all forms of evil spirits as reported in some

Christian circles. Throughout the generations, God's word has been tried and tested to make its obedience non – negotiable in this new dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

We read

**1 Peter 1:24 & 25 – because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.”**

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. Comparatively, the Word of God has survived sin and temptations of the devil in the lives of people like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judges, Moses, Aaron, the Prophets, Kings and leaders. Indeed the word of God has proved and confirmed the lies and deceptions of the devil, worldliness in education, riches, properties, and pride of humanity in this corrupt world since the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The many rise of men and women to power, riches, fame and popularity ended after their demise to become just historical figures. However, only the word of God necessitated obedience, transformation and change in the lives of people as proved in the lives of the Israelites and now through the gospel of Jesus Christ in all who believe as the Church **(Hebrews 1:1)**.

**DO NOT FADE AWAY IN YOUR TEMPORARY GLORY LIKE A FLOWER OR FIZZLE AWAY LIKE A VAPOUR BUT LET THE ENDURING WORD OF GOD INCREASE YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST TO WORSHIP AND WORKS, SHAPE AND DIRECT YOUR LIFE, TO ATTAIN ETERNAL LIFE AND REWARDS.**

We read

**James 1:22 – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

Who does not know that 1 + 1 = 2? Likewise, knowledge, wisdom and obedience of God's word produce righteous results. This explains why the Apostle James emphasizes on practicing God's word to produce results oriented Christians instead of just being hearers. Do not be like people who delight in receiving prophecies without doing anything about them. You must show forth your faith by your works; at least be praying on them.

**OBEDIENCE PRODUCES GODLY RESULTS BUT DISOBEDIENCE PRODUCES REBELLION AND SIN. THERE IS ENDURANCE IN WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT; THERE IS NO ENDURANCE IN LACKADAISICAL ATTITUDE AND LAZINESS. LOVE MAKES ENDURANCE ACCEPTED AND TOLERABLE IN OUR OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

**A// THE PROMISES OF GOD ARE YES AND AMEN**

The promises of God are yes and amen **(2 Corinthians 1:20)** show commitment and faithfulness of God to His word in Christ manifested in the works of the Holy Spirit.

However life and evil, light and darkness do not agree with each other as revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ in

**Matthew 16:16 – 19 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”**

This divine mandate was given to Peter on behalf of the Church. In this apostolic mandate, Peter led the Jerusalem Church to exercise Christ’s authority in the preaching of the gospel. Having Christ’s authority and the keys of the Kingdom does not mean that the gates of Hades will not fight. You will encounter demonic challenges that needs endurance to overcome.

**THE FACT THAT CHRIST HAS GIVEN THE CHURCH POWER AND AUTHORITY OVER THE DEVIL’S KINGDOM AND ACTIVITIES DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU WILL NOT FACE DEMONIC CHALLENGES IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. HENCE THE NEED TO ENDURE ALL CHALLENGES AND SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

### **B// GOD’S GOODNESS ENDURES CONTINUALLY**

**Psalms 52:1 – Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God endures continually.**

David knew of the boasts of evil people even the mighty in riches and wealth but his relationship with God revealed His goodness and faithfulness. Truly the educated, rich, proud, friends, enemies and satanists boast about their evil deeds and damages to the righteous but God’s provisions daily are meant to bless and satisfy us.

**GOD’S GOODNESS SUPERSEDES THE EVILS AND WICKEDNESS OF OUR ENEMIES. IF THE GOODNESS OF GOD ENDURES EVEN IN THE MIDST OF EVIL PEOPLE AND THEIR WICKEDNESS, THEN THE MIND OF THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE MEDITATION ON HIS GOODNESS AND ENDURE EVERY CHALLENGE AND PROBLEM FOR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST.**

### **C// ENDURANCE OVERCOMES HATRED**

**Matthew 10:22 – And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.**

When we love and labour for the sake of Christ, people respond with hatred. Already some Christians are experiencing amazing proportions of hatred in certain countries of

the world. Jesus prophesied that Christians would be hated for their holiness and righteousness contrary to the principles of this world and satanic influences and doctrines. Closing the gap to the end of the world, Jesus revealed that worldly hatred would increase against Christians but only those who patiently endures and remain faithful would become overcomers and victors in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**GOD HAS GIVEN US THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ENDURE AND BE FAITHFUL AS CHRISTIANS EMULATING THE RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

### **D// LACKADAISICAL ATTITUDE HAS NO ENDURANCE**

**Matthew 13:20 & 21 – But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. God’s word is meant to transform and bless us to conform to the image of God in Christ.**

In the parable of the sower by Jesus, the seed that fell on stony places are people who hear the word of God and are shaken by tribulations and persecutions. They cannot endure because they do not have the strength to withstand the storms of life. Trials and difficulties either test our Christian faith or come from the devil to make us backslide or curse God. Truly some Christians have become unfaithful because of sin of compromise and pride. They could not hold on to their Christian faith in their day of adversity.

**WHEN THE SEED OF THE WORD OF GOD; WHEN THE SEED OF FAITH DOES NOT HAVE A FRIM ROOT IN YOUR HEART BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO ENDURE THE STONY PLACES OF LIFE, ONE BECOMES A VICTIM OF BACKSLIDING.**

### **E// THE WORD OF GOD WILL TEST YOU**

The bible says of Joseph in Egypt that the word of the LORD tested him **(Psalms 105:19)** until it came to pass in his life. They hurt his feet in fetters and laid him in iron as a condemned and imprisoned criminal. But Joseph overcame because He loved God s a true Israelite and feared evil; could not sin against his master Potiphar.

If the word of God tests you, it is better than backsliding and endangering yourself with all kinds of sinful, evil and wicked activities. Even if the devil tempts you to sin like Potiphar’s wife with Joseph in Egypt, the word of God and Holy Spirit are in you to endure all kinds of imprisonment, lies, deceits, shame and disgrace. This is easier to endure and overcome in righteousness when our Christian faith, relationships and works, and usages of spiritual gifts are guided with love.

**BEING FILLED WITH LOVE MAKES ENDURANCE EASY TO OVERCOME CHALLENGING SITUATIONS IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH.**

## **F// DON'T FAINT IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE**

**Proverbs 24:10 – If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small.**

This verse speaks of a day of trouble different from other good days. One is supposed to prove himself mentally, psychologically, physically and intellectually as a man and handle the bad situation in a way to change it. But if one does not prove himself with strength to manage the situation, then strength is small comparatively because other people overcome it.

Indeed their strength is small either because there is no love in the context of Paul's teaching on love as the excellent way.

**LOVE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS INCREASES THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE CHALLENGES OF THIS LIFE UNLIKE DISLIKES AND DISINTERESTS. THIS IS A VISIBLE SIGN OF OUR FAITH IN CHRIST AND ALL CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS.**

It means therefore that the Christian can overcome trials and temptations when there is spiritual growth as encouraged in

**2 Peter 3:17 &18 – You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, Peter admonishes his readers that since they know the truth, they should not depart from the error of the wicked and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Paul concluded his message of steadfastness in the belief of the Lord Jesus Christ to escape self – steadfastness and error in life. They were to be found worthy of their faith in Christ by having peace with God. This same message was said to have been preached and taught by Paul in the Churches. In other words, Peter counseled them to endure sound Christian doctrines in the midst of unsound doctrines and error.

This has been true of the world where sound Christian doctrines exist alongside with unsound worldly doctrines. But we have the Holy Spirit to maintain our faith in Christ unto God as a Church, usages of the five – fold ministries and other spiritual gifts. We are to bear the fruit of the Spirit to complement ministries and spiritual gifts.

**MAKE EVERY PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL EFFORT TO GROW SPIRITUALLY, ENDURE AND OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. FOLLOW THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST IN LOVE TO OVERCOME THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORLD AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE DEVIL IN THE LIFE OF SELF – RIGHTEOUSNESS. BE STEADFAST; ENDURE; OVERCOME.**

## **G// ENDURE ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT**

**2 Timothy 2:8 – 10 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.**

Paul's message to his spiritual son, Timothy, was the command to remember the personality and identity of Jesus Christ as the seed of David; a revelation of His humanity with all the promises to be fulfilled. This included His death, resurrection and ascension as his gospel preached everywhere. For this truth, he suffered persecution and even imprisonment like an enemy of the state. Thus Timothy was warned and encouraged to be committed in the work of the ministry.

Knowing that the word of God cannot be chained because it is written in our hearts and minds, Paul stated his position to endure all things for the sake of the elect. That is those saved to secure their eternal salvation. Truly his spirit and success of endurance has made us chosen and beneficiaries of the gospel of Jesus Christ even in our generation.

Apostle Paul's service in love to Jesus Christ was based on his personal encounter on the road of Damascus. His mercy and spare of judgment, and subsequent conversion and call to ministry reflected in commitment and faithfulness. He was in God's perfect will and therefore endured every suffering to ensure that people were saved and Christians were faithful to become overcomers.

**I ENDURE ALL SUFFERINGS FOR THE SAKE OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THE END WOULD BE GLORIOUS AND REWARDING. PRAYERS FOR POWER AND RIGHTEOUS WORKS IN CHRIST ARE INEVITABLE.**

**IF MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS WOULD ENDURE TO OVERCOME WORLDLY AND SATANIC CHALLENGES BY THE INTEGRITY OF GOD'S WORD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, MANY PEOPLE SHALL BE SAVED ETERNALLY AND SERVE AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO MANY CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS. TRULY LOVE ENDURES.**

To the Church, we must emulate Christ's example and Paul's example to love and endure all things because of the hope of eternal life and the hope of being rewarded eternally and the betterment of the lives of other people. Once we believe all things, there is no turning back on our Christian faith. For love empties us of self and pride to fill the lives and ministries of Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers. The Holy Spirit then becomes our Helper to love and endure all things.

The Church needs you to endure and stand firm in order to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ (**Romans 5:2**). For love makes us abide in the gospel of Jesus Christ; our faith.

Yes in love we endure and overcome all challenging situations because our joy is in the Lord and His word of salvation.

## **PRAYER**

**We thank You O God that there are blessings associated with love and endure the challenges to our Christian faith.**

**We pray that Your Holy Spirit helps us to endure the challenges of our Christian faith and remain faithful because of the hope of eternal life.**

**We pray also that we build prayer power, increase our knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ and be guided in wisdom as we endure persecutions and overcome the evils and wickedness of our enemies and the devil.**

**We pray that by faith we stand firm in the Lord Jesus Christ as we express love to perfect righteous works in ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

**LOVE EXCELS IN ALL THINGS AND THEREFORE ENDURES ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND THE PERFECTION OF THE CHURCH. LOVE EXCELS IN ALL THINGS AND THEREFORE ENDURES ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF THE SALVATION OF PEOPLE. BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD BECAUSE CHRIST IS IN YOU. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**IF YOU WANT THE EASY WAY OUT IN LIFE AND MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, THEN GOD'S WORD REMINDS YOU TO LOVE AND ENDURE ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST. IF APOSTLE PAUL ENDURED ALL THINGS FOR THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE FORMED IN THE CHURCH OF CORINTH, THEN LET LOVE MAKE YOU ENDURE ALL THINGS TO MAKE YOUR LOCAL CHURCH PERFECT AND BLESSED THROUGH EDIFICATION. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## LOVE NEVER FAILS; EMBRACE IT COMPLETELY

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### INSPIRATION

To the beloved from the Shulamite woman, many waters cannot quench love and floods drown it. For if a man should give all the wealth of his house to replace love, it will be utterly despised (**Song of Solomon 8:7**). Here love is rated above riches and wealth which is the taste and toast of many people. It teaches us that love is to be valued more than riches and wealth that secures a place of honour only on earth.

Indeed this is symbolic of Christ's love for His Church that nothing can separate us from the love of God as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers (**Romans 8:35**). Let's study further.

**A CHURCH CAN BE TRANSFORMED COMPLETELY BY LOVE BEYOND SPIRITUAL GIFTS. IN TRUTH, LOVE PERFECTS THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.**

**1 Corinthians 13:8a – Love never fails.**

Paul loved the spiritual gifts because they helped and enabled him to do the work of the ministry. Having encouraged the Church to desire the best gifts (**1 Corinthians 12:28 – 31**), he showed them the most excellent way of love in life, ministry and the Church to bring edification, righteousness and eternal results (**1 Corinthians 13:1 – 7**).

**A GOOD MINISTER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST SHOWS THE CHURCH THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND EDIFICATION OF MINISTRIES AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF HE OR SHE CONCLUDES THAT LOVE IS THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY TO BE PRACTICED WITHOUT A SUBSTITUTE, THEN RIGHTEOUS AND ETERNAL RESULTS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED.**

On these truths and revelation, he emphasized on love again as the way to go in Christ's righteousness and the work of the ministry. Love never fails has deep meaning and revelation because the Holy Spirit helps us to love. It is the nature of God and of Christ hence Paul's message to the Corinthians was to perfect their spiritual gifts with love. It has the promise of making ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit beneficial to the Church through application.

In truth, the Church of Corinth was to be transformed by way of love to perfect the spiritual gifts even more than the skills and talents noted in the Corinthians society (**Proverbs 18:16**). Truly love never fail can be equated to God who does not fail in His love, words and works such as creation and salvation work through Jesus Christ (**Genesis chapters 1 & 2, John 3:16, Romans 5:18**). Again, love never fails can be equated to Christ's messianic ministry and forgiveness of sins (**John 8:1 – 12, Luke 23:34**).

Apostle Paul reiterated the importance of love in relationships and service to God and humanity in Christ. Earlier, he showed by example that relationships and service without love is worldly and carnal with no lasting results **(1 Corinthians 8:1, 3)**. He showed also by example that relationships and service without love involve wrong attitudinal approach and strategies to worshipping God as a Christian and in service to our Lord Jesus Christ **(1 Corinthians 4:21)**. Where love works, results are everlasting like the gospel of Jesus Christ. Love is the epitome of God's work in our lives and ministries as practically demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ.

**LOVE HAS A SWEET ANGELIC VOICE THAT SINGS TO CREATE A HARMONY OF WORSHIP AND SERVICE TO PRODUCE EXCELLENT, PERFECT AND EVERLASTING RESULTS. LOVE NEVER FAILS.**

Love is a personal relationship. For Apostle Paul, this was borne out of experiencing the love and mercy of God in Christ as a hard core sinner saved and called into ministry **(Galatians 1:13 – 17)**. It defined his personal relationship with God in Christ and the Holy Spirit which increased His service to our Lord Jesus Christ. His passion for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in many places and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit was driven by the agape kind of love and not self. Since love never fails, the results was amazing with many people becoming Believing Christians, and the formation and establishment of Churches, and training pastors, elders and deacons to manage them. This reflected also in his work of apostleship to the Church of Corinth and in the Corinthian society.

**LOVE NEVER FAILS BECAUSE IT PRODUCES RESULTS THROUGH TEACHING, CORRECTION, INSTRUCTION AND EVEN REBUKE UNTO PERFECTION. FOR LOVE CHANGES STUBBORN HEARTS AND MAKES UNDERSTANDING AND OBEDIENCE BEAUTIFUL THROUGH PATIENCE; PAUL'S EXPERIENCE.**

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, the uncompromising and bold affirmation by Paul introduces the contrast with the spiritual gifts which will not last. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that all the gifts especially tongues, which attracted attention so much, would not be needed one day. But love will continue forever.

In Jesus' intervention of the Church of Ephesus in **Revelations 2:1 – 7**, He commended them of their works but rebuked them for lack of love; forsaken their first love. Like the Ephesian Church, some of our works are done not in love for Jesus but as a duty. Neither are they done by His power and authority. He commanded them to repent of their works or suffer the humiliation of removal of their lampstand; the power and the glory **(Verses 4 & 5)**. Where self takes the place of Jesus Christ in our Christian worship and works, love is missing and our works would not endure. But love cannot fail and has not failed the Church yet because it is of God, sacrificial, provides, protects and preserves.

**REMEMBER THAT YOUR FIRST LOVE IN CHRIST IS TO WORSHIP GOD AND DO HIS WORKS IN HIM AND FOR HIM AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN.**

Whenever love is at work in the life and ministry of the Christian, and in the Church, all of heaven is involved with the trinity; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The ways of God are revealed in various dimensions to show mercy, goodness, care, support and to give power, time, attention, favour, protection and preservation and blessings as a token of love. Indeed, where love is at work, grace is given to do the works of God **(1 Corinthians 15:10)**.

### **LOVE IN CHRIST TOUCHES THE HEART OF GOD FOR FAVOUR AND BLESSINGS WHERE HIS GRACE IS ASSURED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Love is worship and works ensures blessings and inheritance for the Christian in heaven. It cannot fail you because it is based on the promises of God in Christ. Your eternal treasures are secured in heaven and out of reach to the devastating work of rust, insect or thief or armed robber **(Matthew 6:19 – 21)**.

### **LOVE IS PREPARING ETERNAL TREASURES IN HEAVEN FOR OBEDIENT CHRISTIANS. THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT CANNOT AND ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THE WHIMS AND CAPRICES OF PEOPLE OR THE DEVIL.**

Love in service is an act of spiritual worship to God as in the modern parlance that service to humanity is service to God. Your attitude and service to other people reveals love in action to make life better for them and experience God's love in Christ. Jesus provides a deeper meaning of it in **Matthew 25:31 – 46** where love in action never fails to perform wonders and transform people and situations. It revealed that love shown to fellow Christians and other people for the sake of Jesus Christ would be rewarded, honoured and glorious. On the contrary, love that is denied them would be judged and condemned because they were not done for Jesus Christ.

### **THE BODY OF CHRIST IS ONE BIG FAMILY WITH JESUS CHRIST AS THE HEAD. EVERY LOVE SHOWN AND DONE TO EVERY CHRISTIAN FOR THE SAKE OF JESUS CHRIST IS HONOURABLE AND REWARDING. TRULY LOVE NEVER FAILS FOR IT HAS THE POWER OF GOD TO ACHIEVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ATTAIN ETERNAL BLESSINGS AND REWARDS.**

We read

**John 15:9 & 10 – “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.**

### **THIS UNBREAKABLE BOND OF LOVE BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON IS TRANSFERRED UNTO CHRISTIANS AS THE CHURCH WHO OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS CHRIST TO REMAIN IN HIS LOVE. O I LOVE THIS UNION.**

Learning from Paul's message that love never fails, we need to be led by the Holy Spirit in expression of the agape kind of love in and outside the Church. Indeed if love never fails, then it is predictive of its outcome and results. Since the Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Saviour and Lord, it means to say confidently and boldly that love makes beautiful and perfect the works of God. Just as our salvation is an expression of God's love in Christ, likewise everything of the Christian faith in our relationship and service must be borne of love. Yes bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit **(Galatians 5:22a)** because it is the life wire of all ministries, gifts of the Holy Spirit and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

**IF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE OF LOVE CANNOT BE TRAMPLED UPON BY ENEMIES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEN WE CAN STRENGTHEN THE WEAK, REVIVE DEAD WORKS AND PROMOTE CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.**

### PRAYER

We thank You O God for the knowledge and truth that love never fails unlike spiritual gifts that are useful in the work of the ministry and Church on earth.

We pray O God that you fill us with the spirit of love as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers.

Help us to bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit and make Your Church a beautiful place with excellent and eternal works.

Since love edifies, we pray that we shall edify Your Church in the usage of the spiritual gifts through seeking the best in other people beyond ourselves.

Continue to show us the way of salvation in love just as Paul showed the Corinthians.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**THE WORTH OF A LEADER IS TO STAND BY HIS WORDS AND PROMISES TO THE PEOPLE EVEN IN CHALLENGING TIMES. WHEN THEY ARE DELIVERED AND ACHIEVED, IT IS A MARK OF DISTINCTION AND GOOD AND ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP. EMULATE THE RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS. FOR HE SHOWED THEM THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY OF THE AGAPE KIND LOVE WHICH NEVER FAILS. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**THE AGAPE KIND OF LOVE NEVER FAILS BUT IT IS ALSO THE MOST DIFFICULT WAY AND NOT THE EASY WAY IN THE CHURCH. WHY BECAUSE THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT CONTRASTS WITH SELF AND WORKS OF THE FLESH IN SIN. BUT LOVE IS PROVEN TO BE STRONGER IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH WITH ETERNAL RESULTS. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **SIMPLE TRUTH: SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE TEMPORARY; BUT USEFUL**

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The gifts of the Holy are good because they are part of the Holy Spirit who lives in Christians. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are needed and useful in ministry because God's grace abounds in us to do the works of God on earth in accordance with the Great Commission. Truly many results in ministry are as a result of the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed Apostle Peter testifies of Jesus in

**Acts 10:38 – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**

Jesus did good to people; fed the poor and performed miracles, and healed the sick of their sicknesses and diseases and cast out evil spirits either by commanding or teaching biblical truths to deliver them from satanic bondages and doctrines. Like Jesus, you must show forth the gifts of the Holy Spirit in various dimensions to express God's love and goodness to people in need.

**THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE NECESSARY TO DO THE WORKS OF GOD IN CHRIST AS A REFLECTION OF TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD'S GRACE AND NOT THE SPIRIT OF THE DEVIL AND SINFUL STRATEGIES.**

Having established the truth that love never fails, Paul went further to compare some of the spiritual gifts with the fruit of love to appreciate the quality of his message. Hence Paul's message and insight into it was that love never fails. It is of God and practically shown by Christ in His messianic ministry, death and resurrection. By this truth, Paul explained that the spiritual gifts are good, necessary and beneficial but they will fail us because they are needed in ministry and Church works. Let's study further.

**1 Corinthians 13:8b – But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.**

### **1// PROPHECIES WILL FAIL IN ETERNITY; LOW INFLUENCE**

The Apostle Paul's point of revelation here was that though prophecies are good and needful in the Church, they are bound to fail unlike love. For though prophecies emanate from God and people prophesy by the Spirit of God, they are useful on earth and in the Church to speak and reveal the plans of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. It means to say that the gift of prophecy helps to know and agree with the plans of God as a Church, individuals and the nations; the whole of humanity **(1 Corinthians 12:10b)**.

By this truth, Paul defended his message to the Corinthians that love never fails and is preferred to the gift of prophecy because of its eternal nature and impact. In other words, the gift of prophecy must be crowned with love to achieve eternal results. That is when

the gift of prophecy “ends” on earth with the rapture of the Church, love would be evident to make its fulfillment of God’s plans to reward us in Christ by the Holy Spirit beautiful, perfect and glorious in eternity.

Prophecies are Holy Spirit inspired messages spoken to the Church and people to reveal the thoughts and plans of God in Christ **(2 Peter 1:20 & 21)**. Usually they involve knowledge of the future and a declaration of something to happen either for good or bad so that we would prepare ourselves to receive or prevent them. Beyond these conditional prophecies are also decreed prophecies that even prayers and strategies cannot prevent them from happening like the fulfilled Messianic prophecy and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Truly the Church has benefitted greatly from prophecies by the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen, protect and preserve all for the attainment of spiritual growth and maturity so that our works would be perfect like Jesus Christ. However, prophecies have a temporary description and influence, and not permanent and dominant in heaven because the divine plan and works of God in Christ would have been finished **(Revelations 10:6 & 7)**.

This explains why Apostle Paul writes that they would fail. It connotes a sense of disappointment for people who think that prophecies would have the same influence and impact in heaven as it is on earth. Failure here also involves the change over from the old order to the new order of doing things such that the old order becomes non – influential **(Revelations 21:3)**. For love would continue in eternity as it is practiced and promoted on earth, Church, ministry works and personal relationship with God in Christ. Remember the command of Jesus to His disciples to love another as He and the Father had loved them **(John 13:34, 15:12, 17)**.

The good news Christians would continue to prophesy by the Holy Spirit on earth as long as He lives within us and is not taken away back to heaven. Know or remember that prophecies by the Holy Spirit would help us attain eternal life and go to heaven.

It is important to know that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, which in believing, is our visa to heaven **(Revelations 19:10)**. This testimony shall not cease because the Lamb sits on His throne as King of kings and Lord of lords **(Revelations 19:11 – 16)**.

**New King James Bible Commentary: prophecies ... will fail: The word translated fail is in the passive voice, indicating that something will cause prophecies to stop.**

**THE GIFT OF PROPHECY IS ONE OF COMMUNICATION AND POWERFUL GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CHERISHED BY THE CHURCH AND EVEN UNBELIEVERS. COMPARATIVELY, IT IS TIME BOUND AND WOULD NOT BE DOMINANT IN ETERNITY WHEN ALL THE WORKS OF GOD ARE FINISHED UNLIKE THE FRUIT OF LOVE WHICH NEVER FAILS.**

## 2// TONGUES WILL CEASE

The Apostle Paul's point of revelation here was that though the gifts of speaking different kinds of tongues and interpretation (**1 Corinthians 12:10d,e**) are good and needful in the Church but they are bound to cease unlike love. For though tongues speaking are inspired by the Holy Spirit, emanate from God and people prophesy by the Spirit of God, they are useful on earth and in the Church to speak and reveal the mysteries of God to His Church. Also speaking in tongues by the Holy Spirit edify our spirits and make them sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

By this truth, Paul defended his message to the Corinthians that love never fails and is preferred to the gift of tongues speaking because of its eternal nature and impact. In other words, the gift of tongues speaking must be crowned with love to achieve eternal results. That is when the gift of tongues speaking ends on earth with the rapture of the Church, love would be evident to make its fulfillment of God's plan to reward us in Christ by the Holy Spirit beautiful, perfect and glorious in eternity.

The gift of speaking diverse or interpreting tongues are good for Christian living and ministry because they are from the Holy Spirit. These gifts edify the Christian and the Church especially in prayers, prophecies, and inspiration to preach Jesus Christ and teach God's word, write and sing spiritual songs, write Christian books in many or all languages of the world, and interpretation of preachings and teachings and other Christian programs into other languages.

They are also a sign to unbelievers as prophesied to make them see the New Covenant and new order of life and relationship with God through faith in His Son Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit (**Isaiah 28:11, 1 Corinthians 14:21 & 22a**). Hence with the rapture of the Church and second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, there would be no need for tongues speaking because we would be separated eternally from unbelievers and sinners.

Clearly tongue speaking by the Holy Spirit is good and useful to achieve divine purpose. Paul encouraged the Corinthians Believers to speak in tongues and interpret them as well. Besides, he spoke in tongues even more than the Corinthians Believers (**1 Corinthians 14:18**). Results all over the world are remarkable with many testimonies because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit though criticized by ignorant Christians, unbelievers and sinners (**Acts 2:1 – 4**).

In the book of Acts of the Apostles, tongue speakings were known to be outward manifestation of the infilling of the Holy Spirit that translated into divine power for good Christian living and works in ministry. However, Apostle Paul reveals that tongues speaking would cease in heaven where the old order of life would be transformed to the new order of life in the fullness of God (**Revelations 21:3**).

In heaven, Christians would be full of God's love and power with no need of tongues speaking and interpretation. Only the language of love would be spoken in heaven. Besides, the mysteries of God would have ended as prophesied (**Revelations 10:6 & 7**).

**New King James Bible Commentary: tongues ... will cease: Unlike prophecies, tongues will simply stop (no external cause is indicated by the Greek).**

**PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS THAT THEY WERE TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF LOVE EVEN AS THEY SPOKE IN TONGUES. FOR THE GIFT OF TONGUES WILL CEASE TO FUNCTION IN ETERNITY WHEN THE CHURCH IS RAPTURED TO BE WITH CHRIST.**

**THE GIFT OF SPEAKING TONGUES WOULD CEASE TO FUNCTION IN ETERNITY UNLIKE THE FRUIT OF LOVE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THOUGH IT EDIFIES INDIVIDUAL BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, IT IS A SIGN TO UNBELIEVERS AND SINNERS OF THE WORKS OF GOD IN CHRIST THROUGH THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

### **3// KNOWLEDGE WILL VANISH**

The Apostle Paul's point of revelation here was that though the gifts of word of knowledge by the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:8a**) is good and needful in the Church but it is bound to vanish unlike love. It means to say that the teaching abilities of Ministers, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Believing Christians are meant to equip and prepare the Church for Christ's second coming. For He is coming for a blameless and spotless Church.

Knowledge is the collection of different information useful in life. Likewise the gift of word of knowledge involves teaching abilities to speak, explain the mysteries of God in Christ and new Covenant and order of living righteously by faith beyond the Law.

By this truth, Paul defended his message to the Corinthians that love never fails and is preferred to the gift of knowledge to teach and know the depths of God's mysteries and wisdom in Christ by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the gift of word of knowledge must be crowned with love to achieve eternal results. That is when the word of knowledge ends on earth with the rapture of the Church, love would be evident to make its fulfillment of God's plan to reward us in Christ by the Holy Spirit beautiful, perfect and glorious in eternity. For all true Preachers and Teachers of the word of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit would have been raptured to be with Christ.

Indeed the knowledge of God is better than the knowledge of the world because the former leads to attainment of eternal life whilst the latter to sin and eternal damnation. In the Church, the Holy Spirit has given us the gifts of knowledge and wisdom to know and understand the mysteries and ways of God in Christ. This is helping in the receipt of spiritual knowledge, wisdom, understanding and power to grow and attain maturity and perfection of our Christian faith and works (**2 Peter 3:18**).

In heaven we will be full of the knowledge of God just as on earth it pleased the Father to put His fullness in Jesus Christ (**Colossians 1:9**). There would not be bible studies or souls being born again to be taught the word of God. No evangelism and discipleship

would be necessary because perfection of knowledge of God in Christ would be attained **(Revelations 21:3)**. For the Son would submit to the Father that He would be all in all when the works of God are finished. Remember the gift is different from the everlasting testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ because the Lamb sits at the right hand of God as King of kings and Lord of lords. It means to say that the ability to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ would fizzle away because we shall all come to full knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ in perfection. But love remains and does not and cannot fail.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NECESSARY BUT TEMPORARY; THEY WOULD HELP YOU TO ATTAIN ETERNAL LIFE AND PROMOTE THE VISION AND MISSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. BUT IN HEAVEN, LOVE REMAINS AND PERFECTS US IN CHRIST TO GOD.**

We read

**1 Corinthians 15: 20 – 28 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.**

**SPIRITUAL POSITIONS AND ESTABLISHMENTS CANNOT BE CHANGED BECAUSE GOD IS RIGHTEOUS IN ALL JUDGMENTS. JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S INSTRUMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR ETERNAL SALVATION AND DESTRUCTION OF SATAN AND DEATH FOR SUBMISSION FULLY TO GOD THE FATHER.**

### PRAYER

**We thank You O God for teaching us that prophecy will fail, tongues will cease and knowledge will varnish when we come into the fullness of God in Christ as the raptured Church.**

**We pray O God for grace to crown the spiritual gifts with love to make us fruitful, perfect and edifying as a Church.**

**Help us to bear the fruit of love by the Holy Spirit and make Your Church a beautiful place with excellent and eternal works.**

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LOVE AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT NEVER FAILS BECAUSE IT HAS EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY BENEFITS. SPIRITUAL GIFTS SUCH AS PROPHECY, TONGUES SPEAKING AND WORD OF KNOWLEDGE SHALL ALL PASS AWAY. HENCE CROWN THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH FRUIT BEARING OF LOVE IN ALL CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REVEAL CHRIST AND THE TESTIMONY OF GOD ABOUT HIS SON JESUS CHRIST ALONE. FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS WILL EITHER LOSE THEIR INFLUENCE OR VARNISH IN ETERNITY BUT LOVE REMAINS AND NEVER FAILS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **KNOWLEDGE AND PROPHECY IN PART; THE MASTER PLAN OF GOD**

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### INSPIRATION

Adam and Eve were full of the knowledge of God in their uncorrupted state. Even this, God visited them in the cool of the evenings and had fellowship with them (**Genesis 3:8**). Disobedience to eating of the fruit of knowledge of good and evil caused the commitment of sin and broke the divine connection with God (**Genesis 3:1 – 7, 9 – 11**). Since then, man's knowledge of God and His ways have been limited; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**).

However, having the Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ as a Christian provides and increases the knowledge of God in us. It takes the Holy Spirit to know the mind of God in Christ because we cannot and do not know everything by the human mind (**1 Corinthians 2:10 & 11**). Even with the Holy Spirit and the office of the Prophet or gift of prophecy, Apostle Paul reveals that we know and prophesy in part and not in full. He did not give us the capacity to know and understand all the mysteries of the kingdom of God at once but He has given us His word and the Holy Spirit to learn, understand, grow and become mature. The All Wise God wants us to depend on Him; His grace in Christ and the Holy Spirit for fellowship with seeking hearts for answers in prayer and His word. Let's study further.

### **1 Corinthians 13:9 – For we know in part and we prophesy in part.**

Here the Apostle Paul stated to the Corinthians Believers that we do not have all knowledge of the things and works of God and His Christ even with the Holy Spirit. For we know in part and prophesy in part. That is the plans, purposes and mysteries of God for the benefit of the Church and humanity are limited in knowledge and even revealed to be prophesied in bits and pieces. This reveals the Sovereignty of God in creation, lives, and ministries, usages of the spiritual gifts, the Church and human affairs.

In this truth, Paul emphasized on the limitations of the spiritual gifts with regards to human knowledge and intellect. It means to say also that the things of God and His Christ are far bigger than what the human mind can know and understand within a relatively short period of time. Hence revelations of gospel truths to us by the Holy Spirit from time to time for our belief, understanding and obedience.

**THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD SHOWS THAT THE THINGS OF GOD AND HIS CHRIST ARE FAR BIGGER THAN WHAT THE HUMAN MIND CAN KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WITHIN A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. HENCE THE ROLE AND MINISTRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES, MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH.**

Again it is an emphasis that we are to depend on God's grace in Christ by the Holy Spirit to know and prophesy the word of God. Love makes it possible to get to this level of grace. It means that the more we pray, read, meditate on the scriptures, walk by faith and

not by sight, be righteous and holy, all in obedience of the complete gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the more we know and prophesy in love as the Holy Spirit gives us enablement.

The bible says that it is the glory of God to conceal a matter but the glory of kings to search out a matter **(Proverbs 25:2)**. The copied wisdom of Solomon by the men of King Hezekiah began by making a distinction between the glory of God and the glory of kings. They contrast showing the superiority of God over kings. In truth God's glory is revealed when people look out to Him for answers concerning questions, and solutions concerning problems just like the king's glory to search a matter.

Paul's earlier message to the Corinthians Believers revealed the role of the Holy Spirit to know, understand and obey His word of promise and blessings to the Church. We read

**1 Corinthians 2:9 – 11 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.**

Apostle Paul explains that God has so many things for us in our earthly existence and in heaven with Him and our Lord Jesus Christ. The good news is that the Holy Spirit who knows the deep things (secrets) of God reveals them to us for belief, knowledge and experience in our lives and ministries. Therefore making the Holy Spirit work in our lives, instead of self – dependence or satanic manipulations, make us righteous for the receipt of blessings from God. In this realm, the Christian can prophesy the mind of God to complement his or her knowledge of God's ways and will, and even human knowledge of people, events and situations.

From the very beginning of creation, God had desired relationship and fellowship, for in them his good plans are known for preparation and experience of them. If the Holy Spirit reveals the mind of God in Christ fully to you as a Christian and the church, it will be like the story of "**Alice in wonderland**". It will even be a burden to you because your mind cannot comprehend all the ways of God to accomplish them; obedience. Therefore He reveals them gradually through His Holy Spirit in bits and pieces for enhanced understanding and obedience, relationship and fellowship.

We read

**1 Corinthians 2:12 – Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.**

Earlier, Apostle Paul revealed to the Church of Corinth that they had the privilege to know things freely given to them by God through the personality of the Holy Spirit. This is a

proof of the gospel truth that that had received not the spirit of the world but the Holy Spirit from God. By this emphasis, only Believing Christians have the Holy Spirit in them to know and experience the things of God. It means to say that we can have deep knowledge, insight and understanding to the things of God in Christ but not all things. Hence we have increase in knowledge, wisdom, insight, and understanding of the mysteries of God hitherto hidden from the foundations of this world.

**GOD'S RIGHTEOUS DESIRE IS FOR HIS CHILDREN TO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE THE THINGS GIVEN TO US FREELY IN CHRIST. HENCE INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM IN THE CHURCH.**

Since this is the will and joy of God, it should be our joy to seek answers for questions and delays, and solutions for problems in prayers and meditations as we fellowship with God in Christ and the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' teaching on the need to trust God for all things beyond personal connections, He assured the disciples that it is the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom though they were small; described as little flocks **(Luke 12:32)**. By this scripture, it shows that God's will is to bless us with His Holy Spirit to know His word and ways. Therefore, Paul was right that we have received the Holy Spirit to know and experience the things that God had freely given to us in Christ.

**JESUS WAS THE FIRST TO REVEAL AND DECLARE THAT GOD WAS WILLING AND READY TO GIVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD TO ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN HIM AND HIS WORDS OF SALVATION. PAUL ONLY CONFIRMED IT IN HIS MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH. YOU MUST ALSO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE IT AS A CHILD OF GOD WHOSE FAITH IS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN YOU. HALLELUJAH.**

As Paul declared, we see in part and prophesy in part by the Holy Spirit. We don't know it all but we know some things concerning the perfect will of God and His righteous ways in Christ. For prophecy will fail, tongues will cease and knowledge will varnish when Jesus returns for His Church the saints. It means to say that we are not complete until we are complete. Love then becomes the standing word of God in Christ to be complete because it does not fail **(1 Corinthians 13:8a)**. It means also to depend on God for the things He supplies to us in order to be righteous and be in His perfect will.

**PAUL'S EXPOSURE OF THE LIMITATION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS SUCH AS KNOWING IN PART AND PROPHESYING IN PART IS TO HELP US EMBRACE AND ACCEPT FULLY AND COMPLETELY LOVE; THE AGAPE KIND OF LOVE WHICH IS NOT JUST GENERATIONAL BUT ETERNAL.**

**A// LEARNING FROM THE PROPHETS OF OLD**

Righteous examples are to be emulated from the prophets of God who had the Holy Spirit in them. They received divine revelations as announcements to God's plan of salvation for humanity throughout generations before the birth of Jesus Christ.

The bible states in

**1 Peter 1:10 – 12 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.**

The good news is that all the notable prophets written in the bible with given information of the Messianic birth, in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, received it with joy and prophesied without having details. Being expectant and having the Holy Spirit, they prayed, fasted, meditated on the Messianic prophecy, watched for signs and waited patiently in the hope of experiencing it with the generations. They inquired comparing old prophecies with new prophecies and human events in preparation and expectation. The prophets Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, Micah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are righteous examples who were shown a glimpse of the Messianic prophecy; not complete revelations. Likewise David was described as King, Prophet and Priest (**Psalms 2:12, 16:10, Acts 1:16, 2:25, 34**).

**LEARN FROM THE RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLES OF PROPHETS OF OLD WHO HAD THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PRAY, MEDITATE, RECEIVED AND COMPARE SPOKEN PROPHECIES TO GAIN MORE INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S WILL ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY; THE CHRIST.**

The bible states in

**Amos 3:7 & 8 – Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?**

This scripture reveals the transparency, faithfulness, power and integrity of God to partner with humanity in the revelation and declaration of His good plans for us. His channel of communication before the coming of Jesus was His servants the prophets. Revelations were given to them to prophesy as God's Ministers. The prophet Amos continued in his message that divine revelations are meant to be prophesied to people for knowledge and preparation in a very commanding way as an act of obedience.

Besides, limited information does not mean that God's revelations are not to be spoken. The prophets of old spoke of the Messianic prophecy even though they were all glimpses of Christ's birth, works, suffering, salvation and glory.

**SPEAK THE PROPHETIC WORD AS GOD HAS REVEALED AND COMMANDED EVEN IF DETAILS ARE NOT GIVEN. HOWEVER, HAVE A SEARCHING AND**

**SEEKING HEART IN PRAYER AND FASTING, AND MEDITATION OF THE SCRIPTURES AND PROPHETIC WORD TO KNOW WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SAYING IN YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY, CHURCH AND FAMILY, COUNTRIES AND PERSONALITIES.**

We read

**2 Peter 1:19 – 21 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**

In this scripture, we have the confirmation of fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy that is descriptive of light that shines in darkness to open our hearts and minds to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The second part shows that prophecies should not be explained and interpreted in a human way because its origin is of God whose Holy Spirit inspired people to declare His word to people. The Apostle Peter encouraged the Christian Jews scattered abroad to maintain their faith, and be faithful to the end even in the midst of persecutions. It shows the potency of the gospel of Jesus Christ to change and make sinners become Christians and righteous to God.

Besides, it shows that the prophetic word of God was fulfilled in His own time at the right environment for the right purpose. It reveals also that only the Holy Spirit can explain and interpret prophecies fully to know the mind and message of God completely. Therefore believe prophecies of people inspired by the Holy Spirit but rebuke people who prophesy by the spirit of the devil.

**PROPHECIES ARE FROM GOD REVEALED AND ENABLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. SUCH WAS THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY FULFILLED AT THE FULLNESS OF TIME. LIKE PETER TO THE JEWISH BELIEVERS, WE ARE TO PROPHECY TO ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUOUS BELIEF AND MAINTENANCE OF OUR FAITH IN CHRIST EVEN IF THE REVELATIONS ARE LIMITED. FOR GOD'S INTEGRITY AND HIS SERVANTS INTEGRITY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRIST ARE A NECESSARY RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

We read

**2 Kings 4:27 – Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, “Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me, and has not told me.”**

Prophets do not see and know everything. Even the prophet Elisha with double portion of Prophet Elijah's mantle did not see and know that the Shunammite's son had died; for it was not revealed to him by God. Prophet Elisha prophesied the birth of the son but did not have details of premature death; for it was in the plan of God to glorify his name through the child's return to life.

**TRULY WE KNOW IN PART AND PROPHECY IN PART BECAUSE GOD GAINS GLORY THROUGH SEEKING HEARTS THAT BUILD OUR FAITH AND TRUST IN HIM. EVEN PROPHET ELISHA WITH DOUBLE PORTION OF ELIJAH'S PROPHETIC MANTLE NEEDED GOD'S GRACE TO KNOW AND PROPHECY. FOR THE CHURCH, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE CHANNEL OF REVELATION OF THE WORD, PLANS AND PURPOSES OF GOD TO US TO STRENGTHEN, ENCOURAGE AND EDIFY US.**

The better we understand that all secrets and mysteries emanate from God, the better it is to trust Him for revelations, understanding and declarations. We read

**Deuteronomy 29:29 – “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.**

**WHAT GOD HAD NOT REVEALED TO US ARE HIS SECRETS. WHAT HE REVEALS TO US HAVE BEEN FREELY GIVEN TO US. THIS IS TO ENSURE OBEDIENCE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RIGHTEOUS WORKS IN GENERATIONS FOR BLESSINGS LIKE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST UNTO SALVATION. ONCE THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS THE WORD OF GOD IN KNOWLEDGE AND PROPHECY, WE MUST UPHOLD IT FOR OUR GOOD AND BLESSING.**

We read

**Jeremiah 29:11 – 13 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**

**GOD IS SAYING THAT MY THOUGHTS FOR YOU ARE GOOD AND PEACEFUL TO PROVIDE A BRIGHT, HOPEFUL AND PROMISING FUTURE JUST AS HE SPOKE TO THE ISRAELITES THROUGH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.**

**WE HAVE EXPERIENCED IT IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY AND THIS DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IF PEOPLE WOULD REPENT OF THEIR SINS, BELIEVE IN JESUS AND LIVE RIGHTEOUS LIVES BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, PRAY AND SEEK GOD, THEN INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECIES WOULD BE EXPERIENCED IN THEIR LIVES.**

We read

**Acts 1:6 – 8 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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.”**

The disciples of Jesus Christ questioned Him about the restoration of the kingdom of God after His resurrection. For the disciples, the power and glory of Jesus Christ was enough belief that prophecy would be fulfilled for the kingdom of Israel to be restored from their enemies; independence from the Roman governors and rule. Indeed, they had limited information because it is about the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge all sin, enemies of the gospel and the devil and his demons. In truth, Jesus revealed that this restoration is in the hands of God the Father whose divine plans and mysteries would be fulfilled in His Kairos time beyond any human and chronus calendar day and time. Rather, they were to wait and be empowered by the Holy Spirit for evangelism and missions to preach Him to all nations throughout generations.

Even Jesus prophesied and did not provide detailed information about Israel’s restoration in his glory after resurrection to reveal god’s sovereignty. This was however better than the Daniel’s prophecy of the end times which was covered for a period. Eternal life with Jesus Christ in heaven and to God, will bring us to the full knowledge and wisdom and fulfillment of all divine plans and mysteries that eluded us on earth. Therefore don’t just depend on the gifts of the Holy Spirit but let them build your Christian faith and works to God bearing the fruit of the spirit for attainment of eternal life, inheritance and rewards in Christ.

**THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD AND THAT OF HIS MINISTERS SOMETIMES DIFFER IN PERSPECTIVE. GOD SPEAKS ALWAYS TO FULFILL HIS ETERNAL PLANS AND PURPOSES AND NEVER TO PLEASE MAN. HE SPEAKS BUT DOES NOT GIVE FULL DETAILS UNTIL BELIEF, OBEDIENCE AND FAITH WORKS BY THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES THE DETAILS A REALITY WITH TIME. KEEP TRUSTING.**

### **B// THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST**

Over the generations, the second coming of Jesus Christ has been a subject of controversy especially with the unbelieving world. But with Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers, we hold on to the hope of eternal life and Christ’s return **(Matthew 24:1 – 14)**. The bible says that the second coming of the Lord is not careless concerning the fulfillment of the promise. But His righteous intent is expressed in longsuffering to give opportunities for many people to be saved and not perish **(2 Peter 3:9)**. On this truth, Peter emphasized on Jesus’ second coming in the likeness of a thief coming in the night and hour to steal **(2 Peter 3:10)**. Hence the need to be watchful, prayerful, obedient in Christ’s righteousness by the Holy Spirit.

It means to say that Jesus' second coming is sure despite the delays. We know in part and prophecy in part because we don't have all the answers especially with the exact day to happen. Jesus mentioned only the Father in heaven knew of the day of His second coming (**Matthew 24:35 – 39**). Yes prophetic signs have been given and the Church is observing the signs, times and seasons prayerfully. Truly we live in the last days. Therefore we go by the way of love to be complete in Christ till the Day of the Lord's coming. Amen!

We cannot underplay and despise knowledge of the word of God, people and events, and prophecy by the Holy Spirit because they fulfill Christ's vision and mission. They are gifts of the Holy Spirit to make ministry work effective with efficient results. Hence let love be at work to perfect them in our lives, ministries and the Church.

**DO NOT DESPISE THE GIFTS OF THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE, WORD OF WISDOM AND PROPHECY BECAUSE WE KNOW IN PART AND PROPHECY IN PART. THEY ARE ALL THE WORKS AND WAYS OF GOD IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST BUT LOVE, OBEDIENCE AND FAITHFULNESS ARE THE BIGGER PICTURE IN ALL THAT WE KNOW, SAY AND DO AS A CHURCH TO EXPERIENCE THE COMPLETE BLESSING.**

### PRAYER

We pray in the name of Jesus that our knowledge in part and prophesying in part by Your Holy Spirit will help us to seek Your will at all times.

In this truth and revelation, help Your Church to go by the way of love to be complete in Your Son Jesus Christ.

As a Church give us the grace never to despise knowledge and prophecy like the unbelieving world.

Rather help us to accept it and make its meaningful role achieve Christ's vision and mission in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**WE KNOW IN PART; WE PROPHECY IN PART. AS LONG AS IT IS SCRIPTURAL AND WITHIN THE WILL OF GOD AND NOT OUTSIDE HIS WILL, WHY SHOULD I WORRY? NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**GOD TEACHES US THAT SPIRITUAL GIFTS SUCH AS KNOWLEDGE AND PROPHECY ARE IN BITS AND PIECES SO THAT OUR DEPENDENCE ON HIM WOULD BE TOTAL AND COMPLETE THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. INDEED WHAT WE THINK WE KNOW IN CHRIST AND PROPHECY IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIFETIME ON EARTH CANNOT BE COMPARED TO THE GLORY TO EXPERIENCE IN ETERNITY. KEEP SEEKING. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST;  
SUPERSEDES THE LAW OF MOSES AND EVEN THE BEST SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

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INSPIRATION

Perfection is simply defined as wholeness, complete, quality, beauty, glory, excellence and fulfillment in a person for any given situation. In the Christian faith, it is not attained by human intelligence but through the Holy Spirit in the grace of God. The natural desire and principle are that perfection is preferred to bits and pieces of things. However, the bits and pieces in a cordial and systematic manner leads to perfection.

In other words, every process has procedures to attain completion and perfection in a timely manner. Perfection allows us to see the beauty and completeness of a person or thing. It is a process and the means to an end; yes a glorious end. Let's study further.

**PERFECTION IS TASTE OF LOVERS FOR GOOD THINGS AND RESULTS.**

**1 Corinthians 13:10 – But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.**

The Apostle Paul analysis here is that the attainment of perfection automatically replaces parts, bits and pieces in our Christian lives and ministries. This explains why love perfects all things and especially all righteousness and this includes spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit like word of wisdom, word of knowledge, gift of faith, gifts of healing, gift of prophecy, gift of discerning of spirits, gift of different speaking of tongues and gift of interpretation of tongues **(1 Corinthians 12:8 – 10)**. Hence there is time to know in part and prophesy in part through the enablement of the Holy Spirit in life, ministry and the Church. Also there will be a time when we shall come to perfection and full knowledge of the word of God and works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

As Paul stated, love never fails **(1 Corinthians 13:8a)**. In heaven, it will be the language to be spoken and make us complete, perfect, whole, excellent, beautiful, fulfilled and glorious as overcomers and victors in our Christian faith. Like Solomon said, there is time for everything under the sun **(Ecclesiastes 1:9)**, the process of life **(Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 8)** and God makes all things beautiful in His time **(Ecclesiastes 3:11a)**.

**ATTAINED PERFECTION ALWAYS REPLACES THE BITS AND PIECES OF IMPERFECTIONS. LOVE IS COMPLETE AND MAKES PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS. HEAVEN IS THE EMBODIMENT OF LOVE AND PERFECTION, AND NOT QUARTER, HALF OR THREE FOURTHS OF THINGS.**

It teaches us to make righteous decisions using the spiritual weapon of love with basis on the word of God, leading of the Holy Spirit and good conscience. Prayers and righteous counsels are inevitable as members of the Church and the Body of Christ. Knowing the perfect things means replacing the imperfect things in life, ministry and the Church. Hence Paul's discernment that the perfection of love in Christ had come to replace the imperfect

Law of Moses in worship of God as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers. This involves showing love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, care, giving, providing, protecting, and preservation, and great desire to seek the best in the affairs of people.

**THE WEAPON OF LOVE PERFECTS OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND ITS USAGE REPLACES IMPERFECTIONS IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. REPLACING THE IMPERFECTIONS OF THE LAW OF MOSES WITH THE PERFECTIONS OF CHRIST IS INEVITABLE.**

**The New King James Bible Commentary states that “when that which is perfect has come: The Greek word for perfect means “end” or “completion”. Most likely, this is reference to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But some have interpreted perfect as the end of the New Testament canon.**

Love is everything because it provides all the things we need in life and ministry, and in heaven. Love reigns and therefore Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in love and not for self or carelessly. Love reigns because God is love and proves that we are children of God as Believing Christians **(1 John 4:7).**

Besides, love in worship, service and works is the best approach to spiritual and physical relationships as revealed by Apostle John.

We read

**1 John 4:17 – 19 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.**

Apostle John was sure of perfected love and the eternal benefits among them as Believers. Love in perfection of our Christian faith and works on earth would grant us boldness before God in heaven because it would be an emulation of His nature to us. Our testimonies would be based on love and faith and not obligation and fear like performance of religious duties and punishment for disobedience. Besides, love gives freedom whilst fear involves torment and bondage. The motivation of our love is that God loved us to make us lovable in emulation.

**IF OUR CHRISTIAN WORKS ARE PERFECT ON EARTH, THEN WE WOULD HAVE THE BOLDNESS TO STAND BEFORE GOD ON THE JUDGMENT DAY AND TESTIFY OF WORKS IN LOVE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NOT IN FEAR.**

The bible shows Jesus teaching the disciples and followers to resemble God in nature as reflected in His goodness to His creation; humans, animals and inanimate things. He

placed emphasis on showing love and forgiveness to even enemies and broke the culture of revenge taught by the Mosaic Law **(Matthew 5:43 – 47)**.

In Jesus' conclusive statement, we read

**Matthew 5:48 – Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

Jesus did not just preach and taught His disciples and followers but wanted them to be perfect in divine and human relationships; all their ways. Trusting God and dependence on His grace, and obedience to His teachings was to make it easier for them to excel in their Christian faith.

**IF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WORKS ARE TO BE PERFECT LIKE GOD, THEN WE MUST BE LIKE JESUS CHRIST AND OBEY THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; HE IS OUR HELPER IN THE RECEIVED GRACE OF GOD.**

We read

**Galatians 3:23 – 25 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

The Apostle Paul makes a beautiful analogy of the transition from the period of the Law to the dispensation of faith in Jesus Christ, Saviour and Lord. In God's sovereignty, He gave the Law as a tutor to teach the Israelites obedience, discipline and to direct us little children who needed strict training to become responsible adults. Truly, the Law became a necessity because of the corruption of their bodies and souls with idol worship during their slavery years in Egypt. That was temporary because it was not based on God's promise of blessing Abraham whose seed was to be a blessing to the whole world. It is important to note that the Law was restricted to the Jews and proselytes, under the Old Covenant, with strict rules and religious practices. In truth, the Law fizzled away when faith appeared on the scene.

**THE LAW WAS NECESSARY AND A GUARD TO ENSURE OBEDIENCE AND DISCIPLINE BUT FAITH IN CHRIST MADE GOD'S SALVATION PLAN IN JESUS COMPLETE. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER.**

**WHEN THE PERFECT LAW OF CHRIST IN FAITH APPEARED, THE IMPERFECT LAW OF MOSES REPLACED TO MAKE ETERNAL SALVATION ACHIEVABLE TO ALL PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE.**

The good news is that the Law was a directional poster to Christ; yes to bring us to Christ through faith of all people who believe irrespective of country, age, religion, culture, ethnic background and societal perception.

We read

**Galatians 4:4 & 5 – But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

The bible says that at the appointed time, God sent forth His Son Jesus to save the world through faith and not the law to break that culture of bondage to freedom of faith in Christ. From that era of grace where belief in Jesus resulted in forgiveness of sins, we have become adopted children of God to have the power and leading of the Holy Spirit in all matters of life. In Christ, we are complete because the fullness of God dwelt in Him **(Colossians 1:9 &10)**.

**IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, GOD PERFECTED HIS WORKS AND MADE IT MORE GLORIOUS. FOR CHRIST CAME TO REDEEM THOSE UNDER THE LAW THROUGH FAITH AS ADOPTED CHILDREN. IN CHRIST, WE ARE COMPLETE TO KNOW GOD AND DO HIS WORKS IN LOVE.**

In the Church, we get to know and appreciate the perfection of the love of Christ over the imperfections of the Law and even spiritual gifts **(John 13:34 & 35)**. This is also the work of the Holy Spirit who is our Helper. Be in tune with the Holy Spirit and never miss this eternal blessing. For love does not fail but overcomes.

**IF LOVE NEEDS AN ENVIRONMENT TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND ACHIEVE PERFECTION AS CHRIST HAS TAUGHT US, IT IS THE CHURCH. PRACTICE LOVE.**

### PRAYER

**We pray in the name of Jesus that grace would be given us as Believing Christians, Church leaders and Ministers to accept perfection in love by the Holy Spirit and replace imperfections of the Law.**

**Help us O Lord to overcome the imperfections of the religious spirit and complement the spiritual gifts through the perfect law of love.**

**We pray also that we shall bear the fruit of faithfulness where the end of the age would reveal perfect works of righteousness and love before as a Church.**

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

**WHEN ONE IS BORN INTO THE IMPERFECTIONS OF RELIGION, IT TAKES THE INTERVENTION OF THE PERFECT CHRIST TO BREAK THE SPIRIT OF RELIGIOSITY. THIS IS A MARK OF DISCERNMENT BY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE MAGNIFICATION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS, ESPECIALLY THE BEST GIFTS WHICH EDIFY THE CHURCH, HAVE A DECEPTIVE WAY OF MAGNIFYING THEMSELVES IN THE EYES OF PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH. BUT LOVE REIGNS AND DOES NOT FAIL BECAUSE IT WILL CONTINUE IN HEAVEN AFTER BENEFITS IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IF LOVE NEEDS AN ENVIRONMENT TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND ACHIEVE PERFECTION IN CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS AND CHRISTIAN WORKS AS CHRIST HAS TAUGHT US, IT IS THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST; DRIVES AWAY IMPERFECTIONS**

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### INSPIRATION

Perfection is simply defined as wholeness, complete, quality, beauty, glory, excellence and fulfillment in a person for any given situation. In the Christian faith, it is not attained by human intelligence but through the Holy Spirit in the grace of God. The natural desire and principle are that perfection is preferred to bits and pieces of things. However, the bits and pieces in a cordial and systematic manner leads to perfection.

In other words, every process has procedures to attain completion and perfection in a timely manner. Perfection allows us to see the beauty and completeness of a person or thing. It is a process and the means to an end; yes a glorious end. Let's study further.

### **PERFECTION IS TASTE OF LOVERS FOR GOOD THINGS AND RESULTS.**

**1 Corinthians 13:10 – But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.**

The Apostle Paul analysis here is that the attainment of perfection automatically replaces parts, bits and pieces in our Christian lives and ministries. This explains why love perfects all things and especially all righteousness and this includes spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit like word of wisdom, word of knowledge, gift of faith, gifts of healing, gift of prophecy, gift of discerning of spirits, gift of different speaking of tongues and gift of interpretation of tongues **(1 Corinthians 12:8 – 10)**. Hence there is time to know in part and prophesy in part through the enablement of the Holy Spirit in life, ministry and the Church. Also there will be a time when we shall come to perfection and full knowledge of the word of God and works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

As Paul stated, love never fails **(1 Corinthians 13:8a)**. In heaven, it will be the language to be spoken and make us complete, perfect, whole, excellent, beautiful, fulfilled and glorious as overcomers and victors in our Christian faith. Like Solomon said, there is time for everything under the sun **(Ecclesiastes 1:9)**, the process of life **(Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 8)** and God makes all things beautiful in His time **(Ecclesiastes 3:11a)**.

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It teaches us to make righteous decisions using the spiritual weapon of love with basis on the word of God, leading of the Holy Spirit and good conscience. Prayers and righteous counsels are inevitable as members of the Church and the Body of Christ. Knowing the perfect things means replacing the imperfect things in life, ministry and the Church. Hence Paul's discernment that the perfection of love in Christ had come to replace the imperfect

Law of Moses in worship of God as Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers. This involves showing love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, care, giving, providing, protecting, and preservation, and great desire to seek the best in the affairs of people.

**THE WEAPON OF LOVE PERFECTS OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND ITS USAGE REPLACES IMPERFECTIONS IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH. REPLACING THE IMPERFECTIONS OF THE LAW OF MOSES WITH THE PERFECTIONS OF CHRIST IS INEVITABLE.**

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### **A// BEING HELPERS AND BEING HELPED IN MINISTRY**

It means to say that there is still a long way to go in our Christian faith and Christian journey to heaven. Like the Corinthians we are not to be complacent with the abundance of the spiritual gifts with righteous and eternal results in the Churches. More importantly, we are to believe and practice love as the most excellent way of living good Christian lives and doing the works of God. We are to remember that when the perfect comes, the imperfect must give way.

When John the Baptist got this revelation and truth, he declared that Jesus must increase and he must decrease all to the glory of God (**John 3:30**). Know that there was nothing wrong with John the Baptist because he was ordained as the forerunner to the Messiah. Once he played his role righteously in the will of God, he understood the revelation to give way to Jesus and fulfill His messianic ministry according to the dispensation of God’s time. Truly, there are people like John the Baptist who prepare the way for the likes of Jesus to make lives and situations beautiful, complete and perfect.

**IN THE PURPOSES OF GOD, YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY AND CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE LIKE THAT OF JOHN THE BAPTIST OR JESUS. EITHER WAY, BE OBEDIENT TO GOD. KNOW ALSO THAT IN THE DISPENSATION OF TIME AND AGE, YOU CAN MOVE FROM THE FRONTLINE OF JESUS TO THE BACKSTAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. KNOW ALSO THAT THE AGED IN MINISTRY AND CHURCH ARE USUALLY REPLACED WITH YOUNGER MINISTERS AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS TO CONTINUE THEIR RIGHTEOUS WORKS BECAUSE OF BODILY WEAKNESS AND ILL HEALTH. ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.**

Love is everything because it provides all the things we need in life and ministry, and in heaven. Love reigns and therefore Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in love and not for self or careless things. Love reigns because God is love and proves that we are children of God (**1 John 4:7**). Love puts you in a special class and outclasses other areas of life, ministry and the Church as the perfect

will of God. It portrays you as number one among the lot; primus inter pares; first among equals.

The joy of the Shulamite woman was that her lover Solomon brought her to the banqueting table, and his banner over her was love **(Song of Solomon 2:4)**. Such is the peaceful and comfortable nature of love in relationships.

**UNTIL YOU EXPERIENCE LOVE, YOU MAY MISCONSTRUE FRIENDSHIP AS LOVE. FOR LOVE IS EVERYTHING AND BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN A PERSON. IT MAKES PERFECT WHAT IS TO BE PERFECT AND ALSO MAKES THE IMPERFECT BECOME PERFECT.**

### **B// ENFORCE THE WILL OF GOD ON EARTH**

**Matthew 6:10 – Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.**

One of the tenets of the Lord's Prayer is the establishment of God's rule on earth; in the affairs of people. The will of God in heaven needs to be experienced on earth so that there can be spiritual growth, maturity and perfection of Christian works.

It means to say that the Church must arise in prayer, and all the five – fold ministries of the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher playing leadership roles to encourage correct and righteous usages of the spiritual gifts.

**BRINGING HEAVEN DOWN TO EARTH THROUGH PRAYER; THE POWER OF GOD TO MAKE THE EARTH RIGHTEOUS LIKE HEAVEN IS INEVITABLE BY THE CHURCH.**

### **C// WHERE IS YOUR REASONABLE SACRIFICE?**

**Romans 12:1 & 2 – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

The Apostle Paul pointed out that Christians present their bodies holy, free from sin, in a daily manner as their determined purpose to serve and obey God **(1 Corinthians 6:13)**. This is the reasonable service achievable through the mercies of God that Paul talked about to the Roman Believers. Paul compared and contrasted this reasonable sacrifice of newness and life to a dead animal with no life. **The New King James Bible Commentary explains “reasonable” as such a gift is the only rational reaction to all the good gifts God has showered on us.**

Besides, Paul admitted that we live in a corrupt and sinful world but the Christian must not be controlled by the world's systems and values. Rather, the mind of Christ should be refreshed with God's word in prayer and meditation, and the Holy Spirit to have righteous

thoughts and sustain belief of the heart to one's Christian faith. In this truth, we promote the righteousness of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit to distinguish between good and evil.

**YOUR SERVICE AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS YOUR REASONABLE SACRIFICE AND THIS MAKES YOU HOLY. THE WAY TO MATURITY IS TO RENEW YOUR MIND BY GOD'S WORD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ESCAPE SIN IN THIS CORRUPT WORLD. THIS IS THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD FOR US AS THE CHURCH.**

### **D// GROW TO BECOME TEACHERS OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**Hebrews 5:12 – 14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

Throughout the scriptures, the need for spiritual growth and maturity has been emphasized in various dimensions. The Hebrew writer rebuked the Jews of their lackadaisical attitude towards their spiritual growth and maturity in his analogy of the Christian faith. There is a time to be a learner and a time to be a teacher in the Christian faith. But if the expected teacher is still at the learning process like a fresh believer, then it reveals weaknesses, a babe mentality. Truly like a baby in Christ, he or she cannot obey the word of righteousness but can drink only milk and not ready for solid food.

Indeed compromise to sin is a sign of carnality and lack of spiritual growth and maturity; as was common in the Corinthian Church before Apostle Paul's intervention. Full age refers to maturity and completeness of a person or situation beyond the natural perception of the Christian faith to live in obedience to God's word and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if the Christian grows spiritually and is able to practice God's word faithfully, then maturity is attained by the grace of God. It involves knowledge and wisdom of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit in totality and not part of the gospel.

Also, it involves usages of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of love in service to the Lord. It shows that constant practice of God's word enables the Christian to have the mind of Christ; filled with spiritual truths where there is easy renewal to discern between good and evil. That is if you can live your life as a Christian by the Holy Spirit and help and instruct people to know and do the will of God in Christ.

**EVERY CHURCH HAS THE TWO (2) CATEGORIES OF MATURE AND IMMATURE CHRISTIANS WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH. BOTH WAYS, ONE'S CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LEVEL OF OBEDIENCE AND TYPE OF WORKS WOULD PLACE YOU IN ONE (1) OF THE TWO (2) KINDS.**

## **E// SIGNS OF A GROWING CHURCH OR NON – GROWING CHURCH**

**Hebrews 6:1 & 2 – Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**

The Hebrew writer continued that all Christians should aspire beyond elementary principles of the Christian faith like sin and repentance from dead works. That is the recurrence of sin and repentance like a child reciting a poem in class; backsliding nature of Christian.

Rather, Christians should mature to Christian leaders and should be teaching deeper spiritual truths like the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, five – fold ministries and Church growth, works, victories and sufferings of the apostles to make us active Christians in service to the Lord. It affirms love to the fullest in all Christian relationships; be it divine or human to reveal Christ to people and unity in the Church through perfect works.

It means to say that as long as a Church dwells on the fundamentals of the Christian faith because of repetitive sin, there cannot be spiritual growth and maturity. For such a Church cannot experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit to embark on the Great Commission and benefits unity of faith and purpose.

**THE CONSCIOUSNESS AND DESIRE TO KNOW GOD DEEPER IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AND INCREASE IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM OF GOD IN CHRIST. THE GRACE OF GOD MAKES CHURCHES ABOUND WITH DIVERSE MINISTRIES AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EQUIP CHRISTIANS. BE ASSURED OF EXCELLENT RESULTS WHEN DONE IN LOVE.**

**THIS IS YOUR CHOICE; NOT THE DEVIL OR YOUR ENEMIES. LOVE MAKES POSSIBLE THE GRACE OF PERFECTION WHERE IMPERFECTIONS BECOME A THING OF THE PAST.**

## **F// RIGHTEOUS INVESTMENTS IN SPIRITUAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS**

**2 Timothy 1:3 – 5 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**

Being in the Church requires some level of spiritual growth and maturity **(2 Peter 3:18)**. That was the beautiful and glorious story of the family of Timothy whom Apostle Paul

described as a son in the Christian faith **(1 Timothy 1:2)**. The genesis of this beautiful relationship was at Derbe and Lystra **(Acts chapter 16)**.

Apostle Paul recalled this Christian relationship first in Timothy's grandmother Lois and also in his mother, Eunice. He saw generational mark of distinction of commitment and faithfulness in them that connected to Timothy also in the third generation as Believers. Indeed the recommendation of Timothy to Apostle Paul by the disciples in Derbe and Lystra for his missionary journeys was justified. His commitment and faithfulness expanded the territories and regions where the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached to change people.

The good news about Timothy worthy of emulation was his spiritual growth in a consistent manner. He began as a disciple and became a minister and teacher and an evangelist of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and even a Bishop of the Church. It is clear that his association with Apostle Paul outpaced his contemporaries in the Christian faith. He became the perfect and shining star of the Church in the likeness of his spiritual father, Apostle Paul. To the Philippian Church, Paul commended Timothy as a trusted son and ministry partner with the mind to send him to them whilst he sorted out his busy schedules and assignments in ministry. For Paul realized some ministers sought for their own plans in life unlike Timothy noted for the things of Christ **(Philippians 2:19 – 24)**.

Being in the right Church and learning from the feet of the right and anointed minister of Jesus Christ is great opportunity to grow spiritually, perfect Christian gifts and works by the Holy Spirit and mature in the Church and Kingdom of God. In this positive direction of love in service, perfection is assured and replacement of the imperfections would be achieved to portray the atmosphere of heaven on earth.

Love is fruitful and sustainable on earth over generations just us love rules heaven by God through Jesus Christ our righteous foundation on which our Christian works would be rewarded, and inheritance attained **(1 Corinthians 3:11)**.

**FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF TIMOTHY TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AS SPIRITUAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF AN APOSTLE, PROPHET, EVANGELIST, PASTOR, TEACHER, BISHOP, CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LEADER. COMMITMENT AND FAITHFULNESS TAKE YOU INTO THE REALM OF PERFECTION WHERE YOUR USEFULNESS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT BLESSES AND EDIFY THE CHURCH, AND GLORIFIES GOD. BE A GENERATIONAL BUILDER OF BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS.**

**G// LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY TO EDIFY**

**Colossians 3:16 &17 – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**

The grace of God is there but it is not automatic in our lives, ministries and the Church. Even with a prophetic word over your life, the word of Christ must dwell in you richly to fulfill the purposes and will of God. You must be able to apply the knowledge of God's word to live good Christian lives and enjoy good Christian relationships; wisdom. You must be able to teach in and outside the Church. You must be able to instruct and encourage and counsel the Church in the righteousness of God in Christ as the Holy Spirit leads you in Psalms, hymns as well as spiritual songs.

Singing spiritual songs is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It shows that when you are established and matured in the Christian faith, all that you say and do will be in the name of Jesus. For the spiritually grown and matured person in Christ talks and behaves as a righteous person and not as carnal.

It shows that the Church needs a lot of spiritually grown and matured Church and Christian leaders and Ministers whose perfections in Christ would replace imperfections and straighten the righteous ways of the Lord. These are people whose delight is not only in the spiritual gifts but in love for others to care, give, seek the best in others, help and support.

**WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN YOU TO PERFECT THE CHURCH AND FLOCK OF GOD? YOUR HEART MUST NOT BE IN A STATE OF VACUUM AND THEREFORE YOU MUST HAVE THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELLING IN YOU RICHLY. HE IS THE WONDER IN YOU THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT USES TO CHANGE PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS AND PERFECT THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN USE.**

You have a choice to be perfect or imperfect but being perfect in love every time comes with eternal blessings and eternal results. Don't live an imperfect life but a perfect one. Know that imperfections are temporary but the perfect is eternal. Always obey the perfect gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with spiritual gifts in love. For eternal salvation is by faith in Christ and not human wisdom, intelligence and analysis, and scientific data, proof and analysis **(Acts 4:12, 1 Corinthians 3:10 – 15)**.

**DON'T LIVE AN IMPERFECT LIFE BUT A PERFECT LIFE TO GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

### PRAYER

**Dear God, help us to appreciate and practice the perfections of Your works in life, ministry and the Church as Your will in heaven is made manifest on earth.**

**Help us also to be perfect in our callings and ministries and make Your Church a glorious place as Paul desired for the Church in Corinth.**

**Let us attain spiritual growth and maturity to make it easier for the Holy Spirit to use us as vessels honour and instrument of Your glory.**

As a mighty army of the Lord, we pray that the imperfections in Your Church would be replaced with the perfections of Your word, Holy Spirit and the gospel of Son Jesus Christ.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE POWER OF PRAYER; THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST; THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ENSURE THAT THE WORKS OF GOD ARE PERFECTED IN THE CHURCHES. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

CARNALITY AND SINFUL WORKS THRIVE IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF IMPERFECTIONS. BUT WHEN COMMITTED, FAITHFUL, SPIRITUALLY GROWN AND MATURED BELIEVING CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND MINISTERS APPEAR ON THE SCENE, ALL IMPERFECTIONS VARNISH INTO THIN AIR. THEREFORE WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE BABY CHRISTIANS BUT MATURED CHRISTIANS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE PERFECT THINGS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS COMES TO REPLACE THE IMPERFECTIONS OF RELIGIOUS SPIRIT, SELF – RIGHTEOUSNESS AND WORLDLY THINGS IN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **WORKS IN LOVE IS MATURITY IN CHRIST; WORKS WITHOUT LOVE IS IMMATURITY**

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### INSPIRATION

An allegory is a story, poem and a picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically of a moral one or political. For example the Pilgrim's progress is an allegory of our spiritual journey to heaven.

**1 Corinthians 13:11 – When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

This is another powerful analogy of the transition from sub – standard and temporary situation to a better and permanent situation. It is likened to the growth of a child to manhood. Speech development has been explained biologically, psychologically and environmentally extensively. However, Paul's message to the Corinthians Believers of the transition from immaturity to maturity was explained spiritually to reflect level of spiritual growth in Christ by the Holy Spirit to God.

It explains the process of continuous spiritual growth from one level of glory to another by the Holy Spirit who reveals Christ and God to us through knowledge, wisdom, insight and understanding.

It reveals also the role of the Holy Spirit in spiritual growth of our Christian faith that becomes complete and glorious in heaven; attainment of eternal life. This explains why other gifts of the Holy Spirit would not be necessary in heaven because we would be in the fullness of the knowledge of God like our Lord Jesus Christ on earth (**Colossians 1:9**). Love, therefore, is the height and expression of God's relationship with His children in Jesus Christ to attain spiritual growth and maturity. Let's study further.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS TO ENSURE SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM IMMATURITY TO MATURITY IN CHRIST.**

#### **A// CHILDISH ATTITUDE**

Being a child is a stage of human growth and development to adulthood. The bible says that even a child is known by his deeds whether pure and right (**Proverbs 20:11**). Again the bible says that it is better to beat a child with the rod of correction than to leave him unattended and spoil him (**Proverbs 22:15, 23:13, 29:15**). To have a childish mentality as an adult and especially as a leader is a recipe for bad leadership with dire consequences (**Ecclesiastes 10:16**). Hence the need to train up a child to become a responsible adult and leader has a commanding tone (**Proverbs 22:6**).

#### **A1// SPOKE AS A CHILD**

**1 Corinthians 13:11a,b – When I was a child, I spoke as a child**

The analogy of a child shows words difficult to express; like one who stammers, inconsistent and incoherent because of low level of growth. The growth of a Christian begins from the day of being born again. Usually that Christian is nourished in the elementary principles of the Christian faith; sincere milk of the word and not in the bony and deep spiritual things to handle. At this stage, the Holy Spirit is now developing the mind to conform to that of Jesus Christ.

Besides, such a Christian does not have the boldness to speak of his or her Christian faith like a mature Christian. This was the learning process that Apostle Paul related to the usage of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which lacked 100% love. By this truth, Paul made reference to his early ministry life where he spoke as a child and not a matured person. Usually the gift of word of knowledge and gift of word of wisdom and discerning of spirits are of low status. Also we see that ministers in the prophetic office who have deep insight to dreams, visions and revelations make strong prophetic utterances and exposures that do not take into consideration unity in marriage, family and society. They don't apply wisdom to speak privately or publicly on such matters of spirituality and revelations.

Truly, this becomes very clear to us after becoming mature in our Christian faith like the gift of speaking diverse tongues and the need for interpretation for edification purpose.

In the Old Testament, Moses' excuse of low speech to run away from the call of God to go back to Egypt and save the Israelites from bondage of Pharaoh was rejected by God because He knew of the righteous investment and potential in him to perform and deliver. God knew Moses better than himself (**Exodus 4:10 & 11**).

Again the bible reveals that young boy Samuel in the temple of Shiloh did not know how to respond to the voice of the LORD when He called his name three times before Eli the high priest guided him to make the righteous response (**1 Samuel 3:1 – 3, 4 & 5, 6 & 7, 9 & 10**). Samuel was a child and that was the stage of physical development and spiritual development in his life of service and dedication in the house of the LORD; Shiloh.

**THE RECOGNITION OF YOUR HUMBLE BEGINNING AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN, CHURCH LEADER AND CHRISTIAN LEADER IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, CORRECT AND ENSURE SOUND BIBLICAL TRUTHS AND DOCTRINE. THIS IS A STAGE IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND CHURCH SERVICE TO MATURITY.**

## **A2// UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD**

### **1 Corinthians 13:11a,c – When I was a child, ... I understood as a child**

Apostle Paul reveals that knowing the fullness of truth and gaining insight into spiritual things is developed from a low level to high level. It involves developing your Christian faith with the knowledge and wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ through prayers, bible studies, good Christian doctrines, and learning from matured ministers of the gospel and Christians.

By this truth, Paul made reference to his early ministry life where he understood as a child and not a matured person. Usually the gift of word of knowledge and gift of word of wisdom and discerning of spirits are least developed. Also we see that ministers in the prophetic office who have deep insight to dreams, visions and revelations make strong prophetic utterances and exposures that do not take into consideration unity in marriage, family and society. They don't apply wisdom to speak privately or publicly on such matters of spirituality and revelations.

A child is a child in all perspectives and reflects in words and understanding of issues. But a child's innocence is also noted even with lack of understanding of issues in life. It takes some time to grow in knowledge and understand issues. Likewise, spiritual issues cannot be understood fully within a relatively short period of being born again because it involves fellowship with the Holy Spirit to know and understand as a Christian with the mind of Christ.

Likewise, perception and belief in spiritual things; usages of gifts of the Holy Spirit was without deep spiritual revelation and truth. In their days, only few Christians functioned effectively in these spiritual gifts to serve as a learning process to other Christians. Besides, love was not the motivating factor in the usage of these spiritual gifts like the Church of Ephesus revealed by Jesus in **Revelations 2:1 – 7**.

Let us read

**1 Samuel 3:19 – "So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground."**

As a young Prophet in Israel and in the temple of Shiloh, Samuel's understanding of issues increased daily to signify spiritual growth unto maturity. The bible says that he grew spiritually in prayers, fasting and receipt of prophecies, revelations and prophetic instructions and directions to the nation of Israel. Truly Samuel grew spiritually to become one of the well celebrated prophets in the whole of Israel from the level of little understanding of the call, mind and ways of God **(1 Samuel 3:1 – 9, 10 – 15, 16 – 18)**.

**LOW UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL TRUTHS IS COMMON AMONG YOUNG CHRISTIANS TO REVEAL IGNORANCE OF SOUND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES AND EARLY SPIRITUAL GROWTH. BUT THERE IS ALWAYS OPPORTUNITY FOR INCREASED KNOWLEDGE, SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY LIKE YOUNG BOY JESUS. THIS IS A STAGE IN LIFE, MINISTRY AND CHURCH SERVICE TO MATURITY.**

**I TELL YOU THE TRUTH THAT THOSE WHO REFUSE TO GROW SPIRITUALLY IN CHRIST WILL ALWAYS BE BABES IN THE LORD.**

**A3// THOUGHT AS A CHILD**

**1 Corinthians 13:11a,d – When I was a child, ... I thought as a child**

Being a child is a stage of human growth and development to adulthood. The bible says that even a child is known by his deeds whether pure and right (**Proverbs 20:11**). Clearly, the thoughts of a child differs greatly from that of an adult. Unlike the discerning adult, the child is undiscerning and sees and does things on the face value. For with the child, every thought is good for action.

Hence Paul's message to the Corinthians Believers was that his ministry works was once associated with childish thoughts. For early ministry works were associated with the thoughts of a child especially when he understood the ways and works of God in Christ. Truly, Paul's background as a Pharisee with indoctrinations might have shaped his thoughts and beliefs in a way that portrayed immaturity. Hence he was able to instruct the Corinthians Believers to have the mind of Christ to forgive offenders (**1 Corinthians 2:16**).

Having the mind of Christ towards God takes time through belief and commitment. The mind is the battle field for both righteous thoughts and sinful thoughts. Every Christian needs to develop his or her thoughts to make it conform to the mind of Christ. The mind is also the window to the heart and expresses your level of belief unto righteousness.

Indeed perception levels of the Christian faith differ because of varying levels of commitment and spiritual growth. We see this in the perception and usages of gifts of the Holy Spirit that receives negative reaction to spiritual things. Issues about resurrection, heaven and hell, prophecies and speaking diverse and interpretation of tongues have revealed spiritual levels of Christians and Churches.

**THE MIND OF A GROWING CHRISTIAN MUST CONFORM TO THE MIND OF CHRIST TO UNDERSTAND AND SPEAK SPIRITUAL THINGS IN A BOLD MANNER. THE MIND OF THE GROWING CHRISTIAN MUST BE FILLED WITH SOUND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES TO ENSURE THE TRANSITION FROM IMMATURITY TO MATURITY IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

We read

**Luke 2:40 – And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

It is easy to notice changes in children because of childhood characteristics. But to see a great change in a child-like words of wisdom and attitudinal change cannot be ignored. Especially when a child speaks of heavenly things and speaks prophecies that come to pass suddenly, he or she is considered a special child. These were the thoughts of Joseph and Mary with all the great and awesome things about Jesus; physical growth and spiritual growth in wisdom. For the grace of God was upon Him in word and works giving His earthly parents a righteous sign for the future and fulfillment of the messianic prophecy.

**EVEN JESUS IN HIS HUMANITY GREW PHYSICALLY (MIND) AND SPIRITUALLY TO HAVE FAVOUR WITH GOD AND PEOPLE.**

We read

**2 Peter 3:18a – but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

In a world of sin, evil and wickedness, the Christian is charged to use the bible as God's word, be led by the Holy Spirit to pray, attend Church services, have fellowship meetings, and grow spiritually in the likeness of the first Apostles and disciples **(Acts 2:42)**.

**WE CAN ONLY GROW SPIRITUALLY IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. ONLY THIS RIGHTEOUS PROCESS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AND NOT ACADEMIC BOOKS, ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES AND ACCOLADES AND TITLES.**

**I TELL YOU THE TRUTH THAT THOSE WHO REFUSE TO GROW SPIRITUALLY IN CHRIST WILL ALWAYS BE BABES IN THE LORD.**

### **B// MATURITY**

This is the result of commitment and faithfulness in the Christian faith to speak, understand and have righteous thoughts of spiritual things. It can be years of learning from the ministries of the Pastors as in

**Acts 2:42 – And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

Spiritual growth unto maturity is not automatic for Believing Christians but sitting at the feet of matured Ministers to learn from them and be equipped by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**YOU DON'T GROW SPIRITUALLY AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN SITTING DOWN AND DOING NOTHING BUT PARTICIPATING IN OPPORTUNISTIC CHURCH ACTIVITIES TO LEARN AND GROW.**

### **B1// WHEN I BECAME A MAN**

**1 Corinthians 13:11e – but when I became a man**

This is the level of spiritual consciousness and maturity in the knowledge and wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The evidence of spiritual maturity is to behave maturely in word, understanding and thoughts to reveal Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. It involves the attainment of maturity where the Christian is not ruled by false and demonic doctrines but God's word and the Holy Spirit. It involves speaking God's word in boldness by the Holy Spirit even if it touches the ego of people.

The bible says that Paul wrote to the Corinthians to appreciate his messages as full of maturity and the wisdom of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. For he heard that some of the Corinthians considered him of low speech in comparison of great speakers like Apollos. For the Corinthians were to judge him by his messages and not his speeches.

**This is the New King James Bible Commentary: Having heard eloquent addresses by men like Apollos, the Corinthians may have viewed Paul's message as elementary or unpolished. Paul assured the Corinthians that he was imparting wisdom; instruction that mature Christians would appreciate.**

People can misjudge you of ministry words and messages be it oral or written. Like Paul to the Corinthians, they need to be told to accept the messages as the word of God for their lives, ministries and the Church. And not behave like children who tend to like fascinated things in life.

**THE CHURCH DOES NOT ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO CRITICIZE MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS OF THEIR MESSAGES JUST BECAUSE OF LOW SPEECH IN COMPARISON WITH VERY GOOD SPEAKERS AS PREACHERS. FOR THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND TEACHING THE CHURCH ARE NOT ABOUT ORATORICAL ABILITIES BUT ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE THE WORD OF CHRIST AS THE WORD OF GOD TO THE PEOPLE. THIS IS FOR THE MATURED IN THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

We read

**Galatians 2:11 – 14 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"**

**CONSCIOUSNESS OF SPIRITUAL TRUTHS SHOULD LEAD TO INTERVENTIONS AND CORRECTIONS AND OBEDIENCE TO ENSURE SOUND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY.**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD GIVE YOU BOLDNESS LIKE APOSTLE PAUL BEFORE THE LIKES OF APOSTLE PETER FOR CORRECTIVE PURPOSE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF GOSPEL TRUTHS. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS IS AS BOLD AS THE LION.**

**B2// I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS**

**1 Corinthians 13:11f – I put away childish things.**

Paul's message to the Corinthians Believers was that there came a time in when he put away childish things because he was now a matured person. He discerned rightly, spoke rightly and understood rightly and expressed confidence in his apostolic ministry. It means to say that nobody remains a baby Christian or baby minister and Church leader for long or forever. For spiritual growth is achievable unto maturity to have excellent and perfect works in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

This is a reminder of Paul's allegorical message to the Corinthians Believers that usages of the spiritual gifts without love is unprofitable, waste and nothing meaning to bless and edify the Church **(1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3)**.

Maturity should automatically replace childish thinking and works to ensure sound Christian doctrine. The bible says that ministers of the gospel of Jesus are given to equip the Church for spiritual growth and maturity.

We read

**Ephesians 4:11 – 16 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

**GRACE IS GIVEN FOR EQUIPPING THE SAINTS AND EDIFYING THE BODY OF CHRIST TO ENSURE UNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, ATTAIN PERFECTION AND TRULY RESEMBLE JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN. TEACH THEM TO ESCAPE FROM HUMAN AND DEMONIC DECEPTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH. FOR IF WE DO THESE THINGS IN LOVE AND NOT UNDER COMPULSION, WE ARE PERCEIVED MATURED BY GOD AND IN THE CHURCH.**

If Believing Christians would put away childish things, it will be great opportunity to hear and understand the word of God from a matured perspective. The bible says that Paul wrote to the Corinthians to about lost opportunity to hear and receive the word of God from a matured perspective because of sinful desires and works; divisions, strife, envy. Indeed, there were divisions and segregations among them. Sense of belonging was no longer Christ but preferred Ministers who baptized them **(1 Corinthians 3:1 – 4)**.

CHILDREN ARE EASILY MANIPULATED TO SIN EITHER BY HUMAN OR DEMONIC FORCES BUT GRACE IS GIVEN TO BENEFIT FROM VARIOUS MINISTRIES TO ESCAPE THEM FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH, CONTINUITY AND MATURITY. IN OTHER WORDS, PAUL DISCOURAGED LACK OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND IMMATURITY BUT ENCOURAGED SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY.

ONCE FAITHFULNESS IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS ACHIEVED, THE CHURCH WILL GROW INTO THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST IN LOVE WHERE THAT UNION IS MAINTAINED BY SPIRITUAL SUPPLIES IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

NOTE THAT APOSTLE PAUL WANTED THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS TO KNOW THAT THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST IS THE CHANNEL FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (QUALITY) AND MATURITY ON EARTH WHICH WOULD COME TO COMPLETION WITH BEAUTY, EXCELLENCE, FULFILLMENT AND GLORY IN HEAVEN.

### PRAYER

We pray as a Church that the grace to remain in the Christian faith would unify us for spiritual growth unto maturity.

Let our maturity status be evidenced in love, word and works to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ in and outside the Church such as confidence and boldness in our testimonies.

We pray also that we will not miss given opportunities to learn at the feet of the Ministers and Church and Christian leaders and grow spiritually unto maturity.

Let Your Holy Spirit be our Helper in our quest to be obedient, discerning and emulate the righteous examples of Jesus and the apostles of the Christian faith.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THERE IS ALWAYS A TIME OF GROWTH AND A TIME OF MATURITY IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. GROW SPIRITUALLY UNTO MATURITY SO THAT PEOPLE CAN JUDGE YOU BY THE EVIDENCE OF INCREASED KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM AND FRUIT BEARING IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ETERNAL RESULTS. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE GRACE OF GOD TO GROW SPIRITUALLY IS GIVEN IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEREFORE DON'T TELL ME TO SLOW DOWN IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. IF I LOVE MUCH, THEN IT MUST REFLECT IN COMMITMENT, INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM IN CHRIST, FAITHFULNESS, RIGHTEOUS WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND HOLINESS TO GOD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**  
**CLARITY OF VISION AND KNOWLEDGE; EARTHLY AND HEAVEN DOMAINS**

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INSPIRATION

**1 Corinthians 13:12 – For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit led to the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Corinth that Apostle formed and was their spiritual leader and father. As he came very close to the end of his teaching and counsel in the excellent way of love, he made a distinction between earthly limitation of knowledge and sight of the gospel of Jesus Christ and its full knowledge and understanding in heaven.

It means to say that what we have seen and understood in the bible as the word of God, as well as visions, prophetic revelations and sayings, dreams, and trance by the Holy Spirit are not complete because there is more to see, know and experience in heaven. Yes nobody knows it all because God wants us to seek and search for Him all the time for knowledge, and wisdom and revelations so that we give Him all the glory **(Proverbs 25:2)**.

**EVEN WITH THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ABUNDANCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS, WE DON'T KNOW IT ALL BECAUSE IT IS THE WILL OF GOD TO LOOK TO HIM FOR KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM AND ANSWERS. BESIDES, OUR EARTHLY GLORY OF HUMANITY IS A LIMITATION TO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD FULLY IN CHRIST WHO IS A SPIRIT AND LIVES IN HEAVEN.**

### **1// ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTHS ON EARTH ARE LIKE MIRROR OBJECTS**

**1 Corinthians 13:12a – For now we see in a mirror, dimly**

The Apostle Paul reiterated his position of spiritual knowledge, prophecies and revelations by the Holy Spirit that they are like mirrors that are beheld on earth. He revealed that mirrors do not portray exact and precise images like usages of gifts of the Holy Spirit. Truly seeing yourself in a mirror is not the same as seeing your own self beyond the physical into the heart and spiritual. We see in part dimly. It is like night vision which makes us see but does not enable us to see all things clearly.

The contrast on earth is that people see and believe in spiritual gifts as complete and perfection of God. In reality, these spiritual truths are incomplete, partial, imperfect and not glorious compared to Christ in heaven who is the knowledge and wisdom, love, power and glory of God. That is why Paul stated in his writing that we know in part and prophesy in part because we see in a mirror dimly and not clearly **(1 Corinthians 13:9)**.

In this gospel truth, the Corinthians Believers were not to pride themselves in the abundance of spiritual gifts because there was always more to see, know and experience in Christ by the Holy Spirit. It means to say also that they were to be committed and faithful in love, and qualify for heaven to experience fullness of God's glory beyond earthly limitations.

The New King James Bible Commentary states the mirror is probably the word of God (2 Corinthians 3:18, James 1:23 – 25) which can give us only partial understanding of God.

**OUR EARTHLY NATURE DOES NOT ENABLE US TO KNOW FULLY SPIRITUAL TRUTHS EVEN WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTHS LIKE USAGES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON EARTH ARE LIKE MIRROR OBJECTS.**

The bible says that the secret things belong to God but those He has revealed are for us and our children forever so that we may do all the words of this law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

It means that God expects obedience from us whenever He reveals His word to us. But when God keeps His word, concepts, messages and especially mysteries from us, it means that it can only be revealed to us in eternity for our blessing.

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, the secret things refers to the future as well as the way in which the curses would come to pass. The will of God had been revealed in the Law. If these revelations were acted upon, the people would receive God's great blessing. To ignore the express commandments of God would be folly. Similarly the Christian has God's revealed will in the bible. To ignore that while chasing after the things God has left secret is pure folly.

**IF WE THINK THAT WE HAVE SEEN IT ALL BECAUSE OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS, THEN LET ME TELL YOU THAT THERE IS MORE FOR US TO SEE IN HEAVEN; TIP OF THE ICEBERG.**

**KNOW THAT WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED IS GIVEN TO US TO SEE, UNDERSTAND AND POSSESS. WHAT GOD HIDES FROM THE CHURCH REMAIN A MYSTERY TO BE REVEALED IN THE FUTURE; ETERNITY.**

### **B// KNOWING SPIRITUAL TRUTHS FACE TO FACE**

**1 Corinthians 13:12b – but then face to face.**

To attain perfections on earth is possible by the grace of God but not like heaven in God's glory where Jesus Christ and all the angels reside. For Apostle Paul, the hope of the Christian is to see and know fully in Christ all the mysteries, knowledge, wisdom, power in the attainment of eternal life and being with Jesus Christ in heaven. That is face to face sight, communication, knowledge, wisdom, power and glory of God.

It means to say that being with Jesus Christ in eternity is the opportunity to see and know all spiritual truths with full understanding. **The New King James Bible Commentary states that our partial understanding of God will all change when we come face to face with Him in eternity.**

It can be compared to Prophet Moses who had a personal relationship with God and spoke to Him face to face to know His ways of obedience and righteousness beyond His miracles. For the Psalmist described this relationship better than the Israelites who were just recipients of the Law and His works of miracles (**Psalms 103:7**).

The truth is that eternity in heaven is the answer and solution to all questions and challenges associated with proclamation of spiritual truths on earth. It means that some mysteries would be known only in heaven even though prayers, fastings, meditations, revelations and other Holy Spirit messages can be known in God's will.

For our human limitations and worldly environment does not permit God to reveal completely all mysteries and spiritual truths even with the word of God and Holy Spirit under the dispensation of the New Covenant in Christ.

**GOD'S WILL IS TO REVEAL ALL MYSTERIES, KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM AND POWER IN THE ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE AND BEING WITH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN; IN OUR HEAVENLY NATURE.**

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, the mirror is probably the word of God (see **2 Corinthians 3:18, James 1:23 – 25**) which can give us only partial understanding of God. This will change when we see Him face to face.

We read

**2 Corinthians 3:18 – But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

Christ is the mirror of God through the Holy Spirit for all Christians. Even though, our faces are not covered spiritually because we are not under the Old Testament of the Law, but in the grace of Jesus Christ, we are going through the process of change daily to conform to the image of Jesus by the help of the Holy Spirit. This is the experience of the Christian of increasing glory in Christ but not attained fullness and perfection in heaven.

The New King James Bible Commentary states that all Believers behold the glory of the Lord in the scriptures and are transformed into the image of God. Christ is the image of God (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

The New King James Bible Commentary states that from glory to glory is an ever increasing glory. As Believers behold the glory of God in the word of God, the Spirit of God transforms Believers into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is the description of the process of sanctification.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE PERSONALITY OF CONSISTENT TRANSFORMATION TO REVEAL CHRIST ALL THE TIME TO US; NOT FULLNESS. HE IS ALSO THE**

## PERSONALITY OF TRANSFORMATION TO MAKE US CONFORM TO THE IMAGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

### C// THE MIRROR OF YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

There have been great visions and revelations, and prophecies about heaven, God, Jesus Christ, people, situations and the devil by the Holy Spirit that have the element of mystery. Therefore, they are considered as mirror objects and partial knowledge compared to the full vision and knowledge of the mysteries of God in heaven **(Revelations 10:7)**.

Mirrors by their nature allow you to see yourself as you are and objects as they are but the difference lies in the true identity and replica of a person. Moses instructed Bezalel and Aholiab and every gifted artisan whom God had gifted with wisdom to build the tabernacle **(Exodus 36:1 & 2)**.

We read

**Exodus 38:8 – He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.**

**BRONZE MIRRORS WERE PART OF THE SANCTUARY BUILT BY MOSES. THEY WERE POLISHED METALS THAT SERVED AS MIRRORS BUT DID NOT PROVIDE CLEAR IMAGES.**

We read

**Job 37:18 – With Him, have you spread out the skies, Strong as a cast metal mirror?**

The New King James Bible Commentary describes the spreading of the skies by God as Strong as a cast metal mirror: Ancient mirrors were firm and unbreakable because they were made of polished bronze.

**JOB DESCRIBED THE SKIES CREATED BY GOD AS A STRONG METAL MIRROR TO LOOK AND KNOW HIS POWER AND GREATNESS. THE PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE HUMANITY TRUST GOD IN ALL THINGS.**

We read

**Jeremiah 1:11 – 15 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.” And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north.” Then the Lord said to me: “Out of the north calamity shall break forth On all the inhabitants of the land. For**

**behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north,” says the Lord ;  
“They shall come and each one set his throne At the entrance of the gates of  
Jerusalem, Against all its walls all around, And against all the cities of Judah.**

The call of Jeremiah as a prophet opened his eyes to spiritual truths and the sovereignty of God in human affairs and will on earth. The first question posed by God to him about the almond tree received a clear answer with commendation. With this, God informed him timely that He was about to perform His word. Going further, God had to speak and reveal further to Prophet Jeremiah before he could fathom the plan of God.

The second question revealed God’s definite plan in detail of punishing His people for disobedience and rebellion. It shows that there is a difference between seeing a vision from God and knowing what it is all about; the message. This calls for prayers, meditations and precise revelations and messages by the Holy Spirit for the Christian.

**SEEING IS ONE THING AND GOOD; KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING THE  
MESSAGE IS BETTER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

We read

**Luke 10:21 – In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father,  
Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and  
prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your  
sight.**

Jesus had the grace to see visions, have revelations and know messages given by God at the same time. When the seventy (70) disciples returned from their evangelistic ministry with testimonies of signs and wonders, He rejoiced in the Spirit and rendered thanks to God; for the Father had revealed His power and glory to ordinary and humble people who believed but has hidden them from the proud people who were wise in their eyes. The good news is that God loves to reveal spiritual truths to Christians with the Holy Spirit.

**CHRISTIANS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE RECIPIENTS OF DIVINE REVELATIONS  
AT THE PLEASURE OF GOD. IN TRUTH, WE SEE ONLY WHATEVER GOD SHOWS  
AND KNOW MESSAGES HE COMMUNICATES TO US IN CHRIST AND THE HOLY  
SPIRIT.**

We read

**Luke 10:22 – 24 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one  
knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and  
the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” Then He turned to His disciples and  
said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you  
that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen  
it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.”**

Jesus revealed deeper spiritual truths of His mission on earth where the testimonies of His disciples proved that God had entrusted all things unto Him. Therefore He had the Father's authority and approval to speak and reveal spiritual truths like the partnership between the Father and the Son to become a Christian. He went further to reveal His Sonship and messiah status of which many prophets and kings saw glimpses of His glory and prophesied but they did not experience Him like Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, David and Solomon.

It shows that in the fullness of time; in the goodness and sovereignty of God, they were divinely selected to be Jesus' disciples and experience Him.

**BELIEF AND OBEDIENCE IN CHRIST ARE A BLESSING TO KNOW SPIRITUAL TRUTHS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A HIGHER MAGNITUDE THAT ELUDED PROPHETS AND KINGS OF OLD. ATTAINING ETERNAL LIFE AND BEING IN HEAVEN ARE THE COMPLETION TO FULL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALL MYSTERIES AND BIBLICAL TRUTHS.**

We read

**Philippians 3:12 – Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

Christians must have the right attitude like Apostle Paul to press on, and to be faithful in the grace of God, and to hope for the blessing and reward for us in Christ Jesus **(Ephesians 1:3)**.

**PRESS ON; BE FAITHFUL IN YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH TO ACHIEVE PERFECTION IN HEAVEN.**

We read

**Ephesians 1:17 & 18 – that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.**

The prayer of Paul to the Ephesian Believers was that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Also we can receive grace for the enlightenment of our eyes through the Holy Spirit so that we will know the promises, blessings and rewards and inheritance of God in Christ for us His Church to heaven. It means to say that the Church shall continue to come to revelation upon revelation and truth upon truth as long as the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see and minds to comprehend the riches of His glory.

I tell you the truth that faithful Believing Christians, Church leaders, Christian leaders and Ministers have the opportunity and grace spiritually to know and experience greater revelations and glory of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Making it to heaven assures us

of complete and full knowledge of God's glory. Unfaithfulness and backsliding prevent us to know and experience the many revelations of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

**PRAY FOR THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION TO KNOW CHRIST BETTER. PRAY FOR INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING, GLORY AND INHERITANCE IN CHRIST; ON EARTH AND IN ETERNITY.**

The good news is that in the resurrection of our bodies, it is not very clear how we will look like but we shall look like Christ in eternity if we obey His teachings **(1 John 3:2)**. Apostle John continued by instructing us in righteousness by the Holy Spirit to keep this hope alive through a holy lifestyle and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. For purity of body, soul and spirit is a necessity **(1 John 3:3)**.

**A CHURCH THAT HAS HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE WILL PROMOTE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS LIVING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Therefore I counsel you with the word of God in

**James 1:23 – 25 If anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**

The mirror of your life should be able to show you your good or bad personality like a clinical thermometer which reads your temperature level in Centigrade or Fahrenheit. Apostle James, however, tells us that a hearer of the word but not a doer lives in a state of fallacy and delusion. For his or her situation is likened to someone who looks in a mirror and easily forgets how the natural face looks. Indeed taking upon yourself a title, position, power and authority, and self – importance does not mean you are just what you think or say. Yes the Lord knows those who belong to Him **(2 Timothy 2:19)**.

But the person who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it is known to be a doer of the work and not a forgetful hearer. He or she is blessed by God in works. In this context, Paul's message centred on love in relationships and works for the Christian.

**According to the New King James Bible Commentary, the law of liberty is the law of love. Loving God and loving one's neighbour sums up the law (Matthew 26:36 – 40). But it is Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17 – 19) which frees us from our sins to truly love others (John 8:36, Galatians 5:13).**

**THE MIRROR OF YOUR LIFE MAKES YOU READ YOUR SPIRITUAL STATUS AS A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN OR NOT AND SPIRITUAL LEVEL AS A FAITHFUL OR BACKSLIDING CHRISTIAN. IF YOU LOOK INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY WHERE LOVE SHAPES YOUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND WORKS, YOU ARE PREPARING YOURSELF TO MEET THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND COME INTO**

**FULL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S MYSTERIES AND WAYS IN HEAVEN. IF NOT, THEN YOUR WAYS AND WORKS ARE NOT PERFECT BUT ADAMANT TO REPENTANCE, CORRECTION AND CHANGE.**

Know that your Christian life and works are based on your eternal relationship with God just as Paul wrote to the Corinthians Believers; that if anyone loves God, he or she is known by Him **(1 Corinthians 8:3)**. Truly we know in part in this earthly body and the Church but we shall know all spiritual truths and be fully known in heaven as Believing Christians. For this divine assurance is the call to duty and faithfulness.

**ONCE GOD'S WORD IS A MIRROR TO SEE OURSELVES, EVEN WITH OUR HEARTS AND MINDS, LET US OBEY AND BE FAITHFUL AND ETERNITY WILL BRING US TO THE POINT OF FULL KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM. BE MINDFUL THAT GOD KNOWS YOU BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF. BE WISE.**

### PRAYER

We thank O You God for the blessings of spiritual gifts such as word of wisdom and word of knowledge and the prophetic gifts that gives us insight and understanding to Your will.

Though we are limited in visions, revelations and dreams on this earth, help us to express love in our Christian relationships and works to justify our inclusion for a greater and complete knowledge and wisdom of Your mysteries and revelations.

Like the Church of Corinth, let grace abounds upon us to be holy and righteous even in our limited vision and understanding in order to qualify for heaven and come to full blessing, knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

Help us to live holy and righteous lives by Your word and Holy Spirit reminding us of looking into the perfect law of liberty.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**ALL GOSPEL TRUTHS ON EARTH ARE LIKE MIRROR OBJECTS TO US. WE SEE IN PART AND KNOW IN PART BECAUSE WE ARE YET TO KNOW ALL THE DEEP SECRETS AND MYSTERIES OF GOD IN HEAVEN. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**FACE TO FACE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS IN HEAVEN IS THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH WHERE WE SHALL SEE CLEARLY ALL THAT IS WRITTEN AND PROPHESED FOR OUR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR LOVING GOD IN CHRIST, WE ARE KNOWN BY HIM. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**CLARITY OF VISION AND KNOWLEDGE; THE HEART OF MAN**

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INSPIRATION

**1 Corinthians 13:12 – For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit led to the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church of Corinth that Apostle formed and was their spiritual leader and father. As he came very close to the end of his teaching and counsel in the excellent way of love, he made a distinction between earthly limitation of knowledge and sight of the gospel of Jesus Christ and its full knowledge and understanding in heaven.

It means to say that what we have seen and understood in the bible as the word of God, as well as visions, prophetic revelations and sayings, dreams, and trance by the Holy Spirit are not complete because there is more to see, know and experience in heaven. Yes nobody knows it all because God wants us to seek and search for Him all the time for knowledge, and wisdom and revelations so that we give Him all the glory **(Proverbs 25:2)**.

**EVEN WITH THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ABUNDANCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS, WE DON'T KNOW IT ALL BECAUSE IT IS THE WILL OF GOD TO LOOK TO HIM FOR KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM AND ANSWERS. BESIDES, OUR EARTHLY GLORY OF HUMANITY IS A LIMITATION TO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD FULLY IN CHRIST WHO IS A SPIRIT AND LIVES IN HEAVEN.**

### **1// ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTHS ON EARTH ARE LIKE MIRROR OBJECTS**

**1 Corinthians 13:12a – For now we see in a mirror, dimly**

The Apostle Paul reiterated his position of spiritual knowledge, prophecies and revelations by the Holy Spirit that they are like mirrors that are beheld on earth. He revealed that mirrors do not portray exact and precise images like usages of gifts of the Holy Spirit. Truly seeing yourself in a mirror is not the same as seeing your own self beyond the physical into the heart and spiritual. We see in part dimly. It is like night vision which makes us see but does not enable us to see all things clearly.

The contrast on earth is that people see and believe in spiritual gifts as complete and perfection of God. In reality, these spiritual truths are incomplete, partial, imperfect and not glorious compared to Christ in heaven who is the knowledge and wisdom, love, power and glory of God. That is why Paul stated in his writing that we know in part and prophesy in part because we see in a mirror dimly and not clearly **(1 Corinthians 13:9)**.

In this gospel truth, the Corinthians Believers were not to pride themselves in the abundance of spiritual gifts because there was always more to see, know and experience in Christ by the Holy Spirit. It means to say also that they were to be committed and faithful in love, and qualify for heaven to experience fullness of God's glory beyond earthly limitations.

The New King James Bible Commentary states the mirror is probably the word of God (2 Corinthians 3:18, James 1:23 – 25) which can give us only partial understanding of God.

**OUR EARTHLY NATURE DOES NOT ENABLE US TO KNOW FULLY SPIRITUAL TRUTHS EVEN WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTHS LIKE USAGES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON EARTH ARE LIKE MIRROR OBJECTS.**

The bible says that the secret things belong to God but those He has revealed are for us and our children forever so that we may do all the words of this law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

It means that God expects obedience from us whenever He reveals His word to us. But when God keeps His word, concepts, messages and especially mysteries from us, it means that it can only be revealed to us in eternity for our blessing.

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To attain perfections on earth is possible by the grace of God but not like heaven in God's glory where Jesus Christ and all the angels reside. For Apostle Paul, the hope of the Christian is to see and know fully in Christ all the mysteries, knowledge, wisdom, power in the attainment of eternal life and being with Jesus Christ in heaven. That is face to face sight and communication with God and to have and experience full knowledge, wisdom, power and glory of God.

It means to say that being with Jesus Christ in eternity is the opportunity to see and know all spiritual truths with full understanding. **The New King James Bible Commentary states that our partial understanding of God will all change when we come face to face with Him in eternity.**

It can be compared to Prophet Moses who had a personal relationship with God and spoke to Him face to face to know His ways of obedience and righteousness beyond His miracles. For the Psalmist described this relationship better than the Israelites who were just recipients of the Law and His works of miracles **(Psalms 103:7)**.

The truth is that eternity in heaven is the answer and solution to all questions and challenges associated with proclamation of spiritual truths on earth. It means that some mysteries would be known only in heaven even though prayers, fastings, meditations, revelations and other Holy Spirit messages can be known in God's will.

For our human limitations and worldly environment does not permit God to reveal completely all mysteries and spiritual truths even with the word of God and Holy Spirit under the dispensation of the New Covenant in Christ.

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**2 Corinthians 3:18 – But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

Christ is the mirror of God through the Holy Spirit for all Christians. Even though, our faces are not covered spiritually because we are not under the Old Testament of the Law, but in the grace of Jesus Christ, we are going through the process of change daily to conform to the image of Jesus by the help of the Holy Spirit. This is the experience of the Christian of increasing glory in Christ but not attained fullness and perfection in heaven.

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## PERSONALITY OF TRANSFORMATION TO MAKE US CONFORM TO THE IMAGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

### C//THE HEART OF MAN; FULL KNOWLEDGE IN ETERNITY

**1 Corinthians 13:12c,d – Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.**

Paul's message to the Corinthians Believers was that this present condition of the heart of man to believe fully in God and obey Him fully in Christ by the Holy Spirit has restrictions. "Now" suggests a present condition in this earthly body where receipt of knowledge and revelations for the Believing Christian is by the Holy Spirit as we fellowship with the Father and Son. Like the spiritual gifts which shall give way when we enter into perfection in eternity, so also we shall know all spiritual truths just as God knows us. For our true state of hearts with belief in Jesus Christ, application of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, bearing of the fruit of the Holy Spirit and faithfulness in ministry would be evident to God when we come face to face with Him.

**KNOWING IN PART HAS THE ASSURANCE OF KNOWING IN FULL JUST AS GOD WILL KNOW OUR TRUE STATE OF HEARTS AND AS A CHURCH WITH BELIEF IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AND FAITHFULNESS IN WORSHIP AND SERVICE.**

Hence we see in part as in a mirror dimly and we have partial understanding of God despite the blessings of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and fivefold ministries. But the time will come when we will see God face to face with complete understanding of all knowledge and mysteries; creation, the Law of Moses and the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE WAYS AND MYSTERIES OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TEMPORARY EVEN IN THE CHURCH. BUT THE PROMISE OF HAVING FULL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING IS GIVEN WHEN WE COME FACE TO FACE WITH GOD IN ETERNITY.**

As revealed by the Apostle John about the eschatological events, the time will come when the mystery of God would be declared "finished" (**Revelations 10:7**); just as God finished His creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh day (**Genesis 2:1 & 2**); just as Jesus declared in His prayer (**John 17:4**) and on the cross of Calvary that "It is finished" (**John 19:30**) to signify the completion of the work of eternal salvation through crucifixion and death on the cross; just as the works of God were finished from the foundations of the world (**Hebrews 4:3**).

Know also that when we say the works of God would be finished, it does not mean that the testimony of Jesus Christ in which we have eternal salvation would also end in heaven. Remember it is His obedience that has saved us eternally to live with God forever. If we live forever, then the testimony of Jesus would forever remain with us even in eternity.

**SCRIPTURE CANNOT LIE BUT DECLARE THE TRUTH. THE CHURCH WOULD COME TO FULL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING WHEN THE MYSTERY OF GOD IS FINISHED. BE PART OF THE GLORIOUS COMPANY.**

We read

**Proverbs 27:19 – As in water face reflects face, So a man’s heart reveals the man.**

Still waters are able to mirror the face of a person. In ancient days, this was a simple way of seeing and knowing one’s facial features without any form of counterfeit or act of personation. King Solomon used this analogy to portray the condition of a person’s heart which defines a person’s identity, behaviour and habits, and eventually character. Truly, the heart of a person cannot be seen with the physical eyes except the spirit of the person and revelation by the Holy Spirit evident in the gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God.

**AS YOU LOOK INTO STILL WATER, YOUR FACE IMAGE APPEARS AUTOMATICALLY. LIKEWISE THE ONE’S TRUE CHARACTER IS A REFLECTION OF THE CONDITION OF THE HEART JUDGED BY THE WORD OF GOD.**

The bible says that the word of God discovers our true condition and nature beyond personal, biological, marital, family, societal and religious assessment of our lives. We read

**Hebrews 4:12 &13 – For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piecing even into the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

According to the Hebrew writer, the word of God is alive with Spirit and power of God and sharper than the two edged sword. In other words, the word of God is proven to be sharper in terms of making a clear distinction between the soul and the spirit, the mind, will, and emotions, and the heart in terms of belief. Also, it has the power to work on the joints and marrow which are the connecting and inner parts of the human body. Besides the word of God is able to distinguish between righteous and unrighteous thoughts, and hidden secrets of the heart; intents of the heart.

Again the Hebrew writer revealed that no creation of God in heaven and earth is able to hide from the eyes, ears, smell and mouth of the word of God. For all things were created by God through His word (**John 1:1 – 4**). Know that by the word of the Lord, all things were created (**Psalms 33:6**) and He sustains them also by the word of His power (**Hebrews 1:3**).

**NO CREATION OF GOD CAN EVER HIDE FROM THE CREATOR WHO IS GOD. FOR HIS WORD IS STILL LOADED WITH TRUTH, WISDOM, REVELATION, POWER AND**

**GLORY TO DISCOVER AND BRING OUT THE TRUE STATE OF PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL WELLBEING WHETHER AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS OR UNBELIEVES AND SINNERS. HENCE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE CHURCH AND ALL THE NATIONS, WITH HER PEOPLE, AS GOD'S SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORD THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.**

Apostle Paul buttressed this point earlier in

**1 Corinthians 2:11 – For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.**

You are what you are as a result of your heart which expresses self in your beliefs, thoughts, words and works. If your heart is good and righteous, your thoughts, words and works would be good and righteous. If your heart is corrupt and evil, your thoughts, words and works would be corrupt and evil. This explains also why believing in the righteousness of God through faith in Christ makes us value and appreciate the works of God by the Holy Spirit. Likewise this explains why unbelievers and sinners do not value and appreciate the works of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit because they believe in self – righteousness or have a religious spirit or believe in the spirit of the devil for provisions, protection.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit knows the things of God and reveals it to us for obedience and blessings. Mind you, a righteous life in Christ always paves the way for more insight and understanding to the ways of God. This comes close to the hope of knowing fully when we go to heaven but human intelligence and smartness cannot blend spirituality with carnality and sin and have the approval of God through His word and Spirit.

**THE HEART OF A PERSON CANNOT FAIL HIS OR HER DISPOSITION. IT REVEALS THE TRUE IDENTITY OF A PERSON. LIKEWISE, THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES IN JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS. ANYTHING ELSE IS THE SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST. EITHER YOU ARE FOR CHRIST AND AGAINST HIM.**

We read

**Proverbs 23:6 & 7 – Do not eat the bread of a miser, Nor desire his delicacies. For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you.**

Solomon reveals the connection between the heart and the mind. The real person is defined by his or her thoughts. It is said that no – one knows your heart except what is on your mind is spoken and revealed. Therefore, the mind is the window to the heart. The Christian is supposed to live a life of the Holy Spirit and express faith in the word and promises of God in Christ. The good news is that the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see

into our own hearts and minds, and make them conform to the word of God; the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**AN EVIL HEART CAN PRETEND FOR A TIME BUT WILL ALWAYS BE EXPOSED BY THE WORD OF GOD; THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

The bible says in

**2 Corinthians 13:5 & 6 – Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.**

Apostle Paul's message here was a strong defense against enemies in the Church of Corinth concerning proof of Christ in his apostolic ministry. He warned them that coming a third time was to enforce the word of God which would judge all forms sin and evil found in the Church. Hence the clarion call to do a thorough introspection of their lives, ministries and Church unity before he arrived. Clearly, Paul's heart and motive was righteous to ensure that they cleansed themselves of all filthiness and had a righteous standing to God in Christ. In other words, they were to judge themselves to escape his rebukes and judgments as the Lord's judgments before the final Day of Judgment.

The Church today is likened to Apostle Paul's message to the Christians. We are to check our lives and ministries with God's word and the works of the Holy Spirit whether we are still in the Christian faith. Judge yourself; test yourself; do a thorough self – examination whether your belief system has changed or not, whether your belief in Jesus Christ is total or partial; whether you are still faithful and your service is in love or compromised and bowed down to temptations from the devil.

**WHEN WE JUDGE OURSELVES AND RID OFF OUR LIVES, MINISTRIES AND CHURCH FROM SIN, EVIL AND WICKEDNESS, WE WILL NOT BE REBUKED AND JUDGED LIKE UNBELIEVERS AND SINNERS. FOR SELF – EXAMINATION IS THE PREVENTIVE MEASURE AGAINST REBUKES AND JUDGMENTS IN THE CHURCH AND HAS THE REWARD OF BEING RIGHTEOUS TO GOD IN CHRIST.**

If Jesus Christ is in you and Lord of your life and ministry, then you are still qualified to see and know the things of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Then be assured that just as you are in Christ and God knows your heart, so also all knowledge and wisdom and mysteries would be known in heaven.

**IF WE CAN JUDGE OURSELVES, THEN WE HAVE THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN FAITH TO COME TO THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF ALL MYSTERIES IN ETERNITY. THERE IS OUR HOPE AS FAITH AND LOVE ARE AT WORK IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES, MINISTRIES AND THE CHURCH.**

If the Christian sins and backslides, and does not heed to Christian counsel for repentance, then the spirit of the devil and not the Holy Spirit would control activities. Such a person cannot see and know the things of God, and therefore there is no hope of eternal life and full knowledge, wisdom and mysteries of God.

**THE CHRISTIAN WHO BACKSLIDES FREQUENTLY CANNOT BE KNOWN AND KNOW THE WAYS OF GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. RATHER, THE SPIRIT OF THE DEVIL WOULD LEAD SUCH A PERSON TO HELL FIRE IN DEATH. HOWEVER, REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS IS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE WHILST ALIVE.**

The good news is that the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see into the hearts and minds of people; not the spirit of the world and the devil. The Holy Spirit speaks the truth as Christ reveals to Him **(John 15:26)** but the devil is described as the father of all lies **(John 8:44 & 1 John 3:8)**. Do not trust evil spirits for knowledge, directions, answers to questions and solutions to problems **EXCEPT** when the Holy Spirit is involved to prove Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord **(Matthew 8:28 – 34)**. The point of message is that God loves to speak to His Church of Believing Christians through His word in Christ and the Holy Spirit; righteousness.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS THE ABILITY TO SEE AND KNOW THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF PEOPLE FOR SPIRITUAL INTERVENTIONS. DEPENDENCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR INFORMATION IS THE BEST RIGHTEOUS APPROACH IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVING CHRISTIANS BECAUSE HE TESTIFIES ABOUT CHRIST AS THE LAMB AND JUDGE OF GOD; SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. REJECT DEMONIC INFORMATION AND WORKS AND INFLUENCE BECAUSE ITS WAYS ARE DECEPTIVE, ANTI-CHRIST AND DISOBEDIENT TO GOD.**

Our obedience to fulfill the Great Commission as a Church is very important to God because His judgments are righteous. We read

**John 12:48 – He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him— the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.**

You don't have to worry too much or blame yourself when unbelievers reject the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel of salvation preached to them. For the words of Jesus shall judge them on the Judgment day for unbelief and disobedience.

**THE WORD OF GOD SHALL JUDGE UNBELIEVERS ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. EXAMINE YOURSELF WHETHER YOU ARE STILL A BELIEVING CHRISTIAN OR NOT. YES BACKSLIDING CHRISTIANS SHALL ALSO BE JUDGED BECAUSE THEY FELL FROM GRACE UNTO UNBELIEF AND DISOBEDIENCE.**

## D// THE HEART OF THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS IN MINISTRY

**2 Corinthians 13:9 & 11b – For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete... Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.**

The fathers' heart, thoughts, words and works in ministry determines the spiritual direction of the children. As Apostle Paul's heart revealed, his sufferings and works was to make them complete in their Christian faith in all areas. His prayers, preachings, teachings, counsels, impartation of spiritual gifts, emphasis on love in worship and service, leadership abilities, fatherly role, and protection.

Indeed the heart and desire of true fathers and mothers are to make their children emulate righteous examples in Christ and the Holy Spirit, and to be complete in all righteousness.

**THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS HEARTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN IN CHRIST MUST BE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH, MATURITY, EXCELLENCE, COMPLETENESS AND GLORY, AND ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE AND INHERITANCE IN HEAVEN.**

## E// LOOK UNTO JESUS; THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH

**Hebrews 12:2 – looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and also sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

The Hebrew writer revealed clearly that the Christian faith can only be strong and achieve eternal results if only we look unto Jesus as the Saviour and the Christ. For He became the Lamb of God to be sacrificed on the cross for our eternal salvation. He is the crucified and resurrected Christ who overcame ridicule shame and disgrace in the perfect will of God. For this reason, ascension to heaven made Him sit at the right hand side of the Father in majesty and righteousness.

With this message of hope and assurance, the Church must maintain its position of Jesus being the Head to command respect, reverence and obedience (**Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18**). This explains why the Church is independent of the influence, manipulations and controls of the devil and the systems of this world. We live by faith in Christ by the leading of the Holy Spirit beyond sight. Seeking first the kingdom of God have the promise to receive all things we need. Indeed believing and following Jesus makes us see greater things; visions, dreams, angels, revelations and knowing mysteries, receive and experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit like Nathaniel was informed (**John 1:49 – 51**).

Also, it is the Father's pleasure to give us the Kingdom as Jesus declared **(Luke 12:29 – 32)**. Therefore, we have a bright future to know God fully in eternity and be commended and rewarded as children of God.

**MAKING JESUS YOUR FOCUS AND ATTENTION HAS THE BLESSING OF EXPERIENCING HIM IN VISIONS, DREAMS, ANGELS, WORD OF GOD, AND FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**MAKING JESUS YOUR FOCUS AND ATTENTION HAS THE REWARD OF KNOWING ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTHS AND MYSTERIES COMPLETELY WHEN WE COME FACE TO FACE WITH GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN.**

### PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we pray for grace to have clarity of vision and knowledge by Your Holy Spirit.

We pray that our state of hearts as a Church will be good and righteous because our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lead and guide us by Your Holy Spirit to have the mind of Christ always.

May we have the hearts of the fathers and mothers in ministry like the early Church and Apostle Paul in the Church of Corinth to instruct in righteousness, encourage and edify the Church.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**CLARITY OF VISION AND KNOWLEDGE IS FACILITATED BY A GOOD AND RIGHTEOUS HEART SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**THE FATHERS' HEART, THOUGHTS, WORDS AND WORKS IN MINISTRY DETERMINES THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION OF THE CHILDREN IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. TELL THEM THE GOSPEL TRUTH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS SAVIOUR AND LORD. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**MIND YOU, A RIGHTEOUS LIFE IN CHRIST ALWAYS PAVES THE WAY FOR MORE INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING TO THE WAYS OF GOD. THIS COMES CLOSE TO THE HOPE OF KNOWING ALL HIDDEN MYSTERIES FULLY WHEN WE GO TO HEAVEN. NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **ABIDING SPIRITUAL TRUTHS; FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE; THE GREATEST IS LOVE (1)**

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### INSPIRATION

As Apostle Paul concluded his message on chapter thirteen of his first epistle to the Church of Corinth, he identified three major areas of the Christian faith to be faith, hope and love. With these three tools, the Believing Christian is bound to be successful in life, ministry and the Church. Let's study further.

### A// FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

**1 Corinthians 13:13 – And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

Apostle Paul reveals that worshipping God and serving in love as a Christian involves faith to do righteous works by the Holy Spirit. Faith in Christ first and then walk by faith to believe and receives results; hope of eternal life and God's promises in Christ with directions and assurances from the Holy Spirit makes us bear all things even in suffering. Then the agape kind of love to Christ, brethren and other people in a selfless and sacrificial manner. Having proven to the Corinthians Believers that faith, hope and love form the core of the Christian faith, they were to embrace them fully for spiritual growth maturity.

**FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE NOW ABIDE IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH MEANING THAT THEY DETERMINE ONE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WELL AS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH AND OTHER PEOPLE. WITHOUT THEM, THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

Faith and hope provides boldness and confidence to spirituality as Christians. Indeed faith leads to hope, and hope thrives on faith in Christian relationships and works. Love therefore covers the two and produce sustainable results. Love is selfless and sacrificial approach that shape all Christian relationships and works; faith and hope.

**FAITH HELPS US TO KNOW GOD IN CHRIST; HOPE BUILDS ON FAITH WITH EXPECTATIONS; BUT LOVE ENABLES US TO IMITATE GOD IN CHRIST. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER.**

He proved that these three Christian truths abide in every Christian relationship and work having survived every trial, pressure, temptation, and opposition. Since the Christian faith thrives and flourishes on faith, hope and love, it presupposes that there is no Christianity without them. With them in consistency and sustainability, they promote eternal ideals of achieving completeness, honour and excellence in heaven before God and our Lord Jesus Christ. As shown in this chapter, spiritual gifts would not last at the end of the age but love remains forever. Therefore, Christians should attach great importance to the fruit of love (**1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:8a, Galatians 5:22 & 23**) besides other spiritual gifts.

## **FAITH WORKS; HOPE ENCOURAGES; LOVE IS EVERLASTING AND REIGNS.**

### **B// LOVE REIGNS**

The importance of love as a fruit of the Spirit was emphasized and introduced as a more excellent way of doing things besides faith and hope **(1 Corinthians 12:31)**. Having enumerated what love is and is not **(1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3, 4 – 8)**, Apostle Paul ended the chapter and message on love on a positive note fulfilling his promise of making the Corinthians know the excellent way as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ. He mentioned, encouraged and insisted on their application of love for the attainment of best results because it never fails.

### **WHEN FAITH AND HOPE WORK TOGETHER IN LOVE, PROMISES ARE FULFILLED. THEREFORE WHEN I TELL YOU REMAIN BLESSED, I MEAN LET FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE BE ALIVE IN YOU.**

Love is meaningful and rewarding as proven to us by God in His Son Jesus Christ. If love fulfilled God's salvation plan for humanity **(John 3:16)**, then love for Jesus Christ and being in service to Him would make us fulfill our ministries, send us to heaven and receive inheritance and rewards in Christ and God's promises. Therefore, we agree with the Hebrew writer to let brotherly love continue in the Church and among the brethren **(Hebrews 13:1)**.

### **THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL BLESSING OF LOVE MAKES US EMULATE THE FATHER AND SON IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

In other words, love must define our relationship with God and the Church and all people vertically and horizontally. That is all Christian relationships and fellowship with the brethren must be bonded with love. The bible tells us to owe no one anything except to love one another; for he who loves another has fulfilled the law **(Romans 13:8)**.

### **IF WE CAN IMITATE THE FATHER AND SON BY THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEN LOVE IS FORMED IN US TO RELATE WITH THE BRETHERN ALSO IN LOVE.**

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, faith enables us to come to God **(see Hebrews 11:6)**, but love enables us to imitate Him.

### **C// ABIDING IN JESUS; BEARING MUCH FRUIT IN LOVE**

**John 15:5 – 8 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in**

**you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

The word abide was frequently used by our Lord Jesus Christ to emphasize the need and ensure continuous establishment, connection and relationship with us as Believers. It means to dwell in safety. Truly, the better we recognize and acknowledge Jesus as the Vine in which the branches of a tree are connected and derive their source of strength, the better for the Church to show forth faith, hope and love. This reveals an eternal relationship and fellowship with Christ, and baptism of the Holy Spirit for strength, power, knowledge, wisdom and glory.

Being the source of life, Jesus mentioned that the only way to be blessed is to remain in Him. For this divine connection abides much fruit on earth and the Church. But the connection is broken because of backsliding, the leaves wither and become dry and burnt. Likewise a Believing Christian or Church is detached from the source of life, Jesus Christ as the Vine, and weakens spiritually till such a time that leads to apostasy and is condemned and cast into hell fire.

Again, the revelation and promise is that a Believing Christian or Church that stays faithfully connected to Christ has the favour of God to receive whatever is asked from Him. That the assurance of answered prayers is given. This explains why a faithful Believing Christian and Church receives from God abundantly.

**ONLY THOSE WHO ABIDE IN JESUS BEARS MUCH FRUIT IN LOVE. THOSE WHO DO NOT ABIDE IN JESUS CANNOT BEAR FRUIT. IF WE ABIDE IN JESUS AND HIS WORD ABIDE IN US, WE EXPERIENCE OPEN HEAVENS AND WE HONOUR AND GLORIFY GOD AS TRUE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S GRACE IN CHRIST.**

We read

**John 15:9 & 10 – “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.**

The existing and proven love between God and Jesus Christ is satisfying and assuring to remain in Christ's love. Jesus Christ has set a good example to show that if we obey His commandments, the bond of love would continue and not break as it is with God the Father and Him.

**OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO REMAIN IN THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE LOVE OF THE SON.**

## **D// COMPLETE IN CHRIST; COMPLETE IN HIS LOVE**

**Colossians 2:8 – 10 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**

Knowing this truth, Apostle Paul makes a distinction between the knowledge of Christ that leads to righteousness and the philosophy and empty deceit in the tradition of people and worldly principles that leads to sin. Since all the fullness of God is in Christ, and He is the exact image of God, then Christians are complete in Him in our belief and service to Him in love. It means also that we have power and authority over all principality and power; the devil and his demons and every evil spirit that works against Christians to backslide and be associated with dead works. Why because Jesus as the resurrected Christ is the Head of all principality and power, kingdoms, dominions and thrones.

**COMPLETE IN CHRIST; COMPLETE IN HIS LOVE. NO OTHER GOSPEL OTHER THAN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF ETERNAL SALVATION AND COMING INTO THE FULLNESS OF GOD. YES IN CHRIST, WE LOVE HIM AND THE FATHER JUST AS THEY LOVE US. WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, LET US BE FIRM IN OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH LOOKING UNTO JESUS; THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH AND RUNNING THE RACE WITH FOCUS, FAITH AND HOPE WITHOUT DISTRACTION.**

Hence love is useful to the Church on earth and in heaven because it makes us complete in Christ unto God. It makes us excel and perfect in the works of God just like Jesus. It makes us enjoy the leading of the Holy Spirit like Jesus and Paul. Love is the greatest because it is rewarding. It continues when faith and hope stop. Take away love from the Christian faith and everything becomes rules and regulations. Jesus commands the Church to love one another (**John 8:31, 13:34, 15:12, 17**). Having and experiencing love makes heaven and earth witness that we are truly the disciples of Jesus Christ (**John 13:35**).

**AMONG THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES DESCRIBED BY APOSTLE PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS, LOVE IS THE GREATEST. IT CROWNS IT ALL BECAUSE IT DOES NOT FAIL AND IS THE LANGUAGE OF HEAVEN. REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT GOD'S WORK IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS THE COORDINATION OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.**

### **PRAYER**

**Help us O Lord to abide in Your spiritual truths of faith, hope and love because all are beneficial to us.**

**Let love guide us always unto excellence and perfection knowing that it has both earthly and heavenly benefits.**

in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

IT IS SAID THAT EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER. THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE ARE IMPORTANT IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CHRISTIAN WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THOUGH THEY ARE INTERDEPENDENT, THE GREATEST IS LOVE BECAUSE IT IS THE FOUNDATION AND BUILDING STRUCTURES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SERVICE TO GOD.

**NANA KWAKU DUODU**

## **ABIDING SPIRITUAL TRUTHS; FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE; THE GREATEST IS LOVE (2)**

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### INSPIRATION

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**FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE NOW ABIDE IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH MEANING THAT THEY DETERMINE ONE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WELL AS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH AND OTHER PEOPLE. WITHOUT THEM, THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

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He proved that these three Christian truths abide in every Christian relationship and work having survived every trial, pressure, temptation, and opposition. Since the Christian faith thrives and flourishes on faith, hope and love, it presupposes that there is no Christianity without them. With them in consistency and sustainability, they promote eternal ideals of achieving completeness, honour and excellence in heaven before God and our Lord Jesus Christ. As shown in this chapter, spiritual gifts would not last at the end of the age but love remains forever. Therefore, Christians should attach great importance to the fruit of love (**1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:8a, Galatians 5:22 & 23**) besides other spiritual gifts.

## **FAITH WORKS; HOPE ENCOURAGES; LOVE IS EVERLASTING AND REIGNS.**

### **B// LOVE REIGNS**

The importance of love as a fruit of the Spirit was emphasized and introduced as a more excellent way of doing things besides faith and hope **(1 Corinthians 12:31)**. Having enumerated what love is and is not **(1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3, 4 – 8)**, Apostle Paul ended the chapter and message on love on a positive note fulfilling his promise of making the Corinthians know the excellent way as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ. He mentioned, encouraged and insisted on their application of love for the attainment of best results because it never fails.

### **WHEN FAITH AND HOPE WORK TOGETHER IN LOVE, PROMISES ARE FULFILLED. THEREFORE WHEN I TELL YOU REMAIN BLESSED, I MEAN LET FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE BE ALIVE IN YOU.**

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### **THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL BLESSING OF LOVE MAKES US EMULATE THE FATHER AND SON IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.**

In other words, love must define our relationship with God and the Church and all people vertically and horizontally. That is all Christian relationships and fellowship with the brethren must be bonded with love. The bible tells us to owe no one anything except to love one another; for he who loves another has fulfilled the law **(Romans 13:8)**.

### **IF WE CAN IMITATE THE FATHER AND SON BY THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEN LOVE IS FORMED IN US TO RELATE WITH THE BRETHREN ALSO IN LOVE.**

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, faith enables us to come to God **(see Hebrews 11:6)**, but love enables us to imitate Him.

### **C// THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**

**Matthew 22:36 – 40** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

This is the New King James Bible Commentary: Jesus' answer was quoted from **Deuteronomy chapter 6** and in accordance with the great Jewish confession of faith called the Shema with derivative meaning of "hear" as in **Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!"**. Even though this was a test from a student of the Mosaic Law, Jesus used this as an opportunity to reveal that the agape kind of love is the most needed spiritual virtue to relate with God and do His works. Loving God with all your heart, soul and mind involves the totality of a person; not partial but wholeness; giving all of yourself to God and not part of you.

Besides, we must go a step further to show the love for God, beyond natural and self – love, to our neighbours. Application of these two laws makes obedience to God's word complete and fulfilling. It reveals love beyond faith and hope to be in God's will for the achievements of everlasting results by Christians as postulated by Jesus.

It means also that faith, hope and love work beautifully in our relationship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and neighbours, and obedience to His word of salvation and righteousness but love crowns it all. Yes love makes them beautiful, excellent, perfect, glorious and rewarding. The good news is that if loving God is based on relationship other than a rule, then loving your neighbour is just a second divine touch. For grace is given as one is led by the Holy Spirit to obey the word of God in reverence.

**THE FIRST IS TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL THAT YOU HAVE AND THE SECOND IS TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF. EVEN PARTIAL LOVE PRODUCES RESULTS BUT COMPLETE AND PERFECT LOVE FOR GOD AND HUMANITY PRODUCE EVERLASTING RESULTS.**

Therefore, the love message and emphasis by the Apostle John helps us to apply our love for God to our brethren and neighbours. We read

**1 John 4:20 – If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?**

The Apostle John teaches on the relationship between love for God and love for neighbours as a righteous requirement for the Believers. He emphasized that love for God is not rhetoric but experiential and then expressive to our brethren and neighbours. Therefore you cannot claim to love God and hate your brother. This is not biblical because it makes you a liar to God or tries to paint God a liar. The message continues that loving God is of faith and not by sight. For how can you relate physically with your brother and neighbour in hatred but relate with God whom you have not seen with your physical eyes?

**IT IS AN IMBALANCE SPIRITUAL POSTURE TO LOVE GOD AND HATE YOUR BROTHER AND NEIGHBOUR. IN OTHER WORDS, LOVING YOUR BROTHER AND NEIGHBOUR ARE THE EXPRESSION OF EXPERIENTIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

## D// THE RICH YOUNG RULER

**Matthew 19:20 – 22** The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The encounter between Jesus and the rich young ruler reveals obstacles to spirituality and perfection of works to obtain treasures in heaven. This rich young ruler would have been an example of a good Christian by all standards. He had obeyed the laws of Moses even from his youth. The only obstacle was his heart in his riches and therefore could not be perfect before God. When Jesus counseled him to sell his properties and come and follow Him as in **Deuteronomy 6:4 & 5 and Matthew 22:20 – 22**, he departed sorrowfully because it was difficult to part with his great riches. This was so serious that Jesus concluded that it will be easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven.

But the good news is that we can be saved from the perspective of God and not from the perspective of humanity. It shows that we can be good in many things and worthy of example by human standards even as Christians but not perfect to God through His word and Holy Spirit (**Matthew 5:48**).

As Christians with the mind of Christ, we have to find out lacking areas in our lives and ministries and fill them to be perfect in our Christian relationships. What is God telling you to leg off your life so that you can obey and follow Him wholeheartedly? Is it covetousness, divisive spirit, anger, pride, envies, jealousies, backbiting, prostitution, sexual immoralities, stealing, idol worship with charms and protection, spirit of mammon, witchcraft, occult belief and practices? Truly, perfect love produce perfect works to God in Christ. This reasserts the truth that love is the greatest beyond the necessities of faith and hope in the Christian faith.

**PERFECT LOVE PRODUCES PERFECT WORKS TO GOD IN CHRIST; IMPERFECT LOVE PRODUCES IMPERFECT WORKS. CLEARLY, RICHES AND PROPERTIES DENIED THE RELIGIOUS AND RICH YOUNG RULER ETERNAL LIFE AS WITH SOME PEOPLE IN EVERY GENERATION.**

**FIND OUT WHAT IS LACKING IN YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY AND FILL THE GAPS TO BE PERFECT. YOU CANNOT BE SAVED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMANITY BUT GOD IN CHRIST. BELIEVE HIM; THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER.**

## **E1 // NOBODY CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD**

**Romans 8:31 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

The love of Christ is so deep that we can only know and appreciate it in full by the Holy Spirit. It is when we respond in love that His love would be experienced in life and ministry like Apostle Paul. Trials, difficulties, pain, sufferings, persecutions, beatings, lashes, denials, famine, nakedness and oppositions from enemies of righteousness and the devil cannot stop and separate us from Christ's life which is in our union with Him for everlasting and not just earthly. If Christ loves us this way with an everlasting love, then Christians need to prove their love by their faith (**2 Corinthians 5:7**) and works and hope of eternal life (**Titus 1:2, 3:7**), inheritance and rewards in heaven (**1 Corinthians 3:8, 14, 9:17 & 18, Colossians 2:18, 3:24, 2 John 1:8, Revelations 21:9, 22:12**).

**NOBODY CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD. THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH AND ALL CHRISTIANS IS GREATER THAN THE LOVE AFFAIR BETWEEN ROMEO AND JULIET STORY. REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST IS THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE CHURCH HIS LOVING BRIDE AS DEPICTED BETWEEN SOLOMON AND THE SHULAMITE WOMAN.**

## **E2 // NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD**

**Romans 8:38 & 39 – For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

There comes a time in the life of a person when conclusions are based on real life experiences. This was the experience of Apostle Paul in the apostolic ministry when he declared the everlasting love of God in Christ to the Church. Even the devil could not stop His earthly mission through the many temptations to distract Him, and make it impossible to achieve eternal salvation for humanity and especially all people who believe in Him as Saviour and Lord. Jesus Christ was focused and went to the cross in pain and suffering and proved God's love for us to attain eternal salvation. His resurrection from the grave, ascension to heaven and coming of the Holy Spirit reinforced His inseparable love for us.

Therefore nothing spiritual or physical can separate us from the love of God in Christ. The difficulties of this life can never make God abandon us because He has loved as with an everlasting love in Christ just as Israel is loved on the basis choice through the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Old Covenant of the Law through Moses (**Jeremiah 31:3**). It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit would open our hearts and minds to God's love in Christ daily for a positive response. Yes in grace, let us love.

**NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD. THE CHALLENGES OF THIS LIFE, MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH ARE SUBSTANDARD TO GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST FOR US AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS.**

**LIKE ISRAEL WHOM GOD GAVE THEM HIS WORD OF LOVING THEM WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE, LIKEWISE IN CHRIST, GOD'S LOVE FOR US IS EVERLASTING AND WOULD CONTINUE IN ETERNITY; HEAVEN. HAVE FAITH, HAVE HOPE; LET LOVE REIGN OVERALL. AMEN.**

### **E3// MINISTRY WORKS AS PROOF OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH**

The bible says that Paul considered himself one of the few spiritual fathers against the many instructors in his generation with the Church in Corinth (**1 Corinthians 4:15**). For he was deeply involved in the sanitization of the Church of Corinth in faith, hope and love, and not in pride.

In the same truth, Paul's message to the Church of the Romans emphasized on their choice through eternal covenant between them and God in Christ to overcome all challenging situations. We read

**Romans 8:31 & 32 – What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

The message of Apostle Paul was that God is with the Church as a Covenant Keeper because they believed in Him as Saviour and Lord to embrace His righteousness. Therefore, he was confident of God's protection in times of trouble and difficulties. **Yes if God is for us, who can be against us?** Then he made another stunning and powerful statement that connected their eternal salvation to Christ's death and sufferings on the cross. **"If God did not spare His own son, but delivered Him up for us all"** suggests the determined purpose of God to crucify Him for our salvation because He loved us as earlier stated by Peter after the Holy Spirit baptism (**Acts 2:23 & 34**).

In this revelation, Paul stated confidently that God shall also give us all things we need because He loves us; the Church of Believing Christians. Again it affirms that love is the greatest with generational and eternal results when put to good use in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hence love is useful to the Church on earth and in heaven because it makes us complete in Christ unto God. It makes us excel in the works of God just like Jesus; perfect spiritual gifts with achievement of eternal results. It makes us enjoy the leading of the Holy Spirit like Jesus and Paul. Love is the greatest because it is rewarding eternally. Take away love from the Christian faith and everything becomes rules and regulations. Jesus commands the Church to love one another (**John 8:31, 13:34, 15:12, 17**). Having and experiencing love makes heaven and earth witness that we are truly the disciples of Jesus

Christ (**John 13:35**). Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law (**Romans 13:8**).

**YOU ARE TO HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST WITH RIGHTEOUS WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. YOU ARE TO HAVE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE AND THE PROMISES OF GOD IN CHRIST. YOU ARE TO PRACTICE LOVE AS THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY TO ENFORCE GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR THESE GOSPEL TRUTHS, THE CHURCH UPHOLDS THEM AS THE WILL OF GOD IN HEAVEN OVER THE EARTH.**

Again, the bible says that God's love for the Israelites as a nation remain on account of the fathers but enemies on account of Christ because of disbelief (**Romans 11:28 & 29**). It is also true that Christ's birth and messianic ministry was in Israel and transferred to the twelve (12) disciples who became known as the Apostles. Therefore, God's salvation work through Christ has produced the Church of Believing Christians in Israel and all other nations of the world. Let love reign in our hearts, minds and works as Paul charged the Corinthians Believers to be profitable to the Church and Body of Christ and kingdom of God because the Holy Spirit is in us (**1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3, 4 – 8a**).

**THE POWER OF GOD'S LOVE IS STRONGLY TIED TO THE OLD COVENANT AND PROMISES TO ISRAEL THROUGH THE FATHERS. THIS SUPERSEDES FAITH AND HOPE DESPITE THEIR REJECTION OF CHRIST WHEN THEY CRUCIFIED HIM. BUT SALVATION IS FOR ALL AND THIS INCLUDES ALL BELIEVING CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL.**

**THE POWER OF GOD'S LOVE IS STRONGLY TIED TO THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST WITH THE CHURCH. THIS SUPERSEDES FAITH AND HOPE DESPITE THEIR INTERDEPENDENCY. SALVATION IS FOR ALL AND THIS INCLUDES ALL BELIEVING CHRISTIANS IN THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.**

## PRAYER

Help us O Lord to abide in Your spiritual truths of faith, hope and love because all are beneficial to us.

Let love guide and shape our lives, ministries, Churches and Body of Christ beautifully always knowing that it has both earthly and heavenly benefits.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

IT IS SAID THAT EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER. THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE ARE IMPORTANT IN CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS AND CHRISTIAN WORKS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THOUGH THEY ARE INTERDEPENDENT, THE GREATEST IS LOVE BECAUSE IT IS THE FOUNDATION AND BUILDING STRUCTURES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SERVICE TO GOD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

EVEN FAITH AND HOPE KNOW AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LOVE IS THE GREATEST IN THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S COVENANTS AND PROMISES IN CHRIST BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

HEAR O CHURCH; PERFECT LOVE PRODUCE PERFECT WORKS TO GOD IN CHRIST; IMPERFECT LOVE PRODUCE IMPERFECT WORKS. HEAR O CHURCH; **NANA KWAKU DUODU**



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