

**THE
HEALING AND RESTORING
POWER OF FORGIVENESS**



**Retain And Service
Your
Divine Bridges**

Dr. Tor Terry Shaguy

The Healing And Restoring Power Of Forgiveness
Copyright © 2016 Dr Tor Terry Shaguy

TERRY SHAGUY MINISTRIES

#2 Faith Bible Way, Akobo

Box 19824, UI.

Ibadan, NIGERIA.

Email: terryshaguy@gmail.com

Tel: 234 (0)7030308123

www.terryshaguy.org

ISBN: 978-1532872310

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written permission of the Publishers.

All scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible, except otherwise stated. All emphasis and amplification are mine.

Interior design by Pages & Audio

www.pagesandaudio.com

pagesandaudio@gmail.com

Printed by Createspace. An Amazon Company

CONTENTS

Thanks

Dedication

Acknowledgements

Introduction (9)

One: Three Kinds of Relationships (17)

Two: Every Acquaintance is a Potential Bridge (35)

Three: Bitterness More Dangerous to your Health than HIV/
AIDS (55)

Four: Why Pray for Your Enemies? (69)

Five: Joseph (77)

Six: Job (93)

Seven: Retain and Service Your Bridges (105)

About the author (141)

THANKS

Lord Jesus Christ; our Bridge to eternal life in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

DEDICATION

Rev Dr Abosede Debbie O. Shaguy my dazzling and beautiful 'Babe' who forgives me more than 70 X 7 times on daily basis.

Pastor (Architect) & Mrs Gogoro-Leh Togi, one other family that is a gift to my family and ministry. Very vital bridge indeed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Each privilege to pen a book reminds me of the invaluable contributions many people have made and are still making in my life. Generally and ministry in particular. The truth is that an attempt to exhaustively acknowledge all the precious bridges God has graciously networked to me would in itself become a complete book. While avoiding that temptation, I must nevertheless acknowledge a few people who directly contributed in different ways to make this book happen.

Rev David E. Ameh and Bishop Jim B Okewu, led the Benue Braves (Basketball Team 1989) that led my wife and I to Christ. With his wife Rev Charity, the Amehs have remained our spiritual parents resolutely committed to our total well-being and opening international doors for our ministry.

Rev Dr Olu & Rev Vikki David took over our mentoring from spiritual infancy, discipled us and commended us to ministry even when we didn't qualify by any human standards. We wouldn't be writing books today if they didn't painstakingly bear especially with my many errors which Papa and Mama charitably forgave.

Rev Dr & Rev Prof Olawoye of Faith Bible Ministry Ibadan are not just our current pastors and spiritual parents, they have actually become our physical parents as well. Their love, encouragement and sacrifices are contributing im-mensely in helping us fulfill ministry.

I am grateful for the love, fellowship and assistance of all ministers and members of Faith Bible Church led by

the General Overseer elect, Rev Joshua Segun Adeyemi who taking a cue from Daddy G.O, have gladly become an integral part of our family.

Pastor & Mrs Dickson Iyke Ojukwu, Bishop Terry Angbagh, Prof & Mrs M. O.Olowookorun, Prof & Mrs S Onwuka, Dr (Mrs) Fadipe, Prof & Deaconess Ogundele, Prof (Mrs) M.I.Atinmo and Dr J. T. Akande, Sis Oladunni Owo, Sis Joyce Amatotsero, Engr Okechukwu Onwuka, Prince Akere and Mrs S. L. Gbaraka are special gifts to my family and ministry.

Rev Prof & Rev Dr Ademola Akinpelu are another special bridges for me. Among other sacrifices, they gladly proofread my materials at short notice without charge.

Sebastine T. Hon (SAN) with his wife and my sister Felicia are precious blessings to my family and ministry. They have borne much of both my family and ministry's financial burdens. Honourable John Dyegh and his younger sister and mine, Elizabeth, have been such a blessing. My kid sister Doo is a great gift.

Engineer Ifeoluwa Oyedele and his wife Bola have a permanent Prophet's Chalet for me besides material contributions. He is also one person who makes odd-hour trips to airports because of me.

Thanks to all REGAM Global partners for their love, gifts and prayers. I particularly acknowledge the contributions of the REGAM stakeholders' committee members; Rev Are Arowolo, Pastor Emmanuel Umoren, Pastor Ayo Abiona, Mrs Bamidele, Deacon Aofolaju,

Mrs. Bisi Oguntuase, Bro Felix Iwambe and Brother Raphael Odili who also doubles as my Personal Assistant.

Mr & Mrs Richards were my typesetting consultants. Mr Kola Agbeluyi handled the cover design while Bro Kolade Akintayo Kolade & Bro Joe G. Okunuga were my computer consultants at no cost.

Indeed, there are many whose contribution I cannot individually mention because of space. I am nonetheless very grateful for all your partnership.

I can't but acknowledge all Ministers in every nation, who opened their churches or programs to me and gave me the opportunity to share these truths until we ignited the passion and conviction to turn them into a book. Notable among them are Pastor Dave Ogbole and Pst Arome Tokula, Pst Sam Jinadu And Rev Raphael Osawere.

Not in the least, I must document my gratitude for the wonderful family God has given me, for all their contributions, prayers, understanding, patience and sacrifice in getting this book done. Engr Iveren Favour gave her scholarship grant for this work, Barr Sewuese Praise, Dr Tor David, Dr Sina Mimi, Dr Mhile Elizabeth and Engr Laadi. Your destinies shall be greater than 'Babe' and I combined in Jesus Name.

May all your divine bridges speedily obey God in your lives in Jesus Name. Amen.

Introduction

Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. Habakkuk 2:10

We are all born within an Edenic garden of divine relationships. Coming into the world for specific assignments as we all are, the Creator in His infinite wisdom chooses our birthplaces and surrounds us with relevant relationships. These relationships will aid us through provision, teaching, mentoring, motivation, companionship and even challenges to fulfill our potential here on earth. In this book, we refer to these vital networks of relationships as “divine bridges”

Perhaps the period we all benefit maximally from our divine bridges is that period between our birth and the first ten or twelve years. During this time we are either unable to choose our relationships and must rely

on divine providence or we are unmindful of offence or even better still, we are quick to forgive. The beauty of it is that we unintentionally submit ourselves to all the relationships that our Maker in His infinite wisdom has designed that should shape our development and character at this stage.

With time however, our growth fosters upon us all, the responsibility to make choices. A vital aspect of this responsibility for choice is the choice of relationships. We choose our friends, our teachers, mentors, spouses, leaders etc. Unfortunately, many times, our ego, sentiments, emotions and sometimes outright error advise our choice of relationships. The problem is that sooner or later, we feel let down by these relationships. With time, we may begin to multiply our relationship turn over (like divorce and remarriage etc), avoid certain acquaintances or deliberately begin to relate less. In the meanwhile, there are some people we have sworn never to have anything to do with for the rest of our lives. This is usually because they have hurt us so much.

This unfortunately is one major way the adversary has encouraged many people to stab their destinies in the leg. The fact of the matter is that whereas even Lucifer cannot actually hinder what God has destined concerning any one saint, the devil is smart enough to encourage us through our ego or folly or both, to break our own divine bridges. Satan's tactics are as old as himself. Usually, like Eden where he managed to reason humanity's glory out of Adam and Eve's hands by appealing to their sense

of personal importance and egoism, Satan is always after your potential. Usually he can do nothing about where you are currently. Therefore, he plays his best hand of cards to get your potential. When the devil gets your potentials, it doesn't matter where you are at the moment; Satan has got your destiny.

So how does Satan work through your relationships? Of course you do remember that no human being is an island. Whatever you want to be, do or achieve on earth, you will invariably need to relate with other people. On the other hand, every acquaintance is a potential bridge. What Lucifer does is that when he smells a relationship with great potential, he will move in and create some kind of friction. One of the parties will offend. The other party will be so hurt; he will switch off all avenues for settlement. The offended party will vow never to have further dealings with his offender. Bitterness of course will set in. Both parties may continue their lives as if nothing happened.

Nevertheless, let me say that if I am supposed to acquire 2% knowledge or assistance from you but I put myself in a position where that 2% is missing, God will certainly not bend the rules for me and make another arrangement. I may have to go through life without that 2%. And what is more worrisome is that in some cases, that meager 2% may prove very decisive. Worse still however is that if I am reputed for having the knack to ignore that 2% in several places and pretend that I don't need anybody, I may work thought this earth believing

that both the Creator and all creation is in conspiracy against me.

This was what Prophet Habakkuk understood when He declared:

Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul

You have been a cause of shame to your house by cutting off a number of peoples, and sinning against your soul, Hab 2:10 (BBE)

You have devised a shameful thing for your house By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself, Hab 2:10 (NASB)

You have planned shame for your house by wiping out many peoples and sinning against your own self. Hab 2:10 (HCSB)

The Prophet was saying that when we cut off many people from our lives, either because we are offended at them or because for whatever reason we believe we don't need them, we are willingly courting or wooing or devising or planning shame or reproach against ourselves. We are the ones that are our own enemies. We give Satan undeserved credit too many times.

Do you now have an idea why some of those enemies you have been "killing" in prayer have refused to die? Sir,

you have probably been praying against yourself.

In the 2006 revised edition of our book *Igniting & Sustaining Divine Favour*, we mentioned this topic as favour key #7. However, between 2007 and 2010, we felt led more and more to emphasize this issue both while counseling with individuals or families and also as main messages in churches. Without exception, the results were phenomenal. There would be obvious release as people received deliverance from hurts and bitterness. Great testimonies of healings from physical infirmities and other outstanding breakthroughs resulted. Inexplicable delays have been overturned. Spiritual freshness has been restored. We suggest that as much as 70% of defeats suffered by saints are traceable to hurts, bitterness and unforgiveness. There was even an established Christian who nursed an over 30 year old grudge without knowing it until we shared with him in this respect.

One particular testimony stands out, especially because the Pastor in whose Church this occurred, was gracious enough to specifically suggest that we capture it in this book. I was visiting Makurdi in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. Once this Pastor who is such a blessing discovered that I was in town, he invited me to fellowship in their Church that Sunday so we could celebrate my PhD together. I was not invited to minister but there are some Pastors you can't resist. Just the thought of fellowshiping with them is so refreshing. Pastor Dave Ogbole is one of such people. I accepted. In

the service, he generously announced my presence and the PhD. Then, unexpectedly, he invited me to “greet the Church for about ten Minutes”

Sheepishly I climbed the altar and without actually thinking about it, I heard myself passionately admonishing God’s people to forgive everyone who had offended them no matter what. Panic stricken that I was taking more than my allotted ten minutes, I hastily handed over the microphone. To my amazement, the Pastor closed his message for the day and announced instead that I had in fact brought God’s counsel for the moment. His stepsister had been kidnapped a few days earlier. She had been rescued and the Police were waiting for his instruction to commence necessary formalities for eventual prosecution of the culprits. His stepmother was in his Church for the first time that day because they intended to proceed to the Police Station after service to make necessary statements that would aid the Police in their investigation and eventual prosecution. Pastor Dave announced to the congregation that he had heard God. They would withdraw the case from the police and forgive the culprits.

It was so glorious. But the Pastor told me of an even more glorious outcome of that service 8 months later. Again, I was just passing through and needed to see him. He narrated the following testimony himself and suggested I reproduce it in this book when I mentioned I was completing the book.

According to him another young man was also in

that meeting. This young man was strategizing on how he would kill a particular lady. This lady had ordered some goods at a huge amount from this young man's firm, through him. The lady got the goods but somehow would not pay. The company thus surcharged this young man and each month, they withheld most of his salary. All attempts to recover the debt from the defaulting woman seemed to have failed. In the end, the fellow resolved to "arrange a small accident that would send the lady to heaven". He however happened to be in that meeting and when I unwittingly began to emphasize the issue of forgiveness, he was praying that someone would quickly receive the microphone from that 'useless Ibadan man' so that he would stop. Somehow, the Holy Ghost eventually got the better of him and he decided very painfully right in that service to forgive. Under his breath, he mumbled his forgiveness of the woman to God. Within minutes, his handset which had been on vibration, vibrated. He stole a look at it and of all people; it was the same woman calling. Angrily, he pressed reject. Wasn't it enough that she had cheated him? Must she also disturb him even in Church? Again, the phone vibrated. Again, he rejected the call. The phone vibrated yet again. Exasperated, he sneaked out to answer. With all the irritation he could muster, he bellowed, yeeesss? The voice on the other end was apologetic for the long delay in paying up. She then explained that the money was ready and could this young man please come over and collect it the following day? Of course he thought it was a huge joke until the

money was not only safely in his hands but in his bank the following day.

Within minutes of forgiving his debtor, this young man heard the debtor call immediately and conclude arrangements for payment. Within less than 24 hours, a debt which anger and perhaps legal and physical threats could not recover was peacefully resolved. According to Pastor Dave, this young man's experience turned him instantly into an apostle of forgiveness who was persuading all his aggrieved colleagues, some of which were also considering very drastic reprisal against their offenders, to forgive. Glory!

Everywhere we have been privileged to minister in this regard, people have asked for a copy of the book on *Servicing and Retaining Your Divine Bridges*.

It is our prayer that this book will free you of the emotional toxic called bitterness and unforgiveness in this embittered and hurting world. More importantly, we pray that you will be better positioned to utilize every relationship God networks to you henceforth and fulfill your ultimate and optimal potential.

Perhaps you may also know of some precious souls who are hurting? This book could be a timely gift.

One

Three Kinds of Relationships

And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, how shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace. 1 Sam 10:26-27

During your sojourn here on earth, you will come in contact with people who will do or at least attempt to do three things to you.

The first class which normally comprises your parents and other well-wishers through life, will give to you. They may give you protection, provision, education, advice, encouragement, resources, contacts, correction, hope, peace, joy, rebuke etc. This class believes in you.

The second class will persecute you. They will use every opportunity to remind you that you are no good.

They will put you down at every opportunity. They

actually aim to discourage you. However, their success will depend entirely on how you react to their strategy. But make no mistake, this class does not believe in you.

Then finally, there is the third class. To this class, you must give. They are your opportunity and fertile field. This class depends on you.

Everyone who has ever lived upon the earth, and everyone who will yet live upon the earth must relate at these three dimensional levels. God the Creator made it so. God put all these people in your life and each class is indispensable. They are your divine network of relationships. I also call them your Bridges.

After Prophet Samuel presented Saul to the nation of Israel as their first King, a class of people whose heart the Almighty God Himself inclined, followed Saul immediately to help establish the kingdom in his hand. Like King Saul, every human being has a band of men, whose hearts God had touched to help establish whatever constitutes your own kingdom upon the earth. They have actually always been there all along. Your parents, guardians, siblings, teachers, mentors, coaches, employers, spouse, children, admirers, employees, superiors, colleagues, subordinates, friends, etc.

Again, at the same presentation of Saul, another group immediately disdained him. They despised him. They saw nothing good about him. Perhaps his imposing physical frame which was one of Saul's main attributes was what ironically angered the others. The Bible says of Saul in 1Samuel10:23:

And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. 1 Sam 10:23.

You would have thought that since the entire nation had asked for a king and had looked forward to this moment, everyone would have gladly accepted such an impressive choice as Saul. Surprisingly, this was not the case.

But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace 1 Sam 10:27.

Is this not an instructive concurrence that at his presentation, Saul's 'destiny helpers' organized themselves into a group that followed him while his 'destiny detractors' also organized themselves into another group that opposed him? How does this concern you? You also have both destiny helpers and detractors and at the relevant moment, each group will manifest. Therefore, you need to know this truth and profit from it. It is futile to expect or pray that all will accept you.

Notice also another very striking attribute of pre-coronation Saul. He was a patient man. A forgiving man. A longsuffering man. A man that 'beareth all things'. In face of both flagrant disparagement of his person and affront on divine agenda by the children of Belial, Saul is recorded to have passed off the opportunity to prove that he was divinely called!

But he held his peace.

Too many times we are in haste to prove our ‘divine calling’ and have gone ahead of God either to “kill” our perceived enemies in prayer or have used many other strategies that have proved that power is dangerous in our hands. In the end, God has been so stuck with helping us learn and pass the ‘patience examination’, He dares not increase our power level.

Saint of God, you are a divine project programmed for full glory. Failure? It isn’t even conceivable. But you must accept the role of ‘destiny detractors’ and muster both the wisdom and the patience to benefit from their contribution in your life. God ordained it so and they are indispensable!

There are a few vital benefits we must all glean from the ministry of detractors. First and foremost, they are our school to learn patience. God allows this class of people in our lives usually at the point where we really are ill-equipped to retaliate against them even if we wanted to. Look at Saul for instance. At the time the children of

Belial openly discountenanced him; there really was not much he could do about it. Remember, he was only ‘announced’ king but not yet coronated. Hence, he was forced to calmly return to Gibeah and lick his wounds.

You see, when you consistently find yourself in situations where you are persecuted by people against whom you have no power of retaliation or revenge, you inadvertently build up the virtue of patience and

longsuffering. This conditions you in later dealings not to have to react at every provocation even when you have the power to do so. It is therefore disappointing in the case of Saul who started so well, that in later years, blinding envy and insecurity stole this prized virtue from him.

Evidently, every community is an endangered species whose leader has a penchant for temperamental retaliation or revenge.

The second benefit of destiny detractors is that if we have the right attitude and understanding, they will actually motivate us in the reverse. Whereas most of us would usually do better under encouragement and praise, there are times when every single one of us would rather be triggered to positive action and productivity when we face derogation from people who seem to derive some mischievous pleasure from our failure. At different times in our lives, every one of us has been sneered at by people who were both convinced and delighted that we faced certain failure. Frustrated parents or teachers have told us we were no good! Competitors have told us we didn't have what it takes! The opposite sex has told us we were not it, and could never be! Employers have passed the verdict of not employable on us. Landlords and property managers have either rejected or refunded our rents. They don't want us in their neighborhoods. Even clubs have taken a swipe at us. Either we didn't have the talent or we have the talent but lack the character!

The Church also had its knife at our jugular. We had no knowledge, the Church said. Ok, we had the knowledge but not the anointing. Then the Church modified our cane. We have the knowledge and the anointing but we lack the character. Verdict? No room for us! Once the Church landed that crucial blow, the hospital offered us the coffin. Our ailment they said, had no cure!

In fact, we are an embarrassment to civilization and should not be alive taking up both the space and the food that more useful other souls should. We were spending overtime on earth any way!

Ok, relax. No single one of us has had to face all of the above all at once. But in the long run, by and large, we have faced at least one of such situations. And oh! How it went through our hearts! The pain! The humiliation! But above all, the holy rebellion such sharp words have produced within us. A rebellion against remaining who they thought, hoped or claimed that we were.

So, we resolved to disappoint them. If we couldn't hit them back square, we would at least get back at them by walking away from the garments they had prepared for us.

They had to see that we were not as bad, dull, visionless, spineless, irresolute, frustrated and useless as they imagined.

Once we came to this decision, we received fresh fuel for our lives. We found new reason why we couldn't fail. We found all reasons why we must succeed.

Suddenly, the stakes have been raised and the prize of

someday having those who gave up on us eat their words has become a compelling attraction. We thus resort to inner strength and abilities we didn't even consciously know were there. Our mind came awake. Our body revived. Even our resources somehow became available or is it visible?

Something has happened to us. We have been motivated albeit, negatively.

In Nigeria, Africa, a young English undergraduate frequently had face off with his lecturers. He was no good, they repeatedly told him. Predictably, he ended up with 3rd class. Then the unexpected happened. Olawole Soyinka went ahead to become a professor of English before his former lecturers. As at this 2009, he is the only Nobel laureate Nigeria has produced.

In the Bahamas, the Americas, colonial teachers consistently told a young boy that he was a monkey and would never amount to anything. Many years later, this same fellow was a guest minister in United Kingdom. After one of the sessions, he sat back to autograph his books for buyers. On that long queue stood one of his former teachers, the very one who had called him an ape, waiting his turn. He had purchased a book and was awaiting the autograph. He would confess that his former pupil's book had changed his life. But that is not all. Dr Myles Munroe is globally in great demand as a teacher, counselor and adviser to presidents and heads of governments. This is besides presiding over the Global Leadership Network (a network of emerging leaders in

various disciplines), a personal jet and thriving global ministry.

In Lagos state, Nigeria, a young man who apparently did not enter the hall of fame in his educational journey eventually lost out in his bank job. He ended up in politics and before you could say, third term, he was deputy governor of Lagos. As it turned out, the then President Olusegun Obasanjo who prided himself as being smarter than all Nigerians, had a face-off with the then Lagos Governor. As a result, Mr Femi Pedro was the one who dealt directly with General Olusegun Obasanjo. What's more, the Executives of the bank that sacked him eventually had to eat out of his hand. Whether while fulfilling their statutory obligations to Lagos state or pressing for any government grants or reliefs, banks operating within the state channeled their matters through his office.

In the city of Ibadan west of Nigeria, another young man who plied his trade with a Multi-National Brewing giant, received quit notice from his rented accommodation although he was not behind in payment. All pleas fell on deaf ears although he willingly offered to pay even more. All efforts to also secure another rented accommodation failed. Desperate now, he remembered a plot of land he had acquired earlier but to which he hadn't given serious thought. Within a few months, this young fellow went from tenant to house owner. Several years on, he was landlord.

A young nurse found herself in the casual employment

of a very reputable medical facility in Nigeria. The gentlemanly agreement stipulated that she would be staffed at the earliest opportunity. But ‘earliest’ had dual interpretations to both parties. Although she thoroughly knew her job, she was subordinate to permanent staff who nonetheless learnt the job from her. She practically held the department together. Besides, several times, those permanent staff found all manner of excuses to leave work earlier than official time. Still, she worked diligently and hoped, and waited. It was bad enough that in comparison to the others, her salary was an insult but to make matters worse, the other staff openly sneered at her commitment. Still, she worked hard and waited.

Finally, she came to a conclusion! Since it was more than likely that ‘earliest’ opportunity could be any indefinite time within this organization, she decided to make the best of it. She decided to develop herself while on the job. She enrolled for a degree programme relevant to her profession. But there was another surprise waiting for her. Her husband soon distanced himself from the financial implication of this academic adventure.

Still, with the will of steel, she slaved her way through her degree programme. Many times, she shuttled between work, lectures and home.-

Just when she was completing her programme, the much awaited opportunity showed up. The department was authorized to employ. Thankfully and confidently, she prepared. She presented the best credentials and posted best performance at the interview. Notwithstanding, she

did not get the job. You know, in Nigeria, sometimes it takes more than an intimidating CV and impressive personal performance to land a job in public office. There are some other ‘things’. Will you ever understand if you are not a Nigerian? In any case, she obtained her degree and could confidently say that this was not a wasted period in her life.

Now what kept her going in the face of all those obstacles? She revealed that once it became clear that her employers didn’t particularly feel bound by the gentleman’s agreement to staff her, she resolved she would get something she could remember that season of her life by. Then when her husband failed to give the required support, it became a do or die situation for her. The insensitive stance of her employers and even husband became stimulants for a woman of resolve and character. In this particular case, the story wasn’t all so glum. She eventually got the job within a year after her degree.

In all these examples and the several others we have witnessed and even partaken of, the personalities involved had benefited from negative or reverse motivation.

Those negative circumstances had actually been intended to frustrate the subjects under reference. However, because they had winners’ mentality, rather than report at the prison resort of malice and spend the rest of their lives giving excuses for their stagnation and failure, they simply put their lives in auxiliary gear and

accelerated out of those mental ditches.

Those psychological assaults against them made very sympathetic reading. But sympathy, we have learnt, is like smoke or vapour. Yes, it is there. But no, it won't last long and certainly, it won't get anything done.

Thankfully, these recognized they didn't need a little diary of those who had offended them. They kept their minds free of the mental toxic or mental virus that results from dwelling ceaselessly upon actual or even perceived hurts. In consequence, situations that were clearly meant to be evil, worked together for their good.

This is the second cluster of relationships. They are available and sometimes even vital in the destiny of everyone. They attempt to put wedges in our smooth journey on this earth. And for good major! Because some-times 'smooth' is not always synonymous with 'good' or 'right'. Sometimes we need that little obstacle like Prophet Balaam (Num22:24-35), to help us discover and walk in God's perfect will for us. God in fact, does allow it. Yes sir, you will have your fair share. So beware you manage it well.

Finally, there is the last level of relationships. These are the ones that must benefit from you before the fullness of your own glory may be made manifest.

We have received understanding that the seed law traverses every nationality, vocation and generation. It is another law of nature that doesn't even depend upon our knowledge or belief to operate. You know, a natural

law like the gravitational law respects neither age, status, education, sex, location nor even ignorance. Whatever or whoever is thrown up must come down at some point. The seed law operates like that too. This indefatigable law from the oldest known, most printed, most controversial and most popular and infeasible book, the Holy Bible, declares succinctly;

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. Gen 8:22.

This means all of the following:

1. Every harvest is the product of a seed sown. Every seed sown must yield some kind of harvest.
2. Just as at every given time, it is either day or night, even so, at every point in time, man is either sowing or reaping.
3. There is no harvest without a seed.
4. To guarantee your harvest, don't wait for luck. Go ahead and ensure your 'luck' by sowing your seed.

Thousands of years later, not even the awesome technological and scientific breakthroughs have dispelled this law. If anything, these breakthroughs have validated the seed law.

American preacher and writer Mike Murdock puts it beautifully: To get something you have not gotten before, you have to do something you have not done before.

Speaking of Saul, the Bible says since he was being programmed for glory he had not known before, he was presented an opportunity to sow a seed. The inhabit-ants of Jabeshgilead were attacked by Nahash the Ammonite. Saul, who was at this time announced by not coronated, mobilized Isreal and delivered Jabeshgilead (1 Sam 11:1-11). After this feat,

...the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

1 Sam 11:12-15.

Is it not very beautiful that after Saul mobilized and delivered the city of Jabeshgilead, all the people gladly met in Gilgal to confirm and coronate him king?

Now why Gilgal? Why not Mizpeh where Saul was first presented to the nation by Samuel - 1Sam10:17-24? Why not even Ramah where Prophet Samuel had his headquarters and the High Place - 1Sam7:17? Remember

that it was at this Ramah that Samuel had anointed Saul in the first instance. Why not even Shiloh which was evidently the place of worship since the days of prophet Eli - 1Sam1:3 or Bethel, the house of God?

Gilgal was historically and spiritually strategic. It was symbolic for a lot of reasons.

1. It was the place where Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground into Canaan. It was the point of miraculous transformation from hope to breakthrough. It was the Crossover point. Here Israel built their monument of 12 stones that would remind them and generations after them of Jehovah's gracious and miraculous dealing with them - Jos4:19-20.
2. This was where manna ceased and abundance began - Jos5:11-12.
3. It was the First administrative and military headquarters of the nation of Israel. This was where Joshua made his capital. It was also here that all the women and children were secured as the Jews fought neighboring nations and ejected them from Canaan - Jos4:19; 5:10; 9:6; 14:6; 15:7.
4. Elisha also used Gilgal as his headquarters - 2Kg4:38.
5. Elijah took off from here on his way to translation - 2Kg2:1.
6. After Absalom's insurrection, it was at Gilgal that all Israel congregated to receive and restore David to his throne - 2Sam19:15, 40.

7. The first Passover in Canaan was kept here - Jos5:10.
8. This was where God personally first appeared to Joshua as the Commander-In-Chief of the Israelite Army - Jos5:13-15.
9. Gilgal was where God appeared to Israel as a nation the second time - Judges2:1;
10. It was here that the generation that had not been circumcised in the way, was circumcised. God thus declared that by this circumcision the reproach of Egypt was rolled away from the nation of Israel. It was this very act of rolling away the Egyptian reproach that advised the name Gilgal - Jos5:2-9.

Gilgal is synonymous with end of the old order. It represents new beginnings, restorations and elevations. It also connotes God's presence, assistance and security.

In renewing the Kingdom here and coronating their first King, Israel who considered themselves politically reproached in the absence of a king were rolling away this reproach. Besides, it was indicative of the fact that a new phase of God's dealing with His people had begun.

Every one of us of course has a Gilgal where God plans for us to divinely 'cross our Jordans', plunge into spiritual and material abundance, roll away all reproaches and experience greater glory and responsibility. However, like Saul, sometimes we are presented with opportunities to sow the necessary seed that will provoke this Gilgal encounter.

Look at Saul. This fellow was publicly announced as the king of Israel. One group automatically volunteered to serve with him. Another group told him to his face that he was a ‘nobody’. All the elders and even God’s representative, prophet Samuel, failed to call that impudent lot to order. So where is Saul? The Man has gone back to looking after his father’s herd. He is not strategizing for resuming his reign. He is not campaigning to sway the opinion of those who have publicly scorned him. Finally, Saul hears of the predicament of the people of Jabeshgilead. He does not bother whether his scorners are from Jabeshgilead or not. He is not going to negotiate any terms. He is not going around bothering about who has the title. Saul is more concerned about both the work and the welfare of God’s heritage.

Look at this Saul. He puts his life in his hands and mobilizers to deliver Jabeshgilead. He is not bothered about who takes the glory. He just does the job. Do you know that many years after he becomes king, Saul will reap this harvest also? A young man named David is also going to put his life in his hands and deliver all of Israel in the days of Saul. It doesn’t matter that insecurity at this stage pushes Saul to mismanage this moment of national glory. The most important lesson here is that Saul receives a full harvest during his tenure.

Do you still remember where we are coming from sir? We are talking about the law of the seed.

Jabeshgilead was Saul’s fertile ground. Their problem

was his opportunity. Once he stepped out and obeyed God in the life of that community, God arranged for a Gilgal encounter.

Many of us are at the verge of our Gilgal in our businesses, careers, ministries and even marriages. Unfortunately, we have been praying God to change the order for us. We are either too concerned about who has the title or who will get the credit if we act now. We have deceived ourselves that when we actually do get to be in charge, we will save the whole world. Unknown to us, God has al-ready given us the chance to sow the necessary seed that will hasten our arrival. We fail to respond to the needs of those around us at our own hazard.

There are people whose circumstances are our own fertile grounds. Their predicaments are our opportunities to sow the imperative seeds that will eventuate our breakthroughs.

Sir, there are three kinds of relationships among men in this world.

1. Those who will motivate or help you positively. They will give to you.
2. Those who will motivate or help you negatively or in reverse by openly criticizing, discouraging or op-posing you. They will persecute you.
3. Those who depend upon you for help because they are your opportunity to sow the seed that will get you to the next level. You must give to them.

Two

Every Acquaintance Is A Potential Bridge

*Which in time past was to thee
unprofitable, but now profitable to thee
and to me: Philemon 1:11.*

Encarta dictionary 2009 edition describes acquaintance as somebody known: somebody who is known slightly rather than intimately.

In this book, we are describing acquaintance as every human being, family, organization, corporate body, institution, Church/ministry and nation with whom we have made any manner of contact whether deliberately or accidentally, whether knowingly or inadvertently. We will “accept” acquaintance to mean somebody who is known whether slightly or intimately. We will however peg the age limit to somewhere around 5 years of age. The reason is because I want you to contribute to this book as we go along. Therefore, it is only fair to begin at an age limit where our memory is most likely to cooperate with us. You know, anything earlier than that, our recollection

may be unfruitful.

Now how could you possibly contribute to a book that is already in print? Okay, I confess that other readers may not read your own personal contribution. This is actually a shame because I know some of you will produce masterpieces, best-sellers and must-reads. Nevertheless, at every point, you can personally decide whether or not the suggestion is true in your own peculiar case. At the end of the book, you will discover that you have indeed been actively involved in shaping the book and perhaps, and this is more important, shaping your life through shaping your relationships.

First of all, we need to agree, (you and I) that since age five, all you have ever done has revolved around or involved people. You went to your first, second and perhaps third and even fourth schools. People drove or escorted you to school. People taught you in school. Other people competed with or assisted you in school. In fact another set of people harassed you in school. May be it was your Mathematics teacher or the biggest boy in your class who ended up in the same class with you because he spent more time bullying others than studying his books. People managed the cafeteria where you took your meals. People sold the clothes you wore and the books you used and the furniture and indeed the buildings.

You did your hair regularly (even Jackson 5 in the 1970s and early 80s did their hair regularly. At least they washed their hair). You did your laundry, shopping and went to the movies. You did or at least watched

sports. You learnt driving, got a job, moved into your personal accommodation and got yourself a car. You got married/are planning to get married. You are into politics/are contemplating getting into politics. You are into business/ are prospecting some businesses. You are into active ministry or at least you are a member of a church, society, club or one organized body or another. You benefit from public utilities like electricity, water, air transport, trains, etc. You watch TV and/or Cable. Currently, almost daily, you depart your house for some location either within or outside your city or even state. Several times, you have travelled out of your nation or even continent. In most of these cases, you depended upon others for your arrival and safety.

What have we been doing all along? We are trying to prove that whatsoever we have done since age 5, nay, whatsoever we will do for the rest of our lives, we have dealt and will continue to deal primarily with people. As long as we have breath, people are our primary constituency and they are indispensable. In education, ministry, career, business, politics, marriage, health, etc, we are dealing first and foremost with people. Therefore, the earlier we put a premium on the value of people generally and relationships in particular, the smoother and less stressful our endeavours.

In light of this, the first thing you need to know and treasure is the fact that every acquaintanceship is a potential bridge. Every one you meet in your life, irrespective of the circumstances, is potentially a

blessing and profitable. Notwithstanding educational, professional, social, material or even spiritual status, no single person is useless. But more importantly, every person you meet has the potential to benefit your destiny.

APOSTLE PAUL - PHILEMON

Our opening quotation is excerpted from Apostle Paul's letter to Philemon whose slave Onesimus had apparently stolen and ran away. In that letter, we have the example of how Jesus expects the Church to broker peace and reconciliation between masters and servants and between pastors and members of their congregations.

Paul somehow has met runaway Onesimus and led the young lad to Christ. A typical Paul finds out on enquiry the circumstances of his new convert. We find Apostle Paul pleading with Philemon to take Onesimus back and forgive him all wrongs especially now that the younger man is a Christian. To press home his prayers regarding Onesimus, Paul even offers to indemnify the slave's debts to his master.

Let us digress a little and share some thoughts together. Do you know of any Pastor today who leads a divergent member of another assembly back and brokers reconciliation between Pastor and member, sir? Is it not more fashionable to organize special programmes with perceived wealthy members of another assembly as targets so that we can draw them by all means to our churches? Is it not also more fashionable to brag that since the other fellow has failed to provide necessary

spiritual nourishment for the flock, and since we have the most nourishment in the city, that is why the sheep from other folds are joining our church?

You? No sir, you couldn't possibly be guilty of this. Besides, who qualifies me to stand in your judgement? What we are doing is simply sharing some thoughts. So, one more question, sir? When was the last time your Church (don't worry, I know you are not the pastor) counseled with those "newcomers" , discovered they were matured Christians who had differences with their leadership, then advised and encouraged them to return to the assemblies where God who set everyone in the assembly where He knows they will fulfill their destinies, has placed them? When was the last time your church encouraged every aggrieved matured Christian to return to their churches and make up with their pastors?

If every leader did what Paul did with Onesimus, we would reduce cases of insubordination in the body. We would encourage character and discipline because brethren will understand that they cannot just casually walk away from discipline in one assembly and join another assembly.

Paul told Philemon:

This Onesimus just fills our vacant position of keyboardist,

Onesimus is the perfect architect we prayed God to send to us to head our building committee,

This guy is God's answer for us as Church administrator,

I just found me the head of the youth wing in this Onesimus,

In the absence of Timothy and John Mark, this Onesimus will run errands for me,

But I will not keep him against your permission.

In the present situation where we not only encourage brethren to dislodge from where God has planted them but we are eager to give them titles in our churches to keep them with us, we may stand accountable to God for two reasons;

1. We share in their sins (1Tim5:22) when we fail to help them submit to proper discipline and restoration.
2. We have aided them to dislodge from where God has placed them. Therefore, they will not give testimonies of what is happening in their personal lives. Yes, they will give testimonies of what is happening in “our Church” but not in “my life”. Why? They are in rebellion and must dwell in a dry land because their provision is not with us. Remember:

God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. Psalms 68:6.

It is God who sets people in families (whether biological or spiritual families) as He deems fit. If you encourage anyone to break his rank because you want to populate your Church, you will not only be accountable

to God, they may fail to fulfill their purpose sir. Beware!

Of course, an immediate consequence of this seed is that the same people will not only soon become smoke in your eyes, they will also lead another rebellion and move vital pillars away from your work. Are you now understanding why there is so much “migration” within the church Sir?

Anyway, let us return to our subject. In this book, the main interest is not the fact that Paul brokered reconciliation between Onesimus and Phelimon. Awesome and worthy of emulation as that is. The main point of interest is the fact that the mighty Apostle Paul does acknowledge that a young convert like Onesimus, one with such ignoble or dishonourable background, was profitable to him.

Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: Philemon 1:11.

This is a vital lesson humanity must learn. Every human being is a potential blessing. The issue usually is the way we handle the people we are exposed to.

Paul - Acts23:12-33.

All through Scriptures, we hear of nothing about Paul’s biological family. Did they or did they not embrace Paul’s faith? We cannot tell authoritatively. Nevertheless, Paul did not let his faith, as controversial as it was in his days, to ostracize him from his biological ties. Thus when there was a sworn conspiracy to murder him, we hear

of his family connection for the first time. And this is in good light. It is his nephew that leaked and foiled the plot.

Do you think this is no big deal? The fact that only about forty people were aware of this plot makes it top secret. For Paul's nephew to become privy to it, yes, there was evidently the divine element. But remember that he needed to be an insider among the Sadducees fanatics to become aware of such plot. Secondly, if he didn't particularly feel personally obliged to Paul, why risk his own life to foil the plot? Are we still headed in the same direction?

My submission? Paul never got to a position in all his ministry where he began to feel he did not need anyone. He kept all his bridges sustained and serviced.

Please don't use your faith to sever from your biological family. In fact, God may be counting on you as the tithe or firstfruit of their salvation. Keep in touch. Identify with those family events that do not contradict your faith. Send your help as regularly as you can. It is by the way, your first line of bridges. Sustain it.

On the other hand, should the family ostracize you because of your faith, that is an entirely different matter. In this case, you are only under obligation to stand in the gap through prayer for their salvation until they begin to embrace the truth.

David - 1Samuel:30

One day, David and his team of 600 soldiers returned to their temporary camp in Ziklag to an empty camp. The enemy had invaded the place in their absence and carted away all their possessions and families. Three full days had passed. The people went from anger against the invaders to resentment against David. This time, it was weeping that Jesse's son found and the king-in-hiding led his soldiers to cry with all their might. Finally exhausted, he remembered to ask God if there was any hope. At God's assurance, these bereaved bears set out in pursuit. Clearly, there was blood-thirstiness in the atmosphere.

At the brook Besor, however, 200 of those fellows were too exhausted to continue the pursuit and they were excused to remain there. David and the remaining 400 continued. Now do you see what Am seeing? I think the frustration of this pursuit party should be reaching boiling point at this level. Remember that earlier, they had even contemplated stoning David. This certainly is a very dangerous party to cross paths with.

Suddenly, one of the soldiers motioned with his hand to halt his colleagues. He took aim with his spear, blinked several times and lowered it again. Gingerly, he approached a scanty shade in the Philistine fields. Lying on his side, awake but barely able to move or even open his eyes, was a man. By now some other members of David's team were gathering. From the look of the stranger, it was easy for them to recognize that he was an Egyptian. Then

these soldiers that had been provoked to breaking point did something very unexpected. Rather than vent their spleen on him by killing him right away, they brought the weak stranger to David. An uncircumcised Egyptian of all people! What on Earth would David need an Egyptian for? Under normal conditions David would have little need for Egyptians. Under this present conditions an Egyptian was a taboo surely?

In our modern language, an Egyptian would be an unbeliever. There could be only one treatment for an Egyptian from the hands of soldiers that are itching to shed blood in vengeance, certainly? Or at best, leave him to his fate and sure enough he would die sooner or later? Surprisingly, David ordered that the bread that was hardly sufficient for his team (that was why 200 of his soldiers had to be left exhausted, at the brook Besor in the first place) should be fed this half-dead stranger.

The account records however that after this stranger ate bread and drank water, his spirit revived and he became the bridge that led David and his soldiers to where their families and property were. This Egyptian became the link between them and their recovery.

Why should it interest you? It should because you will agree that a half-dead enemy acquaintance in the field is not exactly your conventional useful contact. However, because David had brought up his team to value life generally and to disparage nobody particularly, it was normal first for his team to refrain from killing or at least neglecting the Egyptian. Next, it was normal for David to

feed him. Did they do it because they actually had hoped that he would be useful to them? No, Egyptians would not be raiding this side of the country. Remember even this Egyptian happened to be on this trip because he was servant to an Amalekite. David and his team just had a habit of taking none for granted and this time, oh! How it happened to pay blue chip returns!

If you carry a microscope and are screening who looks like a potentially profitable investment, you will miss it all the time. The winning wisdom is to remember that every acquaintance has imponderable potential and could be a vital bridge.

Next, I want you to remember that if you are a Christian, there are Egyptians all around you. Egyptians are unbelievers. All Egyptians/Unbelievers are lifeless and they are in urgent need of bread and water to save their lives. The good news is that at every point in time, you already have sufficient bread and water to share with Egyptians and save their lives. Jesus says:

*I am that bread of life. John 6:48
But whosoever drinketh of the water that
I shall give him shall never thirst; but
the water that I shall give him shall be
in him a well of water springing up into
everlasting life. John 4:14*

When you lead any Egyptian/Unbeliever to Jesus Christ, you are giving him both bread and water of life. He will not only be revived for a season. He will gain eternal life.

Now apart from your eternal reward, some of you, your spouses are still Egyptians and are waiting for the bread and water of life before you can get married. Maybe your car, contract, job, admission, house and even land for you ministry may be in the hand of an Egyptian or at least he may be the link to it.

Did I hear you say that you are so careful, you don't even bother to greet unbelievers? Don't you think we may be missing something?

All of Jesus' financiers were men and women who at various times benefitted directly from His ministry-Luke 8:1-3. But before they benefited from his ministry, they had all been unbelievers.

I also know that some of you, like me, have received your greatest and most regular support and help from those who have benefited one way or another from your spiritual bread and water. And you don't even have to be a minister of the Gospel. Of course I defer to obvious exceptions where God has touched people on your behalf even when you clearly do not know them. But these are exceptions, not the rule.

General Naaman - 1 kings5:1-14

Naaman was a five-star general in the Syrian army. In fact, he was the Chief of Army Staff. He had an intimidating résumé or CV. He had risen to the pinnacle of his military career not by politics but sheer military exploits. His achievement on the battle front merited

the attention of the Holy Ghost, inspirer of the Holy Scriptures. In social circles, only red carpets were good enough for him. His name opened doors within both the military and civil circles of Syria. He was famous, rich and favoured by even the King of his land.

Verse 1:

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

And with the last five words in verse 1, an otherwise enviable CV, was rubbished.

Unfortunately, there is the conjunction “but” after every person’s curriculum vitae, no matter how great his or her achievements or exploits. No single human being is complete. The Creator of the universe made it that way. Those who pretend otherwise have to live daily in personal delusion and deception. Worse still, they contend with personal battles daily to hide their deficiencies or is it inadequacies? from the public. But there is an even worst state. Some battle to hide these cancerous deficiencies even from close family members and close associates.

Thank God for an otherwise proud and presumptuous Naaman. His immediate household knew about his leprosy. The King knew about his leprosy. The king and prophet of a foreign land would soon know about this

leprosy.

Do you know why some ailments kill certain people? Whether the financial disease called Lackoffundis, the social and moral disease called Satanicappetitis or the health scourge called HIV/AIDS, cancer, etc. Many people lose their lives to these “buts” because Satan long negotiated with them to keep the ailment secret by all means. This way, they cannot access any kind of help.

But General Naaman was different. First is it not instructive that Namaan which means delight or pleasant, was carrying something not so delightful? Don't be deceived. Some of those expensive perfumes and even titles suppress a lot of either physical or moral stench.

Thankfully for Naaman, he didn't cover his “but”. Even his maid, a slave girl brought in from one of the raids on Israel, knew about the state of mighty Naaman. It was this same little Israelitish maid that eventually served as the bridge that brought Naaman healing. All Naaman's military, professional, political, social, academic, financial and diplomatic connections could not help him. In fact, even when the necessary information was obtained, he almost still missed it because his king chose the diplomatic option.

When King Benhadad sent that presidential red tape request for King Jehoram to heal General Naaman, the Israelite Monarch misunderstood. In any case, he didn't whole heartedly follow after Jehovah and probably didn't believe leprosy could be healed. So he thought it was a way of seeking a quarrel against Israel. He probably

would have responded aggressively and would not only have cost Naaman his miracle but provoked war between the nations.

Thank God who arranged for prophet Elisha to hear about this developments. Eventually, Naaman got his healing. Still, there are certain virtues that everyone who desires to fulfill his destiny on earth should appreciate about Naaman.

1. Suppose General Naaman was the kind of arrogant and heartless celebrity who treated all his subordinates and employees as second rate human beings. Suppose that he was the kind of fellow who had little time for hired servants. A man who used every opportunity to abuse his servants whether physically, verbally or emotionally. One reputed for oppressing his servants in their wages. A boss that found every excuse to withhold or delay staff wages or even surcharge them for all kinds of trumped-up damages. Do you think that Little Maid from Israel would have divulged the information that led to his eventual healing?

Do you know any one that can use this wisdom? Someone who will treat every one around them with reasonable dignity, sir?

Terry is this all about men?

Not at all Madam. Please forgive me. It is for every human being. "Sir" in these pages represent all my esteemed readers. Say, do you know anybody who can use this wisdom Madam?

2. Suppose also that high and lofty General Naaman was so unapproachable that even his personal aids could not reason with him. You remember, pride and presumption were going to rob him right within the premises of Elisha Prophetic Outreach Ministries. When the prophet gave him prophetic instruction for getting his healing without personally showing up, Naaman asked Ghehazi a few questions.

Naaman: 'Please did you tell him who is here?'

Gehazi: 'Yes, Sir. He knows.'

Naaman: 'Ok. Tell him that General Namaan of Syria...'

Gehazi: 'He already...'

Naaman: 'Shut-up boy! Tell him General Naaman, Commander of the Royal Forces of Syria, the most honourable and second only to His Majesty the King of Syria. The first five-star General of Syria about whom all the women within and without the Syrian kingdom sing as the deliverer of the Kingdom and the most courageous. Did you tell him all that? Did you tell him I was sent here at the express fiat of the Most excellent Majesty, the King of Syria? Did you tell him all that, boy?'

Gehazi leaked his lips but before he could reply. Namaan resumed: 'Tell him all of that boy and tell him how many carmels are here with great substance as a gift to the man who recovers me of this leprosy.'

At last Gehazi leaked his lips again, swallowed hard then blurted out: 'My master the prophet, speaks only

once sir. He knows who you are and where you came from.’

At this point, General Naaman felt both insulted and humiliated. Pride lifted his right shoulder. Presumption lifted up the left and he stomped out of the place. He voiced his disappointment even as he went.

It finally took the tactful counsel of his aids to sway the General. He eventually went to wash in the Jordan seven times and was healed.

For a man of such pride and near delusions of grandeur, Naaman still possessed an uncommon virtue. He had ears for his subordinates.

Now I return for your help. Suppose at this level, General Naaman was the kind of VIP or boss so inaccessible that even his immediate team couldn’t reason with him for fear of reprimand. Would he have gotten healed in the land of Jewry or not?

Again, what do you think Madam? Do you know of anybody who could use this wisdom of Naaman?

Someone must learn to listen to his driver, his cook, his cleaner, his gateman/security staff, his every subordinate and employee.

You miss vital channels of divine counsel when you place yourself beyond their fellowship. Does this mean they will always be right? No sir...emmm, no Madam. They may not always be right so you will decide what to accept or reject. I repeat, they may not always be right but many times, God uses them to talk to you. So operate

a policy where everybody around you is confident to express an opinion. Do you still remember God used an ass to save prophet Balaam - 1Sam22:22-34?. Remember, every human being is more valuable than a million asses. We are made in the image and likeness of God. We forget that at our peril.

In one of my books *Igniting & Sustaining Divine Favour*, I shared this particular experience. However, I feel led to reproduce it. I was visiting with my in-laws and arrived rather late. As I walked the now deserted street to my in-laws house, the only people I met were a group of boys with maybe one or two very young girls. This was past midnight! I was greatly offended that such young girls could hang out with boys that late. But the worst was that they were all openly smoking Indian hemp. I was so mad at that crowd that without any power to do anything about their situation, I pointedly refused to greet them. They may also have noticed my clerical collar. We all belonged to different worlds and would have nothing to do with each other that night, or so I thought as I impudently walked past.

Although I had called ahead to arrange for someone to wait up for me, somehow, he slept off. The gate was locked. I shouted as loud as I could even as I already knew I was wasting my time. The distance was impossible. Nobody could hear me from the inside. The only way was to make a phone call but I was out of credit on my handset. Then I remembered the hemp smoking crowd. Red in the face with shame, I returned, greeted them

and asked if I could use anyone's phone and pay 5 times the usual price. One of them blew the grass smoke in my face and rightly pointed out that I had treated them with scorn when I first passed. He assured me they were neither criminals nor useless. They were only enjoying life their own way.

I quickly agreed with him and apologized. The alternative was to sleep on the street. Eventually, they woke up someone who recognized their voice in the neighbourhood. I made and paid for my call, paid them for their service and forgiveness and slept in a warm bed that night. I was the one searching for them the following day on my way out so that I could greet them.

Everywhere you go, whoever you meet, whatever you do, compliment generously. Always remember, everyone you run into is a potential angel.