SONSHIP AND SERVANTHOOD

IN THE KINGDOM

AFRICA |ASIA |AMERICA | EUROPE

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the Church including many congregations I fellowshipped with and got opportunity to minister especially Christ Dominion Church (CDC) who embraced and practice the teaching on sonship. This apostolic teaching is primarily meant for the Church but is also useful for every person in position of authority as servants of God.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost I give all honor and glory to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I acknowledge many people whom God used to encourage me, that include: my brethren, Bishop Julius Chepsat, Bishop Dr. Kepha Omae, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Odhiambo, Pst. Mathew Komen, Rev. Joseph Chepkoyo, Pst. Susan Kiptoo, Rev. Joshua Kimaiywa the leadership and congregations of Christ Dominion Church, the Full Gospel Church of Kenya at Bossei; my late dad Alfred Rotich and mum Salina Kobilo who believed in the gifting that God had put in me. Also Prof. Melitus Wanyama. This revelation would not have come with such clarity without my dear family (the church at home) whom God used greatly to minister to me. May the Lord bless you all and may you be inspired to live as responsible sons of God here on earth that is a miniature part of the Father's Kingdom.

PREFACE

It is with very strong conviction about the challenge that Christians face in understanding the work Jesus Christ accomplished and living a Christ-like life that made it necessary to share about sonship and servanthood. Given the many different interpretations of the Bible among the many sects of Christians all over the world and some inconsistencies in the practice of Christianity this book will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the problem. Hopefully, the reader will be stirred to read the Bible more objectively and be able to reconcile the various confusing views and practices. A reconciliatory tone is set to enable building of harmonious relationship between sons and servants in church ministry as they both play a very important in the maturity of the Church. It is worth noting that most ministers are sons but minister with an attitude of a servant.

This work is as a result of many years of ministry where some of my friends urged me to put in writing the teaching about sonship for better clarity. I am much aware of the divergent views already expressed by some but hope that this will provoke or stir you to seek to know more than what is presented here. The views herein are wholly the author's and may not be reflective of the congregation I attend/lead. Thank God for the many men and women of God who have taught about the grace of

the Heavenly Father; for I believe the message in this book will well connect with such teaching on grace and make it easy to practice. Hopefully growth will be evident in your life by the end of it all.

FOREWORD

It is my great honor, joy and pleasure, to be privileged to write this foreward to Prof. Kibet's revolutionary and life-changing book: 'Son-ship and Servant-hood in Church.'

As I sit down to do so, our country is currently in the throes of a massive and stunningly unprecedented revolution of sorts, instigated by *Gen-Z* Kenyans. In surprisingly ways, they have stood up to and revolted against not only the political establishment but also against The Church. In their minds, our country is in its current bad state and malaise, because many church leaders have, distastefully, gone to bed with the State. Hence one of the rallying cries is "Occupy the Church!"

They have literally thronged and 'occupied' Sunday Services not because they love those Churches but because they don't like what has been going on in there. As multitudes of young people in the Western world have often declared: "We Love Jesus but not The Church!" or "Jesus Yes! The Church, No!"

Many of them, who grew up attending various churches, have abandoned the faith and confidence in church leaders, mainly because they can clearly see that the churches are full of the archetypal Servant – the elder brother in the Story of the Prodigal son (Luk 15: 11-31)

And as Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of modern India, famously declared: “I would have been a Christian but for the Christians!” Though an avid admirer of Jesus and diligent student of the New Testament, he rejected the Church: Because most professing Christians were so much un-like Christ.

Multitudes of unbelievers around the world admire Jesus Christ, but want nothing to do with the church. Mainly because, many who profess to love and serve Christ appear to be so much unlike Him.

Our villages, towns and cities are filled with people who have fled from churches full of “elder brothers”. Yes, the gospel of Christ calls us away from the reckless immorality of “younger brothers”, but also calls us away from moralistic legalism of (the elder-brother-) the archetypical Servant.

Based on a thorough exhaustive and biblically balanced exposition, Prof Kibet, relevantly and compellingly provides answers to the crucial question concerning how believers can become like Christ. And that is mainly by aspiring to become more of Sons than Servants of God!

But alas! Most church leaders identify themselves as servants, like the Elder Brother. Sons are more focused on the One, The Lord Jesus Christ, who called them than what or whatever titles people have given them. A servant is hired for a job while a son is raised from childhood to participate in the Father’s work.

A servant is identified by outward appearance but a son through likeness with the father. Father-son relationship is not legalistic but through the covenant of the blood of Christ.

As it is in the natural, so in the spiritual: a servant can never resemble his or her master, no matter how much or how long he she strives. A son imitates the Father in many ways because he has the seed of the father and hence his likeness.

“Behold what manner of Love that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 Jn 3: 1).

“As He is so are we in the world” (1 Jn 4: 17).

The Church of Christ will never be the world-changing and life-transforming force it was meant to be as long as Christians remain more of servants than sons.

The crucial distinction between servants and sons is clearly brought out in that extraordinary encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4). It is remarkable that, besides an ordinary Well, away from any Temple or synagogue, Jesus bypassed all the religious and ecclesiastical authorities of the day, and for the very first and only time in the gospels Jesus personally revealed His messianic identity to an ordinary, despised, dejected Samaritan woman (Joh.4: 26). And thereafter, Jesus used this ordinary woman, who had no title or

religious credentials, to transform her entire Town and world for Christ. And after they had met Christ, they declared to her: Now we believe because we have heard him ourselves, not just because you told us. He is indeed the Savior of the World." (Joh.4: 42). And therein lies one of the most crucial and significant of all themes in the New Testament: That through Christ, by His Grace, you can know Christ, by yourself. With all due respect to all spiritual leaders, "fathers", mothers, ministries, churches and authorities, we have been called not to point people to ourselves but to Christ, as that woman did: "Come see a Man!" (Joh.4:29).

Christianity is not an abstraction but a Person: "For there is only one mediator between man and God, the man Jesus Christ."

It is only when we truly and actively aspire to be like Christ, The Son of God, will people desire to be life-transforming members of His body. It is likeness to the Father that will turn this world upside down for Christ (Act.17: 6) and transform and revolutionize it, like our predecessors in the early church did.

One of the most epochal and significant decisive moments in the history of Christianity occurred around – one summer day in the year, while in a Garden, in Algeria, North Africa, with a book in hand, a fun-loving, easy-going and libidinous young man, heard the insistent voice of a child, nearby, saying: "Take up and Read!"

The first place that his eyes landed on was Romans 13: 13-14. So powerful was the impact, that he surrendered his life to Christ. His life and the history of the Church was never the same. Saint Augustine became one of the most positively influential figures in the history of the Church and the World.

And so having read through, enthralled and challenged, I would earnestly say to you too, concerning this book that is in your hands right now: "Take up and read!" Who can tell what God can do? Your life and your world may never be the same again!

Dr. Kenneth Odhiambo, ThD
Chaplain, Maasai Mara University.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A teaching on sons of God may initially appear as a new teaching because much of the Bible teaches about the children of God and the Son of God but on very few occasions mentions ‘sons of God’. Yet, as we shall learn herein, sons of God play a key role in God’s family and Kingdom. To set some background for an understanding of sons and servants of God, this introductory chapter shall briefly discuss the Kingdom of God as the context within which, sons and servants of God work.

The teaching of the Kingdom of God is not new but is likely to have been obscured by many other doctrines (Mar.4:11; Luk.8:10). The Kingdom just as with any other kingdom is ruled by a King who has subjects. However the Kingdom of God is made up of an infinite number of kingdoms, nations (tribes) and people (Mat.8:11; 11:11). Hence God’s Kingdom spans not only the heavens above but also the whole universe (taking eternity to travel from one end to another – trillions of light years) and the earth below (Rom.1:20; Eph.3:9; Col.1:16; Rev.4:11; Rev.10:6). The heaven is God’s throne (only a small part of His dwelling place) and the earth is just but a footstool in the Kingdom (Mat.5:35;

Act.7:49). What we see is just but the works of His hands and visible servants. He remains the invisible Eternal God (Col.1:15; 1Ti.1:17; Heb.11:27). I believe if He was to be visible we would vanish forever (consumed to nothing) because He would be so huge in stature, brighter than billions of suns and, denser than the heaviest substance; that the whole universe cannot accommodate Him (2Ch.5:13-14; Mat.10:28; Heb.10:31; 12:29; Rev.20:11). That is why He is the Almighty God.

Scope of God's Kingdom

In God's Kingdom, there are infinite number of kings, servants and sons (Mat.17:25; Mar.13:9; Luk.10:24; 1Ti.2:2; 6:15; Heb.7:1; Rev.1:5-6; 5:10). Some of the kings are servants while others are sons. Among the servants are angels and men, both obedient and disobedient whose reward, judgments and destinies differ (Rev.17:14; 19:18; 21:24). Broadly, the Kingdom has both mortal and immortal members. The immortal have eternal life and relationship with God while the mortal have a temporal relationship with God. The dividing factor of their destinies into immortality and mortality hinges on birth. Each of the servants and sons has unique calling, power, authority and jurisdiction. All these are beyond our understanding making it impossible to fully comprehend God's Kingdom. Let us therefore recognize our limits and with reverence acknowledge Him as God, only then can we gain wisdom to enable us reconcile with

the declaration of His identity as recorded in Rev.19:16, King of kings.

His Kingdom spans from past eternity to future eternity (Isa.9:7; Luk.1:33). This means that His Kingdom may span in time over the past trillion of trillion years and into the future trillion-trillion years. The scriptures give an account of God being eternal (from 'before' the eternal up-to 'past' the eternal future). He is the creator who has in the eternal past created visible and invisible beings and objects and will even in the future continue creating many more (Joh.1:3). He is also the creator of the ends of the earth (Isa.40:28). This is not an imagination but a reality according to what the biblical scriptures say.

Just for the sake of acknowledging the greatness of God's Kingdom, let us reflect on the words of Col.1:15-20. Jesus is introduced as the First-born over all creation. He was there with God the Father before the beginning of anything that ever existed. Through Him all things were created. Without Him nothing could be created, not just down here on earth but also in the heavens above (Joh.1:1-5). He is the only begotten Son of God who was given as the sacrificial lamb for the remission of sin and the salvation of mankind. He became the first-born because in Him others would be accepted as children of God.

Children of God in the Old Testament (OT) were mainly the offspring of Israel (Deu.14:1) but in the New Testament (NT) a door was opened for the gentiles to also

be children of God (Mat.5:9; Luk.20:36; Joh.11:52; Rom.8:16,17,21; 9:26; Gal.3:26; 1Jn.3:10). The offspring of Jacob were known as children of Israel and only once in the scriptures (Deu.14:1) explicitly called children of God, since God intended for a day of their adoption as sons in Christ Jesus. Prophetically, the Lord spoke of them as His children through the promise made to Abraham (Rom.9:8). They were counted as children of God within the promise and not of the flesh since flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

Those who took pride in the inheritance through being the offspring of Abraham in the flesh outside the promise missed the revelation. This is the reason why the children of Israel were not able to comprehend the special calling the Lord had ordained for them. Hence up to now the veil of the law still keeps them from embracing the sonship discussed herein, apart from those who have believed in the Son as the promise. This is evident through the fact that the children of Israel who are still referred to as children of God are yet to believe that Jesus was the Messiah sent to give them eternal redemption. They were willing to accept Him as a prophet but had to reject Him because of His claim as the Son of God and had him die on the cross about two millenniums ago. Their faith is still defined within the Law of Moses. The Muslims confess they are also children of Abraham and admit that Jesus was a prophet but never the Son of God.

Mention of Children, Sons and Servants of God in the Bible

To further clarify the Biblical context of the terms children, sons and servants of God in the scripture the following brief statistical review from the Bible concerning the same is herein presented.

Children of God are explicitly mentioned over 10 times in the New Testament (NT) King James Version (KJV) and are key members of the Kingdom of God as well as members of the Royal family of God. Hence the identity of believers in Christ Jesus is actually first and foremost in their position as children and sons of God (Hos.1:10; Luk.20:36; Gal.3:26).

Using the King James Version (KJV), the term "servant" appears 502 times in the bible with 417 times in the Old Testament (OT) and 85 times in the NT. The word "servants" appear 411 times in the OT and 69 times in the NT. "Servant of God" appears 4 times (referring to Moses) in the OT and 3 times in the NT (Tit.1:1; Jas.1:1; Rev.15:3) with it appearing plural once in the NT, 1Pe.2:16 – servants of God. "Servants of the Lord" appears 6 times in the OT while it is nowhere in the NT. "Servant (singular) of the Lord" appears once in the NT (2Ti.2:24) but 21 times in the OT and specifically it was referring to Moses (18 times), Nun (once) and David (twice). The phrase "the servant of God" appears 3 times in the OT and once in the NT with all referring to Moses.

Family is mentioned 122 times in the OT with all referring to families of men but mentioned once in the NT

(Eph.3:15) and refers to God's family. Household is mentioned 48 times in the OT and all referring to household of men but 13 times in the NT with about 4 implicitly referring to God's household (Mat.10:25; 24:45; Luk.12:42; Gal.6:10; Eph.2:19).

The phrase "children of God" appears 9 times in the NT but nowhere in the OT. Offspring of God appears once in the whole Bible (Act.17:29). Phrase "begotten of God" appears once in the whole Bible (1Jn.5:18). "Born of God" appears 6 times in the NT but appears nowhere in the OT. Phrase "born of the Spirit" appears twice in the NT.

Sons of God appear 5 times in the OT but 6 times in the NT. However, Son of God appears 47 times in the NT and it refers to the Lord Jesus while it appears only once (in Dan.3:25) also referring to the Lord.

The phrase "the Father" appears 145 times in the NT with it referring to God 123 times. "Father" appears 369 times in the NT with about 270 times referring to God. Of these, over 180 times was by the Lord Jesus Himself in the Gospels. However, the term "father" appears 757 times in the OT but all apart from one (Isa.9:6) refers to men with the unique usage of the word in Isa.9:6 addressing God as the Everlasting Father.

SERVANTS

A clarification on the whole of this discussion of sons and servants is that it is representation of mind-set that has a bearing on the purpose or destiny of not only the individual but also the church organizations and the entire universal Church body. Our mind-set is influenced by what we believe and not only makes us who we are but also who we shall be. A son can have a mind-set of a servant and a servant can have a mind-set of a son. Just as a king can have a mind-set of a slave and a slave can have a mind-set of a king. Ultimate lasting honor will not depend on the position but the mind-set and that is why historically, we honor some slaves or servants above their masters.

The definition of a servant in this book is generally any spiritual of physical being who has been created or contracted or enabled by God to serve or; execute some task or ministry or responsibility. The person so called to serve is a servant for as long as the service is being rendered and ceases to be a servant when the service ends or when the person ceases to serve. The service is therefore bound within some jurisdiction and time. The operations and office of a servant has a limit and an end;

thus such a servant whose work has a time limit is mortal and perishes. There are beings who are servants called to minister for eternity and such servants are immortal in nature, unless they become disobedient. This means that spiritual beings were likely created for eternal service and hence by nature eternal. Only the Creator can destroy that which He created, be they physical or spiritual beings. Jesus admonished his disciples in Mat.10:28 – "..fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell".

It is good to highlight the fact that servants and sons have both been called to serve in the Master's dominion. We therefore have not only serving servants but also serving sons. Additionally, a son who dwells in a mortal body lives with the reality of the body as servant (Rom.6:19-23). The earthly tabernacle must therefore be disciplined as a servant serving the spirit that is a son within. There is that part in believer of Jesus Christ that is a servant and there is the other part that is a son just as a coin has two phases. Metaphorically, the 'head' should be son and the tail 'servant'.

Servant-Master R**elationship**

It is good that we define the term master for clarity of the discussions in this study. A master is a person who has power and authority to administer order over some task or responsibility. The term master and lord are herein used synonymously but the two terms used are actually

distinctly different. A master who has power of ownership and administration within a jurisdiction is a lord. We shall be using the term "Lord" separate from lord in reference to Jesus Christ and God. The use of the term "Master" shall also be synonymous to the term "Lord". A master therefore has skills and abilities that enable execution of power and authority that may have been delegated by another master or lord. A master can therefore be a servant under another greater master and hence possibility of a hierarchy. Masters whose scopes are limited for one reason or another delegate their responsibility through passing on their mastery skills to other servants who serve under them. Such masters nurture followers who are better known as disciples with unique calling to be masters as their master. A master will share his life skills and character with his disciples in great trust that they shall ensure continuity of the service that was begun by the master even long after the master has gone. More seamless transitions that enable greater posterity of service are effected through discipleship.

Those under masters can therefore be either servants or disciples. A servant can also be defined as person hired to do some work for the master. The term servant as used in the bible was at times synonymous to a slave. This means that it not only referred to a hired worker but also one who has been bought. A slave is a servant that is fully 'owned' by the master.

A servant has no image of the master from the first day but may develop the similitude of the character of his or her master with time. Very few servants achieve the image of the master even after working the whole of their lifetime under one master. They may develop a form of likeness of the master but not an image. Only by the master's permission, wholesome love for the master and ceasing to be a servant can he/she take the image of the master. In other words, he/she must be translated through the master's authority to be the master's representative (Luk.20:41-44).

The relationship between a master and a servant is established through contractual agreement that is enforceable by some law generally recognized by the society, state/kingdom or land. The core factors in the relationship are the work description and the reward for the work. The servant must agree to carry out the responsibilities required of him/her under a given job description as defined by the master while the master will (in the case of a non-slave) pay the servant for the work done.

The Servant in the Old Covenant

For every work there is a benefit and cost. To the master, the work of a servant is a benefit and the reward to the servant is a cost; but to the servant it is vice versa. A cost is a sacrifice while the benefit is a fruit or end result of work. Hence work is a fruit/benefit to one party but a

sacrifice to the other party. The sacrifice of the righteous is therefore sweet aroma to the Lord.

Masters use servants for a time and when you see servants moving around with immense aura of authority you recognize the reality that there is a master behind their character. Nature is just but a servant (because it works in harmony as one) or made up of an infinite number of servants. To influence work, wisdom dictates that one must relate with the master and not the servants. This is only possible on condition that one is equal to the master which cannot be the case since the master will cease to be a master and the servant will cease to be a servant. What must a servant do then, since equality to God is impossible and there are a good number of better servants around? There is only one way out – SUBMIT TO THE MASTER so that whatever the master decides would be the best. Some resort to falling under another master to give them protection from the greater master. It often may be a highly relieving (appeasing) but a short-term solution with likely long-term devastating effects. No other master will guarantee you real life and true freedom apart from God (the True Master). Others will just turn you into a slave of sin after robbing, killing and finally destroying you (Joh.10:10).

The Great Challenge of Servants

In the OT, the greatest challenge servants of God faced was to walk (or work) with God ALWAYS. They understood well the outward walk but could not fathom

the inner walk. The outer man was well developed in rituals, sacrifices and customs pertaining to food, offering, clothing, seasons and the fear of man and evil. The inner man remained impoverished in the knowledge and the true fear of God.

It is also paramount for a servant to know his/her boundaries so that he/she does not trespass as many have done and reaped rejection by God. Children can end up adapting the character and likeness of a servant rather than the Father and owner of the household. A servant is not the master but a hired person and is remunerated for the work they do. Servants work under instructions of the Master. That is why we must honor them that are in authority over us.

Each servant has a responsibility and task to be performed with certain delegated authority. Each responsibility and task may be split, distributed or delegated to other servants. Hence the observed existence of hierarchies in the authority exercised by servants. It is important to know that servants have a great role in God's Kingdom and will always be with us especially in the physical realm. Mortal servants can never be immortal apart from those who are born of God and have the promise of life again in His Kingdom.

Servants need to know their limits or their jurisdiction to serve well and come to the truth about adoption for them to be accepted into eternal life. We will inherit eternal life not as servants but as sons, but; if we live only as servants

in the world we are likely to miss eternal life because the paths of a servant are defined by the law. Servants are bound by the law as agreed in the contractual relationship between him/her and the master/employer. The relationship is so personal that it is independent of the contract of the master with any other servant. Mistakes made by servants include extension of the contractual relationship to another worker or person in the household of the master. So, unless the contract did define the role of other worker/servant it would be disobedience for a servant to rope in another person into the relationship.

There are dire consequences for disobedience by a servant. Disobedience is an act contravening the agreement stipulated within the contract initially made by law between the servant and the master. The contract will stand broken if one party is unfaithful or is disobedient. This will lead to a chain of invalidation of some privileges and responsibilities as dictated under the contract. Jurisdictions and boundaries limit contractual agreements and hence dictate the nature of laws and relationships. Servants with greater jurisdictions will therefore have other servants subject to them since they have greater responsibility with greater consequences whether positive or negative. That is why hierarchies are common in any kingdom. One servant is accountable to another for purpose of order and prompt dealing/correction of disobedience/mistake. Servants' safety in any contract will therefore depend on not only their obedience but also the obedience of the person they are subject to. Hence if

one has a choice, it is paramount to choose the most obedient and faithful master who provides the greatest jurisdiction.

A servant can also make a mistake of operating beyond their jurisdiction and this is also disobedience. It does not matter whether it is out of ignorance or not. The consequences according to the law will still take effect (if the law actually works). Mis-application of a law can happen if it is made outside its jurisdiction. As such the law will be ineffective or null and void. A servant must therefore interpret the law rightly or else there will be a greater possibility of a chain of consequential violation or breech of contracts. Correcting impacts or effects of any act of disobedience by a servant can be very difficult and often impossible to restore what caused the disobedience. The life of a servant is therefore not as good as many of us would want to believe. It has very little freedom and too many irreversible chain consequences to rejoice over.

It is however good to know that true joy, rest and good life is found outside the realm of a servant life. This we shall discuss in the later chapter on sons of God where we shall learn that the realm of sons of God is an eternal realm.

Operation of Servants outside their Jurisdiction

Servants are subject to their master and must serve within the jurisdiction of their master. In principle, according to Mat.10:24, a servant cannot be greater than the master. A servant should therefore operate within the jurisdiction of

the master. So it is important to first know the scope of the master if the master is under another master to avoid trespassing into the jurisdiction of other masters. An extension of the same principle implies that within the jurisdiction of a given master the servants must know their domains. Safety in service is dependent on operating within the confines of one's jurisdiction. It is possible for a servant to transgress by operating outside the domain of authority and hence without the permission or instruction from the master.

As a result of operating outside areas of their jurisdiction, servants have often enslaved children and 'killed' sons of the master. Children of a household are not servants and must never be treated as servants. There are rules/laws that govern servants and do not govern children. Servants have responsibilities that are not necessarily those of children. So are privileges. The privileges of children are different from those enjoyed by servants. Children have other rights and privileges that servants may not understand. This implies that even when servants are used by the master to deal with the disobedience of children, they must be careful to know their limits. A father will chastise his children not to destroy and kill but to discipline them towards obedience to their destiny as heirs.

Servants have often enslaved children through the whip of the law either within customs of men or religious doctrines strongly established in denominations that are

only registered here on earth. Sadly, servants can raise their own sons who are not in the likeness of the Father but in the likeness of themselves.

Luke 22:25-28 warns servants and others called to serve God's children (sons included) not to lord over the members of the body of Christ as with the leadership in the world. The attitude of servants whose reward is actually here on earth, easily lead them to seek for recognition or approval. The reward of servants may include titles, honor from men, great financial remuneration, good living, great name, glorious dressing among others. Not that these things are wrong but that the emphasis can be erroneous where we may equate them to spiritual maturity or spiritual riches. The rewards can become standards and such servants become our idols, dream and vision. Jesus our Lord becomes so obscured in our visions that we end up serving a servant rather than the Lord.

I believe our standard is the character of Jesus Christ as easily recognized through the fruit of the Holy Spirit and not the gifting. He has never relinquished his leadership to any man for He clearly instructed all believers to receive the Holy Spirit who is an omnipresent, omniscient person of the God Head. He can be the closest of all and as real as your heart (what you know is inside of you but cannot see). He can therefore be nearer to me than the pastor, bishop, apostle or even family members. He can

therefore be a believer's closest role model, teacher, companion, father, pastor, intercessor, comforter, etc.

This does not imply that we should not seek fellowship with others and hear God speak through them. However, we must come out of the trap of trusting in the "arm of flesh" including leaning on our own understanding. A person can never get lost nor be overwhelmed nor perish as long as they abide in the Lord Jesus. We should not doubt the eternal sustaining power that works in new believers to feel that we must constantly oversee or perpetually patronize them. In other words, we should fully trust in the saving power of the Lord and that He alone is able to keep us. Often we have over patronized other believers to levels where even in small details they have to consult us as leaders. This has made some brethren not to relate directly with the Lord in their day to day activities but relate through church leaders. In the process many brethren have lived like slaves to men of God, entirely dependent on the men rather than God. We ourselves as leaders need the Lord to always oversee us lest we perish. I must work out my own salvation with fear and reverence to God.

The distinction between servants and sons is summarized in the message Jesus preached to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in John 4:4-34. There were a good number of people whom Jesus sent to their homes after believing in Him because their faith in Him was sufficient to keep them going to the end. I wonder at times why I have to

spend several years in a fellowship to be confident of getting faithful persons to continue without me. Maybe I want to raise persons who will be faithful to me or faithful to the denomination or sect to which I already belong. It could be that many of us are building our own churches or running our own ministries that are not sustained by God but by our own selves. It did not take a decade for Paul to turn the world upside down. The Samaritan woman did not need two days but just a few hours while the Samaritans did not need three days to believe what happened to the woman as divine and genuine.

SERVANTS AS STEWARDS MINISTER GIFTS

To understand servants and sons we need to appreciate the calling to stewardship. Stewards are people who have been given responsibility to administrate over the property of a master. Stewardship therefore refers to a servant who administers over a property that belongs to a lord or master. Unlike a servant where the task relates to a service, a steward role is defined in the context of a property. A servant is therefore not necessarily a steward but a steward is a servant. It is worth noting that stewardship in Israel according to the Old Testament (OT) was more confined to kings rather than the priests and prophets because of the nature of the priestly services. The priests and prophets were to have minimum ownership of property. Stewardship is therefore observed more before ordination of Huron as a high priest.

One of the revelations in true stewardship emanates from the understanding that all a believer has belongs to the Lord. Therefore, much of the offerings presented to the Lord are actually gifts that are supplied through the abundant grace of God. A steward will not be referring to sacrifices or burnt offerings but gifts that were freely given by the Lord Himself. Therefore an interesting

distinction between sacrifices, offerings and gifts is unveiled.

Sacrifices and Offerings

Offerings of the Old Covenant (OC) were more of physical with shedding of the blood of animals required for the covering of sin. Sacrifices were therefore required for forgiveness of sin. Such sacrifices had to pass through fire hence were offered on the altar for the sin of whoever gave the sacrifice.

They were sacrifices because the cost of the offering was borne by the sinner or person giving the offering. An offering becomes a sacrifice because it costs some pain to the person offering it. It will often cost the loss of a life in whatever form being an expression of death penalty for sin. The person offering will be remorseful, pained, sorrowful or repentant. It is likely that there is no joy or delight when one is offering such a sacrifice. After the sacrifice is accepted the person making the offering can rejoice. Such sacrifice or offering results from sin or transgression. That is why men of God never valued any sacrifice that cost nothing.

The OC Priesthood and Sacrifices

There are many challenges and questions related to offerings among believers in the present Church that need proper teaching by the Holy Spirit. Many are struggling to meet the demands of the leadership in as far as giving is concerned. Various methods have been employed to effectively meet the needs of the ministries in the

congregations. Among the most popular ways of giving and ministering to material needs of the Church are methods borrowed from institutions of the world. Alongside the adoption of worldly methods are also religious orders adopted from other religions. One very foundational structure is of identifying priests.

The identification of priests and their role is core to understanding the ministry of giving, offering. To be able to give an offering, the priest must be functional hence already identified. In other words, we cannot understand offering before identifying and establishing the office of the priest. This is critical not just in the OT but more importantly in the New Testament (NT) where we get to know the New Covenant (NC) that the Christian faith is supposed to be founded on.

The priesthood, altar and temple in the Old Covenant (OC) are physical, with the offering being offered by members of a family such as the Levites or Aaron's family. The altar and temple were physical places set up according to the Lord's instructions. That is why the sacrifices were physical objects/items that the Lord required by law.

If we are to however translate the activities of the OC priesthood into the current Church situation, we are bound to have certain inconsistencies and confusion. Actually, the current predicaments in church worship result from lack of understanding that the NC form of

worship is different from the OC one. By the end of this chapter we may understand better why?

A little search of the NT should enable us know that the new priesthood in the NC is in Christ Jesus who is also the Eternal High Priest. Believers in Jesus Christ are part of this High Priesthood. If so, the question I leave for us to ponder on is, if you are part of the High Priesthood then how and who should you offer your sacrifices to? This will be a question to be answered hopefully by the end of the lessons learnt from discussions in the subsequent chapters.

Thanksgiving and Gifts

Nowhere in the NT are we instructed to give any material offering to the Lord apart from our bodies as living sacrifices and thanksgiving. Paul in Rom.12:1 is beseeching brethren to offer their bodies as living sacrifices as this is the reasonable service that is holy and acceptable to God. The Lord however instructs us to give to brethren, the needy, orphans, widows, destitute and strangers as a ministration of material goods. The correct language is to minister to the needs of the people that the Lord will lead us to serve but not giving directly to the Lord as we have learnt over the years of growth in the faith. This is because the actual or real giving to the Lord was done when we first believed and accepted Him as Lord in our lives. Thereafter, we administer as His stewards over His property that we erroneously refer to as “our possessions/properties”.

The phrase giving to the Lord has a negative connotation that the properties or possessions belong to us and hence tragically implies that He is not fully Lord over our lives. It also implies that the lives we live is ours and not His and hence miss out on the abundant joy of the real eternal life we have already received from the Lord – His LIFE. In other words our regular "giving to the Lord" negates the very Word of faith we have received. After the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection, the new eternal Covenant was established with unseen items and structures of worship greater than those in the previous covenants. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the eternal pillar that totally redefined offerings and sacrifices once and for all. The offerings and sacrifices are therefore different from those of previous covenants. He finished it all and our work is only to abide/rest in His finished work.

There are however offerings that were presented to the Lord as thanksgiving for the good things that the Lord has done. Such offerings were often given with great joy and delight. In the OC they may be accompanied with sacrifices of animals but with rejoicing or singing or dancing. It was often an expression of joy and worship that resulted from some answered prayer or display of God's favor in some circumstances or event.

The offering is not a payment or reward given for the work but simply a token of appreciation that accompanies an activity or event of thanksgiving or praise. Efforts are

made to make the event beautiful to display some splendor or delight to the Lord as a way of also honoring Him for what He has done. Notable in such an occasion is the celebration mood of everyone participating in the offering without which the offering would rather not be given.

Gifts are important in building relations between the parties involved and are not necessarily meant to meet the needs of the person receiving the gift. They are just expressions of love to extend the joy to the participants. Offerings can be given to meet needs being ministration of love possibly to meet some need and hence can arise from some compassion for some third party. However a gift is primarily a product of overflow of joy that seeks expression in the giving. The gift is basically a token or souvenir testifying about some good done to the person giving. It may have a small use value but goes a long way in cementing the relationship or love between the parties involved.

The NC Priesthood and Offerings

It is important to note that the priesthood, altar and temple in the NC are spiritual, being in the spirit and truth. The priesthood in the NC is actually a High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus with each member of the body of Christ being part of the High Priest. The priesthood is not only eternal but royal being one of kings/princes who are also children of God. All acceptable offering is given by the Lord through the believer as originating from the Father's

abundant love. The giving emanates from the Spirit of the Lord because of the truth that everything fully belongs to Him. All we have are essentially gifts supplied to the body of Jesus Christ and for God's own glory. The abundance of the grace at work in sons enables them to minister through the offering without counting it as sacrifices, since none can compare with the sacrifices already made in Christ Jesus. The cross we carry is lighter and the joy of the great salvation wrought already in us immensely exceeds the little pain we experience.

In other words, the offerings are actually already provided by the Father in Christ Jesus and it is actually the Lord who is offering them through us. The great love and abundant joy residing in each member of the Church causes the offerings to be mainly thanksgiving. Since the Lord has given immeasurably many gifts to the church freely by His grace all ministers of the NC minister the abundant riches of God's gifts to not only the church but also to the creation.

Love, Joy and Gifts in the New Covenant

In the NC, God gave the great Gift of His Son Jesus Christ who was packaged with infinite gifts for each member of the Church. The Gift was His Love and hence was a free eternal gift to mankind. In Christ Jesus we have not just abundant life but also abundant joy. If the joy is truly abundant and eternal then it must overflow with gifts being offered in our activities of worship.

Since all we have belongs to the Lord then rather than giving Him sacrifices we should be presenting to Him gifts of thanksgiving that actually don't pain us because He is the one that actually gave us freely. If whatever we have belongs to Him, then we bear no cost neither do we sacrifice but it is the Lord who has paid the cost. Freely we have received as stewards and freely we must learn to give with overflowing joy for we are most favored of the Lord.

Why should we find it hard to give offerings, first fruits or tithe? Why does it pain us when we have to give to the needs of the brethren or ministry? Possibly because we have been taught to offer sacrifices out of what belongs to us rather than gifts of thanksgiving out of what belongs to the Lord. We are poor stewards who have possessed what should actually belong to the Lord. Or possibly, we still live in the law of the OC and are yet to learn to minister in the love and grace of the Lord as children of God. Our offerings are sacrifices given through obedience to the law and not gifts of thanksgiving from great love the Father has lavished on us.

The offerings in the NC are gifts of abundant joy, eternal love and true rest that have been first ministered to us by the Lord. We give not because we want to be blessed but because we are already abundantly blessed. Not because we want to be rewarded but that we are already eternally rewarded. Not because we seek to be forgiven but that we are the righteousness of God. Not because we want to eat

the good of the land but that the Good Lord already abides in us and satisfies us.

Our prayers, praise and worship should be punctuated with lots of thanksgiving and our activities should be ministrations of spiritual and material gifts. Our worship should be packaged in abundant love and joy of the Lord.

We just need to confirm these by checking the scriptures where sacrifices, offerings and gifts are spoken of both in OT and NT. Most scripture on sacrifices and offerings are referring to the OC worship activities apart from the Lord Jesus as the High Priest and the ultimate sacrifice (Lamb of God). Gifts are more relevant to the NC worship and hence church activities.

Exceedingly Abundant

The NC is a priesthood of abundance or overflow. Exceeding great grace of God is manifest among the believers who are also called out to be sons of God. What the law could not do, now God's grace is much able to do. In fact, what was a struggle in the OC is supposed to be a rest. The standards of the law are lower than the standards of grace because with the greater grace in the NC there is an ability to perform the tasks we are called to do. The Holy Spirit not only makes us willing but also able to do His will.

We should not be talking about the tithe as if it is some great feat but more about the remaining 90% that seem to belong to us rather than also belonging to the Lord. The

tithe may only be an indicator of our love in following the Lord. We should be pushed by the love of God not by obedience to the law. We should live a righteous life not out of the fear of hell fire but out of our love for the Lord. We should forgive and love others not out of the fear of our sins not being forgiven but out of our love even for those who hate us because we want them to also be saved.

If there is any sacrifice we must make, it should come out of the great compassion we have to preach the gospel to desperate persons who have hurt us. The love of God should constrain us as the Lord is pleased when we joyfully offer our bodies as living sacrifices. In our service to the Lord, we may therefore often find our bodies hurt or pained but joyful and this may be the best sacrifice we can make to the glory of the Lord.

INVOKING THE FATHER'S NAME

The title "Father" as referring to the Heavenly Father who is the creator of all that is visible, invisible, past, present and future is only to ONE and not any other. He is also the Father of all spirits or spiritual Father. He was there before creation and will be there eternally since He has no beginning and no ending. Only His children's voice, reach His ears when they call Him Father and He responds by recognizing them as His own offspring. Calling Him Father does not therefore guarantee recognition of children or sons, but the seal of Jesus' blood through birth is the assurance of the Father-child relationship.

The Father's Name

Among them that know Jesus as Lord, it is therefore not sufficient to know God as the Creator but more as 'Our Father'. In a number of communities, sons rarely mention the name of their father and so do sons of God. They cannot swear by anyone since they are never at pressure to prove or be approved by the creation and in their position of authority they are ultimately answerable to their Father. Their 'nay' is a 'nay' and their 'yes' is a 'yes' – no more and no less. This is important because the

labors of a son must have direct link with his father. The work of a son differs from that of a servant since a son works with his father while a servant works for his master.

Sons refer to their Father as 'Our Father' especially in reference to the teaching by the Lord Jesus on the manner of praying they need to adopt. Jesus was emphatically informing his followers that God was their Father and should always address Him so. Whenever Jesus was addressing God, He called Him 'Father'. Only once on the cross did Jesus call on His Father as "my God, my God" – and this was the only instance when the Son was separated from the Father (because he bore the sins of the whole world on his body completing the work of redemption). All other times, He calls Him Father.

Just as in the natural, sons bear the name of their Father as their surname and thus identified or called by the name of their Father. The Heavenly Father gave a name to His children – the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel (God with us). This is the name given to men for their salvation such that any who will call on His name shall be saved.

The Father is Revered

Since it may be disrespectful in the natural (according to many cultures) for a son to address his father by his name so is it true that it may not be in order for sons to address the Heavenly Father by His names. It is just sufficient to address Him as Father. In the natural therefore, (out of reverence) sons don't call their father by name but simply

call him ‘father’. This is reflective of the spiritual sons who would not be disrespectful of their Father to call Him by His Name. That is why the children of Israel were warned not to utter the name of God in vain. The Name given to men and children of God is Jesus. If we belittle that Name the gospel will be of no value to us.

The nature of sons of God is thus such that, they cannot call God by His name because the revered relationship is paramount to their existence. They not only fear and revere Him but also love Him. They cannot use God’s name unless when it must be mentioned since their fellowship with Him is very real. That is why the name of Jesus is sufficient for sons. It is thus highly possible that those who use the Father’s names carelessly without discerning their error either live in ignorance or don’t know Him.

One may therefore shudder at the thought of what did happen over time that children of God mention the names of the Father in prayers, preaching and songs. Christians call the Father by name without blushing so often that we may need to pause and reflect on how we got that audacity when in the New Testament (NT) His name is not mentioned anywhere. A deeper reflection is required to understand the reason why even in the Old Testament (OT) His name is explicitly mentioned in few places (Gen.22:14; Exo.6:3; 17:15; Jdg.6:24; Psa.83:18; Isa.12:2; 26:4). I would rather leave you do a search on your own on how many times it is mentioned in the NT.

You will be surprised that in many versions it is not mentioned – not even once. Then you can understand the command that, 'Thou shalt not mention the name of the Lord God in vain (Exo.20:7) … Thou shalt not swear falsely by God's name … (Lev.19:12)'. Understanding the commands of the Lord is much easier when we relate with God as our Father. In other words, sons should have a better insight of the Lord's instructions for deeper, intimate and richer communion.

The Use of Father's Name in Scriptures

It is however easy to argue that some translations use God's name and that it is not a big deal. Though a number of translations especially of other languages other than Hebrew and English may use God's name it would be good to understand that limitations existing within languages made it convenient to pass the message of salvation. The Lord may have allowed other languages to use the names of God (e.g. Jehovah) because their religious backgrounds had names of their gods pronounced. To distinguish other gods from the Lord God, the Father's Name was explicitly used (invoked).

The scriptures are therefore written in the language of men and by men as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Languages of men are limited and may not wholly present God's word as intended. That is why the same Holy Spirit of God must quicken the scriptures as we read for us to get God's message. The scriptures present the Word (Jesus Christ) and speak of Him.

To illustrate further the problem of weak languages, nations and tribes all over the world had various religious beliefs as core to their cultures. The evolution of the many languages therefore accommodated the cultural and religious customs in the diversity of their backgrounds. Some interpreters therefore may have found some words used in some languages not befitting use in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God in His great mercy and grace did allow the use of some translations since the objective was the delivery of the message of salvation. Where love abound, grace did abound the more.

The problem is with us who are slow in seeking the Holy Spirit to teach us the scripture, but would rather use our intellect to conform the scripture to our religious ways. Due to our backgrounds (many of us from Christian homes), we already had mindsets that are influenced by the teaching and doctrines taught over the years. We are advantaged in that we relatively know more about the scriptures but disadvantaged because we are too familiar with the interpretation of scriptures to hearken to the Word (compared to believers during the time of the apostles).

A good example is that the hierarchies currently existing in Church organizations may not be part of the real Church structure. It may be core structural framework that keeps the Christian religion standing but not the true Church (Body of Jesus Christ). This may need elaboration as a separate topic since we are likely to divert

from the key discussion – but I believe those who will do a search of the scriptures will understand what this means. It may suffice here to pose a question for other forums – Is there a distinction between Jesus Christ and Christian religion? (What do the scriptures say about each of the two?) It would be interesting to know the conclusions made if there will be any. Why would this be important in sonship? I will only for now briefly state that mixing Christianity and Jesus Christ has been a travesty of the faith that has clouded the truth of the eternal life of Christ that has in greatest love been offered to us.

Hence the use of God's names in the various languages or translations was not intended to be misused in the manner the current generation of believers are using or invoking. The 'misuse' could be reflective of ignorance or disobedience in the faith we are supposed to stand for. A child who misuses his/her father's name is either disobedient or disrespectful or is probably ignorant of his/her identity. That is why Jesus never got tempted to prove that He was the Son of God. Children who know the omnipresence of their Heavenly Father are never under pressure to prove their paternity or identity. Sons bear the likeness of their Father wholesomely in every-way, everywhere and every-time. They are ever conscious of the Father's ever presence that 'with a smile' they would almost always silently whisper, "If you only knew this great salvation and new life I have … He is just right here with me and hears all you have said and think". Sons comprehend the futility of religion and vanity of all

efforts made outside Jesus Christ. Sons see the invisible and eternity. They mercifully reach out to the perishing having full knowledge of the wrath of God awaiting the disobedient. Only those who are unsure of their identity will go about trying to prove who they are.

Contrariwise, servants must always carry some proof that they are servants of their master and may often have to prove their identity through some document, dressing, deed or sign.

The Term 'Spiritual Father'

The title of 'father' was probably used by Paul and John for a role model who has led many to Christ. However it may not have been the intent of the Spirit of God in the two apostles to have it perpetuated as a doctrine to be used extensively in the Church structure. It is my submission that the principle of having spiritual fathers as currently practiced in many churches is out of the context. Paul and Peter would not have considered themselves spiritual fathers to the saints but rather in the physical or mental or faith context because they were elders age-wise to the person/s they were addressing. This I am confident based on the fact that Paul recommended a number of practices that are not presently exercised in the Church because the Spirit of God in us enable us know that the context is not similar. Among the recommendations are: women covering their head in worship/prophesy; women not speaking in congregation; celibacy among ministers (1Co.7:27-33; having apostles

lead other ministers etc. Paul and Peter also corrected some recommendations by other apostles such as: requirement for circumcision (1Co.7:18,19); observation of the law of Moses; eating of meats that are unclean or defiled (Act.15:5-11; Rom.14:15).

Abraham was referred to as the father of faith but not spiritual father. The term spiritual fathers or spiritual mothers is not mentioned anywhere in the scripture because only the Spirit of God begets spirits and all of children of God (or inheritors of the Kingdom of God) have been born of Him. The titles of spiritual fathers and mothers as used often among believers are quotation out of context from the scriptures especially the letters of Paul and John.

Let us consider the serious implications of these titles on the relationship between leaders who have taken up these titles in the following analogous discussion. If A is the spiritual father of B and B is the spiritual father of C whereas all three are born again believers irrespective of their positions in the Church, what would be the relationship between A or B to Jesus Christ? With an understanding from the scriptures that Jesus Christ is the elder brother of C and every other child of God, will B or A be able to call the Lord Jesus their elder brother? Believer A will have a very precarious relationship with the Lord.

Suppose A calls the Lord Jesus, “father”; then B would be a spiritual grandson and C would be a great grandson.

Isn't it appearing already confusing and contradicting the same scriptures? Please observe the fact that in the scriptures there are no term "grandchildren" of God. The Father never delegated His responsibility as the Father to anyone (the Father, Son and Spirit are one) because He is ever-present (Omnipresent). He relates with with each one of us directly in His Son as His child and calls us by name. We call Him Father and not Grandfather.

Allow for the other view that A may refer to the Heavenly Father as "Father". Will B and C be representing grandchildren and great grandchildren of God? On the other hand if C refers to God as Father what would be the relationship between B or A and the Heavenly Father? None is an equal to the Heavenly Father for He is most revered and Holy of all throughout eternity. Whatever view you take in any state where we have other spiritual fathers apart from the one and ONLY Father of all spirits there is bound to be a scary relational conflict with God.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN SERVANTS AND SONS

Example of Household

Allow me to use an example of a parent and son to drive the point home. As a parent, if your own son was to refer himself as your servant your relationship will be adversely affected. When a child humbles himself to his/her parent in such a manner, the child risks losing his/her identity.

The world finds it easier to relate with servants rather than sons because the former are easily identified through outward appearance while the later require keen observer of inner qualities. Most of us often either do the wrong thing or have some foul mouth (speech) or have wrong thoughts hence we are most likely to be caught on the wrong foot if we are to meet a son. Interacting with servants is a lot easier for us because from the outward look we can tell them from afar and behave accordingly.

Distinguishing Sons from Servants

It is normally easier to relate with a servant than a son since the outward appearance is less demanding than the inward character. This will become more evident if we consider the following distinctions between a son and a servant.

1. A servant is hired for a job while a son is raised from childhood to participate in the work the father begun. A servant enters into relationship with the master as a mature person with an identity separate from the master. The identity of a son originates from his father and in obedience he matures as he participates in the father's empire.
2. A servant does what the master tells him to do while a son does what he 'sees' the father do. A servant works for the master and takes instructions from the master from time to time with very little room for freedom. A son however works with the father hence participating in a fellowship with his father and works jointly with the father.
3. A servant is restricted in the master's house but a son is free. A servant has relatively more boundaries or restrictions in his master's house than a son. A responsible son is restricted by his love and respect for the father and will be led into wherever the father will please within the house.
4. Relationship between a servant and master is established through some legal contract while the relationship between a son and a father is through

blood covenant. Servant-master relationship is established through law while son-father relationship is established by blood.

5. A servant is identified through outward appearance such as clothing while a son is through a likeness of his father or inner character. The identity of a servant is recognized through physical items uniquely prescribed by the master. A son however is identified in his various traits which bears a resemblance of his father.
6. A servant may have the form of the master but a son has a true image of the father. A servant may imitate the master at a heavy cost of being banished for impersonation or being disrespectful – hence can only represent the master in a manner as commanded by the master. A son however naturally or unconsciously imitates the father in many ways because he is the seed of the father and hence in his likeness,
7. Appropriation/display of power is the joy of a servant while the manifestation/radiance of a father's character is the joy of a son. The pride of a servant is in serving the master with his joy derived from being identified with the glory of the master's power. The pride of a son is the fellowship he has with his father and his joy being partaking of the father's character.
8. A servant is identified in rank or authority through the outer decorations (often on the clothing) while a son has no rank because he has no equal. Order in the service of a servant is defined in a hierarchy of

authority which is by law always observed. A son just like a cell in the body has no defined service rank but a living function as charted by the father.

9. In each test servants are tempted to compete while a son always complements. A servant may have his/her interest separate from the master that may take precedence over the interest of the master at certain times – hence s/he may be tempted to compete with others. A son has his lifetime role cut-out to complement all other services in the father's household and will only be tempted to be a servant of all.
10. A servant works for a wage while a son works because of his love for the father and the family. The gain of a servant in the servant-master relationship is in the wages paid at the end of a working period – the greater the pay the more hardworking the servant will be. If a better offer is made by another master a servant will move to the new better pay-master. A son works for the love of the father since what belongs to the father belongs to the son.
11. A servant receives a wage at the end of day's work while a son receives an inheritance. Servants cannot inherit the master's estate but is rewarded with wages and/or gifts. Sons however are inheritors of their father's empire.
12. Property belonging to a servant is distinctly different from that of the master, while any that a son has belongs also to his father.

13. The seed of a father abides in his son but can never be found in his servant
14. A son does not labor to identify himself while a servant must make effort to identify (thru documented evidence) himself/herself
15. A servant's name is often not complete without a title while a son's name given by the Father is sufficient
16. A servant may move from one master to another depending on wages or other factors while a son will always remain a son to his father
17. A servants abides by the law of the master while a son abides by the favor/grace of his father
18. Servant-hood lasts for a while whereas sonship lasts forever
19. A servant sees his labor as a sacrifice that must be rewarded while a son sees his work as a benefit/fruit of joy and rest.
20. A son is at home and rest in the Kingdom but a servant is at workplace where work performance is the rule

RECONCILING SERVANTS TO SONS

After severing a relationship, the only way back is through a covenant. Trust once broken costs much more to restore than building it initially. It is good to maintain original trust that is pure and undefiled – which thinks no evil because it lacks such knowledge. However, we thank God that restoration is possible but with great cost of faith. It is important to understand that both servants and sons are called to serve in God's Kingdom. Thus of main concern in this study is the attitude or mind of the person serving.

Reconciling a Son with a Servant Mind

Adam fell from grace but had room for restoration. Since he now had knowledge, he could only be restored through a covenant. The knowledge of evil and good also makes him a poor candidate to mediate or approach God. That is why he had to wait until the birth of Enoch after Cain killed his only other hope of a 'priest', Abel. That is when men began to call on GOD. The role of man as a priest is not as a child but that of a servant seeking favor for restoration just to be a servant in God's Kingdom. Being a doorkeeper for a day in God's house is better than a thousand elsewhere. The prodigal son asked to be

allowed into his father's household as a servant. Servants in God's Kingdom live a better life than others elsewhere. It is a great honor to be called by God to serve. Rather than live in a back-slidden state in the world, you'd better be a servant in God's household. Servants are well fed, clothed and paid especially those serving God.

The position of a servant is however limited within the household in terms of time and space. Servants do have more knowledge on good and evil as compared to children. This is the reason Jesus said that the children of the world are wiser than the children of the Kingdom. Servants serve with a background of knowledge of evil and will often find themselves victims of these vices, but this will not stop them from serving or receiving their wages. It is important to do what they say but not what they do. They have message from God but have no power to live the message. Prime reason for this irony is they are hired to do some job but have no likeness in character of the author of the message. This is the main difference between sons and servants as is discussed in this book.

Out of this main limitation, servants can fail in several ways. They can easily go off the way to create their own message if opportunity arises. If a lie can be profitable or if another master with better pay comes along, a servant will easily shift alliance. The great master does allow this at times except when such servant was entrusted with some deep mysteries.

Servants can also take possession of their master's property and usurp authority that denies children and especially sons the rights over the master's dominion. This is the big barrier that exists now in the churches – barring God from relating with the children.

A Child Can Grow Up with a Servant Mind

Additionally and most devastating is that servants can influence the children to grow up in the nature and character of a servant rather that of the Father. The attitude of a servant much as it is vital in service, can inhibit the maturity to sonship and the Father's divine nature. Children will grow up seeing their Father as a Master who; hires and fires, condemns and pays wages, too far away in His own unreachable home, etc. This attitude will not enable children to grow up to be sons but to be as servants whose end is not to inherit the Father's Kingdom but be paid wages and spend retirement at 'bliss' elsewhere away from the Master.

Servants live within laws which define their relationship with the Master (Mal.4:4) and may easily impose the same laws meant for them to the children (Gal.2:21; 5:4). Deficiency in likeness with the master requires that a working order be established through law for harmonious relationship between a servant and a master. However, this is not the case with sons. So laws are created within the contract that the Master put in place. Am not inferring that law is wrong - it is right as long as the party concerned wholesomely does not have the mind of the

master. The mind of the Master can only be gotten through genetic likeness – which is acquired through birth and abiding in the Master (2Ch.28:1; Joh.15:4-8). This is a nature a servant lacks since he/she belongs to another family and is only in the Master's household on hire.

'Hypocrisy' is adopted and allowed in servant hood to cover for aspects that belong outside the master's home. That is why servants need a break often to be them-selves. Acting is for a while but living is for life. In the master's home during duty a servant may find it is very stiff and stressing. The anointing can not only break yokes but also break the servant and is therefore bearable for a short time – possible reason for short anointing services. Don't blame them when they struggle to stop sinning – it isn't their nature. 'To overcome sin you must run/flee, strive not to see/think/talk evil' is the common preaching. 'It is impossible to stop sinning and we've got to give room for sin once in a while'. This big lie we have believed for long arises from messages from servants and the mind-set we got from servants (Rom.5:20; 6:14). Sin has no dominion over sons because they live a Spirit led life.

I know as we get deeper, some things will be more difficult and dizzy. Jesus did not promise a broad and easy way but a narrow way and door which can only be walked through by HIS own divine empowerment (Mat.7:14).

As earlier said, sonship is a covenantal relationship between a father and a son as established in a family set-up where the father is the head (Psa.2:7; Act.13:33). With respect to a believer of the Lord Jesus it is the relationship between God and the believer who is made a child of God through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a blood relationship instituted through a covenant made between the Son of God (Jesus Christ) and His Father, the Almighty God. This is the ultimate sonship that guarantees us eternal salvation. Abraham rejoiced to see this 'day' (Joh.8:56) and the angels in heaven long to see what God has kept for those who believe (1Pe.1:12).

Reconciling Servants to the Son

There are two ways of reconciling with a mighty master especially a King whose dominion includes where you are.

1) Servant-hood – Give yourself up to be his servant or slave (Exo.21:5-6). Often one must go with the terms of the master if you must save one-self from other cruel/wicked masters. Wicked masters do not wait for servants but always go out seeking to capture slaves. So do not sit comfortable thinking you are safe from such masters (1Pe.5:8). Good masters do not seek to make people slaves and will therefore not force any into slavery or servanthood. A good master however can buy one that is already a slave of a wicked master to save him/her. Relationship with the son of the

Master is ‘kiss the son’. Thank God there is only one good Master.

2) Sonship – This is the most difficult if not impossible approach. It is not by any merit but only through some awesome favor the master grants. A stranger may not win such a favor but most probably a son of the most faithful servant can after proving very faithful (Phm.1:10). Whoever may want to be accepted as a son in the master’s family must win the favor of the Son beloved to the Master.

Since the latter option is impossible with man, the trends in religious circles are to make peace with God through servant-hood relationship. This is the normal way in the earthly kingdoms of reconciling with a king that is greater in might. That is why submission that is common among men take the nature of fear, dread with little room for pardon. It is a relationship based on and judged by the law. Obedience is demanded at very high precision and rigidity according to sets of law given by the master. Any slight deviation (not deviance) or breaking of one rule is not tolerated but is met with heavy punishment or penalties (Rom.3:20). This is the norm in most sects of religious bodies. Grace is a very strange doctrine hard to practice especially with abounding licentiousness that is characteristic of a lawless society (Gal.5:4).

The calling of sons is much higher than of servants as they are not under the law but under grace (Rom.1:17; 6:15). Sin has no power over sons (Rom.6:14). It is not

just a calling to walk with God but ***A WALK IN GOD*** (Deu.10:12; 11:22; Mic.4:5; Eph.2:10). When we dwell and walk in Him, He will dwell and walk in us (2Co.6:16). Since we have made Him our habitation God makes us His habitation. I know this term sounds new but it's a very vital concept each NT believer needs to embrace. I was taught by none but Him who is my teacher. Sons are called to abide in the only one and begotten Son of God (1Jn.4:9). In Him all children of God born of His will are made sons and accepted as one.

Servants who have yet to receive Jesus Christ need to be reconciled to the fact that they have a very important role in God's Kingdom (though having a mindset of being) but outside the body of Christ. To be at peace with God, servants must be faithful, truthful and seek justice in whatever position God has allowed them and be restored to the calling of the re-birth that many have already believed.

Most servants of God in this era of grace actually left the first love they (first) believed (when they were born again). Many have gone ahead zealously to establish their own righteousness. As they faithfully serve in the organizations God has allowed them (for a time) to serve God's children; it is the Father's will that they enter into sonship to have a part in the eternal inheritance prepared for sons. This is because, as long as they are not children or sons in the Kingdom, they have no part in the body of Jesus Christ and have no eternal inheritance of children

in the Father. Not that they are not children of God but that they drifted away from the faith and hence lived in unbelief. Remember the brother of the prodigal son who was very faithful to his father but lived a miserable life without love for his own brother (many of the servants have such attitude).

Servant-hood is a state of the mind and therefore a bondage limiting the experience of fullness of the joy of salvation. Such attitude denies us a lot of the fullness we have been given in Christ Jesus. The greatest battlefield of believer is in the mind with many strongholds being built over years through religious indoctrinations by church organizations. Before building the foundation of the Son there will have to be a lot of pulling down and uprooting of these strongholds. The rigid observation of laws and regulations are actually indications of these strongholds under servant-hood.

The Transition

Reconciliation of servants to sons is not an easy task. It is actually impossible with man but possible with God. We need to mark the order – not reconciling sons to servants but servants to sons. The divine order is that when reconciling two people at different levels/realms the order is that the lesser is reconciled to the greater. The least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist; implying the least of the children of God is greater that the greatest servant. To be reconciled to God we must be reconciled to His son and therefore sons (Psa.2:12). We

must be willing to humble ourselves as servants of God to be reconciled to (the Son) the sons and ultimately be born children of God. Servants as said earlier were actually called to sonship (to be sons).

The cost is very heavy and demands a shift away from structures or wineskins that are already too familiar to us as handed over to us in the organizations within Christian religion. We must put on Jesus Christ and be transformed by the renewing of our minds through the saving power of the blood of Jesus. Our minds will resist and so will our bodies because it is only the spiritual mind that will understand this divine blueprint.

It will take a while and the Father in His divine plan, mercies and love has allowed for a transitional period. The glory of the latter Church shall be greater that of the former for the Holy Spirit is preparing a glorious bride for the Lord. I believe details about the transition period where servants will be reconciled to sons are yet to be revealed. I would not want to indulge in it lest I sin for I have so far only gotten part of the revelation. My confidence is in the fact that God will always instruct us on what we are to do today and come tomorrow He will raise others to speak instructions for tomorrow. Abraham never had details about the path and place God was leading him to but walk in obedience to the one who controlled the past, present, future and eternity. Our joy should be in abiding always in His body (the Church) irrespective of the circumstances or period. Being in the

Lord Jesus Christ is as good as being in heaven. Outside Jesus Christ we can fall into religious ways or worse cultism.

THE SON'S SEVEN-FOLD ANOINTING

In any divine calling there is an ordination and anointing. In sonship is a unique anointing as distinct from what many of us have been familiar with, though not new as it is the same anointing in the Son. The anointing that ministers in the Church have is the same one in the Lord Jesus, hence all other anointing are just overflows of the one anointing on the Son. The anointing and ordination are one and from the same Holy Spirit. We have had a lot of teaching emphasizing the five-fold ministry of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (1Co.12:28-29; Eph.2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 2Pe.3:2; Rev.18:20). These ministries are very important for the nourishment of the church but have been over-stressed as offices rather than a calling/grace embodied in the life of a believer. Jesus actually did not explicitly present them (apart from apostles) as offices but indirectly as various life callings or operations of the Holy Spirit among believers. It is in the epistles of Paul that we have some direct mention of the offices whose intention was to bring order in the church. The term ordination is related to order and is intended to set order in the Church. Spiritual order is however not identical to the physical or natural order for

spiritual matters are discerned in the Spirit. The natural or carnal man cannot perceive the order of the Spirit.

Offices and Functions

Over-emphasized interpretation of these functions may lead to believers missing the intended teaching of the operations/graces of the Spirit in the Church within them. As mentioned earlier, it is my conviction that the Lord does not refer to us in titles of the offices even when we operate in any specific ministry. God may not be referring to individual member of the body of Jesus as apostle, pastor, prophet, teacher or evangelist. In the new covenant He calls us His children or sons since that is who we are in Christ Jesus. The ministry that each believer is operating in is supposed to be alive or embodied in the believer not as an office or job but as living grace that is not separate from the believer. It is a grace that is supposed to freely flow as propelled by the power of the life of Jesus at work within the believer. It is not an office but a life enabling the offering of living sacrifices.

In the scriptures, the term ‘calling’ is not some naming or appointment to some job as used in common usage but is a divine direction to an ordination, empowerment and anointing. This calling is also predestination for believers of the Lord Jesus towards deeper relationship with the Father in His work. The calling is actually an anointing for/of fellowship in God specially designed to enable a

child of God live and grow within the eternal relationship as a son.

It is in the OT that offices were emphasized since it was an old covenant that was a shadow of the new. God spoke then through His servants (but now He has purposed to speak through His Son). In the OT the main offices were of a prophet, priest and king. Only some few individuals may have operated in all the three simultaneously and included Melchizedek, Abraham, David, Joseph and Daniel. In the NT we come across the five-fold ministry identifying the main offices as five. However, it is my strong conviction that the operations above can all be summarized under one office – that is not actually an office but a life. This one office that envelopes or encompasses all the others is of a son. It is not an office in the same level as the other offices but a divinely pre-ordained life determined entirely by only God the Father. It is the ultimate calling of the apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers etc.

The Anointing of Sons

The main OT and NT offices are actually represented by six offices; prophet, king, apostle, evangelist, teacher and pastor. The office of a priest is represented in the NT by apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors possibly because: in the new dispensation of grace opening salvation to the gentiles needed an outreach of great love, and; most importantly, the priesthood is the entire body of believers. However, God did allow the

ministry of kings being administrative to continue operating till present.

A **crowning office** that may have easily missed out (though the greatest) is of sons. It is the major missing link in church ministries, often forgotten or ignored. The office of sonship is the seventh and perfecting office completing all the others. In fact, true sons operate in all the other offices to an extent that it is not an office but a flow of life from the Lord enabling full administration of God's love and grace. It is a living flow of salvation and eternal life from the Lord Jesus through those who have been ordained to walk eternally in His likeness and character. These are believers who dwell in Christ Jesus being one with Him. You can understand then why asking who will sit on the right hand or the left hand of the Lord Jesus is not easy.

The divine power that sustains this flow of life is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead works in them which are in Christ Jesus. It is the power of the Word that works eternal salvation in us. The life you live as a believer is no longer yours but the Lord's. He has given full assurance that no one can take away the eternal life you have received from Him. The life of Jesus is to be released to others because it is a flow of God's saving grace. Since this salvation is a spiritual re-birth, the most effective ministers are witnesses of its power. Who are the best witnesses of the power of salvation than sons who minister in the same anointing of the Son? This is what

the Father has ordained. Sons are inheritors and are well able to impart the saving power of the Son to everyone who would believe.

In 1Jn.3:1 we read of **the great love that the Father has bestowed** (given) us in Christ Jesus – "that we should be called the sons of God..". Also in Joh.1:12 it is clear that "to all who received Him (Jesus Christ) God gave them **authority** (.. or **power**) to become the sons of God. Other version (KJV) says that **He gave them power** to become the sons of God. This may mean that one may believe and be given the power/enablement but not use the power. That is why sons emerge (are made) from children through exercising the authority or power given to them. A son is a mature child who has learnt to train and continuously practice his authority as a son. The practice of authority is not only for the sake of doing ministering to the Church but also for spiritual benefit of a more intimate relationship with the Father.

The intention of the Eternal Father in the calling is to establish an eternal bond with His children who have a great promise of eternal inheritance in God. The children are predestined to rule or reign with the Son in the eternal Father's Kingdom. Therefore of great essence is not the work or service or ministry but maturity and perfection of the fellowship in the 'Father-Son-sons' relationship. The work is but part of the tools used to mould (train) us to become like Him so that we can perfectly fit into His eternal plan.

That is why the world did not recognize Him and cannot recognize us that believe in Him (1Jn.3:1). The other offices and anointing (Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Priests/Pastors, evangelists and kings) are recognized by the world – both in religious circles and governments. The controversial office or calling or anointing that has not been recognized is that of sons. Even many of the institutionalized churches have a big challenge in explicitly recognizing, honoring and receiving it. There are many sons who minister in the Church but are restricted because such office is yet to be embraced (though it is actually an office higher than that of the servants). Not that the sons should demand for recognition (they know better since they don't seek for approval of men) but that if the Son is not recognized as ever present in the Church sons would rather not be recognized.

Ordination of Servants

The Jews may not have recognized or received Jesus because they were only familiar with servants of God, the prophets, priests and kings but had never known a son. Even the servants had never related well with sons but were familiar with children as a helpless people who only receive instructions from them and had to be cared for like 'sheep'. They knew how to work with one another as servants but not with the Son. That is why they had only one big problem with Jesus – when He claimed that He

was God's Son. They were familiar with the ordination of servants but not sons.

Servants could not fit Him into the office of a prophet, or priest, or teacher, or king since his manner of doing things and speech could not fit into any of them. Though they knew He was a person who had great authority they were uncertain about the source of His authority. They therefore did not recognize His authority as the Son of God because such an office embodied in human flesh had never been known in the established Jewish religious cycles. They therefore rejected Jesus, the chief cornerstone upon which other lively stones were to be built on. It did not take long for this office to be crowded out (pushed) to the periphery of Christian religion.

The current practice of ordination in churches follows the Old Testament (OT) way that was meant for the Old Covenant (OC) but not the New Covenant (NC). It is also similar to the ordinations in other religious circles where key leaders are priests. The ordination of pastors and bishops is therefore equivalent to the ordination of priests in the Old Covenant as it ignores the other key callings and offices in the New Covenant. If church ordination has to be holistic, then it should include ordination of apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists among other callings in the Body of Jesus Christ. I submit that the observed partial ordination of only those in the pastoral calling results from the adopted recognition by the state or government of religious leaders who are simply

priests. The motivation for ordination of pastors and bishops is therefore for the sake of the government who understand that priests in Christian religion are pastors and bishops.

The ordination of pastors is therefore a biased recognition of church leadership that has created a wrong impression that only those with pastoral calling are the priests and key leaders among followers of Jesus Christ. This could be the main tragedy that has led the priesthood in the churches and Christians towards servanthood with the key calling to have the entire body function as one Spirit lacking. Pastors are just part of the priesthood and lack holistic approach when other gifting are neglected. Those in other callings get tempted as per the expectations of the believers, to train and act as pastors (yet they are not). When a minister functions in a role outside the grace, such a person is bound to face many challenges and frustrations. The frustrated ministers and leaders in churches are pushed by expectations of the ones they lead to act outside grace and into stressful work that adds sorrow rather than joy. Many evangelists, teachers, prophets, apostles, etc. have operated as pastors without the pastoral grace out of expediency. Many pastors have ministered in the apostolic, prophetic and teaching offices without the grace and this has made the ministries burdensome and stressful. Many in the process have operated in the intellectual realm or in the flesh with less rest and peace. In the process, the Church has yet to witness of the fullness of Jesus Christ.

I am certain that many would feel that this whole criticism does not give solution. The solution is to accept that the Lord is in charge and has always been watching because we simply have not believed that He is ever present to guide us into all truth. In the process of "giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" by appointing leaders to represent us in the name of pastors, let us acknowledge that these representatives are simply part of the leadership. The Church would be best served and represented by a team of leaders who should represent the various callings – especially inclusive of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. A balanced approach in church leadership is critically needed for every member of the body to mature. All these leaders must be sons to ensure we are wholesomely led of the Spirit. First and foremost, a prophet, apostle, pastor/bishop, evangelist, teacher, etc. must be a son in God's Kingdom – since sonship is eternal calling and ordination.

Children of God are recognized and accepted since they are helpless (powerless) and do not know how to exercise authority – hence not so much a threat to worldly powers. It is in the interest of myopic servants to have children not growing up to be sons. Sons are therefore not recognized or accepted because their order is misunderstood by the rulers of the world (yet they are the ultimate solution to the problems of the world). Sons have therefore not learnt to identify their calling as sons because their calling is a mystery that has been concealed not only in the Old

Testament but also in the New Testament awaiting the revelation of the Father through His Son. The maturity of the Church is primarily hidden in the identity and manifestation of the sons in the Son. All children of God shall find positions and authoritative identity in the sons since each one of them has an eternal portion in the one Body of Jesus Christ. Each one member of the body is ordained to uniquely manifest the divine life of the Lord Jesus. In the divine unity of sons in one Son, children perfectly complement in a divine order of the eternal high priesthood of Jesus Christ. That is why the creation is awaiting the revelation of sons of God. All gates of hell cannot stand against this power of God's word that has decreed eternal life and sonship to each one that will believe (Mat.16:18). Anyone who is in Christ Jesus is a new creation and **has eternal life, having been created in Jesus a child of God with eternal life already within. These children have been ordained to serve in the Church as sons.**

SON-LEADERSHIP

Leadership

Leadership is critical function in any organization and will greatly determine its success. Core values, vision, mission and objectives are defined and instituted by the managers and owners who are also the leaders.

When the vision is not clear to the leadership the organization cannot live long and the mission will not be clear. When the mission is not well defined the plans and strategies are bound to weak since the objectives/goals will either be too easy to achieve or not feasible at all.

So far we have heard about servant leadership in corporate training but very little is known about son leadership. Servant leadership has been embraced as advocating strong leadership character that enables peak performance and efficient achievement of the goals of an organization. It is supposed to be very sacrificial with high moral values being upheld by the leaders.

Son leadership can best be understood in the context of a family business or a body that is not just an organization but an organism (or family). The latter is what the Church is and that is why in principle, leadership in the Church

must be approached from a sonship perspective (son-leadership) rather than servant-leadership.

God ordained that the Church should run/operate as an organism because it is actually alive not as a corporate body created by law but by God's own breath and Spirit. This is very vital for any leader in the Church to recognize. The life of the Church is in the Blood of Jesus Christ and this blood flows perpetually in the body of Jesus Christ. Each member of the body is a child/son of God hence members of the eternal Royal Family. Servant-leadership is effective in corporate institutions but would fall short of the grace when applied to church ministry as it applies human effort. Son-leadership is therefore the Father's ordained grace operation in church ministry.

The subject of son-leadership can be viewed as encompassing all that has been shared in this book though there is much room for more discussion/contribution by others.

Nature of Son-Leadership

The uniqueness of son-leadership can be summarized in nature or characteristics as follows. S-O-N-L-E-A-D-E-R-S-H-I-P

Spirit led – the leaders are led by **the Holy Spirit** of God since He represents the Lord here on earth

Obedience – obedience to the Heavenly Father to believe in the Son

Newness of life – service rendered is in a new eternal life created in Christ Jesus

Love – the love of God that has been shed abroad in our lives enables us to minister the same love to others. First to God then members of the body and others

Eternal – the service is part of the eternal High priesthood with the vision, mission and objectives being Eternal Life but ultimately achievable

Acceptance – we must accept all that the Father brings to us for ministration recognizing that each one has different grace. Accept one another in the Lord

Discipleship – discipleship model is to be adopted since service is through example and must be continuous as a discipline

Endurance – we must be willing to endure all things in patience and perseverance to produce excellent results as will be approved of the Father

Reward – reward should be the last concern because the promise of the Father is the greatest reward already granted at the beginning of our service. We are a reward to mankind and entire creation (as part of the body of Jesus Christ) – we are already of great value.

Son – the Son leads sons. Any leadership not led/subject to the Son is not son-leadership. Sons must dwell/abide in the Son

Holiness – son leaders are holy since they serve a holy priesthood and are created in the likeness of God who is Holy. Be ye holy even as your Father is Holy

Integrity – son-leaders hold very high moral values above the law and should be beyond spiritual reproach

Power and authority – these leaders are authorized and empowered with much knowledge and wisdom by the Father to represent Him on earth. It would be unwise to ignore instructions from a son – the consequences can be dire

Characteristics of son-leaders are simply in the characteristics of sons which are identified in the Father. When you know the Son you know the Father and hence should know the sons (the sons are in the Son). Sons are like the Son. When sons lead (in son-leadership) everything will be in harmony and the creation will find rest and joy.

The law could not give the life that we now have in Christ Jesus apart from pointing out our great inability to please God. The law cannot be compared with what has been offered in God's Love to the saints. The offer to the Church is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22, 23) being:

Love – true and eternal love is in Christ Jesus. God is Love and Jesus was the Love of God given as a gift to mankind

Joy – God has promised a life full of joy in Christ Jesus

Peace – there is great peace deeper than what our minds can comprehend in them that are led by the Lord

Longsuffering – believers are granted much grace to enable them endure long even in suffering. The Father trains us through suffering so that we can effectively minister not just here on earth as witnesses of faithfulness but also in the heavens to come as wise rulers and judges

Gentleness – there are many who will come to the knowledge of truth as children who must be nurtured and loved. We must be gentle to the children of God to enable them build confidence in their relationship with the Father. God is Jealous about His children

Goodness – God's love is manifest in all goodness. The Gospel is good news and thus we must serve. The prophesy of the Word in this dispensation of grace is about God's goodness

Faith – the spiritual connection is through faith. Without God's faith it is impossible to please God. Communion with God is based on faith and sons inherit and serve through faith

Meekness – in meekness we recognize our inability outside Christ Jesus. He is the one that works in us both to will and to do. The Lord abhors arrogance and hence we maintain the fellowship of God's love through much meekness. Through meekness, we will also serve as examples to the proud and arrogant – sons inherit and rule the earth in meekness

Temperance – sons are called to be balanced and are divinely enabled to effectively minister to every member of the body and the creation. They are sober and rich in grace because they serve simultaneously as priests, prophets, apostles, teachers, evangelists, pastors and kings.

When leaders in the church embrace son-leadership there will be an awakening in the entire Church. There will also be a manifestation of the manifold greatness of the calling of the believers to direct the earth towards a true relationship with the Creator. Sons are one in the Son and work for the good of the whole creation.

WHY GRACE IN SONS IS GREATEST CHALLENGE TO LEADERS

Grace is a Higher Standard

Leadership that abides in the grace demands more sacrifice in role modeling through a living example. It means showing the way by going ahead and patiently waiting on others to appreciate or understand that it is the right way. Such a leader must exercise much love and perseverance towards the group s/he leads. The leader must live by grace and in God's love allow others to follow according to grace. Grace must grow through ministering of the same grace. Not by might of the natural realm nor by power outside of Christ Jesus but by the Spirit of God.

Grace may seem to demand more from a leader because the feats a leader in the Church does is too hard for the natural man. Leaders in the Church are empowered by the Holy Ghost to do greater things than what Jesus did in the scriptures. This is because the promise of the Lord is that the believers will do greater things. The deeds of the Church are not just confined to miracles and healing but above all righteous and holy living. The natural man is easily moved and mesmerized by miracles because that is

the manifestation in the natural realm. What higher standard than holiness exists? That is what grace implies.

Grace is Easily Abused

The biggest real obstacle facing leaders in the church is the common and frequent behavior of members of the church to abuse grace. The nature of grace is that it manifests in weakness or mortal limitation when one acknowledges the Lord and fully submits to God. Grace varies from individual to individual and from one level of responsibility or authority to another. It is therefore easy for one to give the excuse of grace when s/he fails. Any weakness, bondage, failure or sin can be blamed on insufficient grace. How can we differentiate the act of real grace from that of negligence? It is not as easy because it is spiritually discerned though its fruit is evident with time.

When one gets acquitted with the works of grace the temptation of familiarity that leads to disrespect grows with bad results of poor relationship with God. That is how a very humble/meek person can suddenly be puffed up with great pride. Believers can therefore easily take the grace for granted and shift from faith to either a life of indifference or superstition. When a believer attributes his/her success to luck it could be indicative of a person who has shifted from faith in the Lord to some supernatural predestination of some religious belief of any god/s. Christian faith in that view is no different from other faiths hence exposure to idolatry.

If convinced about the grace of God the other tendency will be a life of negligence where little or no effort is made to build a healthy relationship with the Lord. Such persons will therefore find himself/herself often too busy and excited in other activities of the flesh with little or no time for spiritual activities. Thus wherever need arises in the church for a volunteer, very few will be available. Leaders will therefore get tempted to employ religious methods of pushing members to volunteer. The time proven religious techniques of 'coercing' believers to act or obey lies within religious laws and ordinances. This implies the leaders will revert to law and regulations.

To appreciate the tendency to turn to the law, consider the most 'successful' congregations and they are likely positively related to strict adherence to well-articulated rules and regulations. To have a program, project or activity setting up of; formal institutions, strict planning, regulations, and precise execution of the plan is essential. After all, to get mortal people with diverse interests and abilities to work together for a common goal that is invisible and eternal is impossible unless they are made to abide in a strong religious oath. They can only work as one team for a very short while and will only miraculously be one in mind. How can they therefore be united? Only through a law with dire consequences for those who don't abide by the law. To make the law realistic and achievable it has to be confined to a time or place or person or circumstances. That is why creation of one law will always lead to other ordinances or

regulations/rules. To enforce a law, other laws and orders will be created.

Human order is therefore best maintained or sustained in and through laws. Laws are effective in governing the natural man who is prone to act against the interest of others. Thus when people have no ability to discern spiritual order, they resort to human order that is often poorer than the natural order. The natural systems have pure natural systems and human systems. Among the pure natural systems are the biological or ecological systems with small units being organisms, whereas, the examples of human systems are; political, economic and social organizations. One is a system of organisms while the other is a system by organisms. One is a creation of natural laws while the other is a creation of human laws. The order of the later is often poorer than that of the former.

SONS AND THE TREE OF LIFE

Adam and the Tree of Life in Eden

One of the greatest revelations that follow the belief that we are called to be sons in Christ Jesus concerns the position of a believer with respect to the Tree of Life. If you have read the previous chapters and you are yet yearning more, this will be part of the crowning messages that will spur you to seek more from the Lord Jesus Christ. I am certain you will find great joy and peace in the Lord henceforth.

God created Adam and placed him in the middle of the Garden of Eden as a gardener. The garden and all within it plus the whole creation belonged to God. Hence Adam was just a steward entrusted with the responsibility of managing or caring for the garden. This was a great responsibility and special position in God that we will come to comprehend later in this chapter. We need to be reminded that man is a recent creation coming after the earth, plant life, marine life, birds and wildlife or animals. The earth as said before is likely some billions of years old yet Adam was likely created just less than 7,000 years.

The garden was a deliberate planting of species of plants possibly with animals within it. Adam was instructed not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. He was warned that he would die if he violated God's instruction. However, he was permitted to eat of every other tree in the garden.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

It is important to note that at the center of the garden were two trees, one was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the other was the tree of life (Gen.2:9). Adam was warned not to eat of the first tree but the Lord was silent about the tree of life. In fact, Eve was aware about the instruction but possibly could not distinguish the two because they were both at the middle of the garden. When conversing with the serpent, she was prodded and asked if God actually warned them not to eat of the trees in the garden. She replied that they were not only refused to eat of the tree at the middle of the garden but not to even look or admire – which was not true. Adam must have given Eve a very stern warning not to dare even admire or come close to the tree at the middle of the garden.

The serpent however succeeded in making her pick and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Her eyes were opened and she went on to give Adam who also partook of it and their eyes were opened. This is confirmed when God walked in the garden and found them hiding because of the knowledge that they were naked. Adam was asked if he ate of the tree of knowledge

of good and evil and he answered with an affirmative blame on Eve.

The knowledge of good and evil is an enlightenment of not only the mind but also the eyes that causes one to distinguish good and evil. It is an ability of discerning evil and good like God that accompanies great responsibility of making perfect decisions. God's veil of holiness and seeing all as pure is removed and in its place is the discovery of disobedience, nakedness, shame, guilt and condemnation. God confirmed that Adam has now become like God in as far as the knowledge of good and evil is concerned.

Partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil implies engaging the mind in understanding of evil. An exposure to analyzing evil and good is defilement of the mind and soul. God did not intend to have Adam engage his mind in discussion or consideration of evil as this would pollute him and hence shift him away from the holy state he was created to dwell in. That is why the temptation to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a tragic risk to his relationship with God. Would we fall into the same trap? We may answer in the negative, "No never! Why would I fall for such a trap?" Many of us would be so assertive as if we would be better.

Did you ever know that we have been often engaged in partaking of the same tree of knowledge of good and evil passively? You may ask how? Consider any meditation you may indulge in to avoid any possible legal litigation.

Whenever we are confronted by a legal issue we have to weigh the possibilities of us being wrong or evil. It is scary to be caught on the wrong side of the law. To know the law is considered as vital wisdom in our activities. This could have been the state of kings, prophets and priest in the Old Covenant. They had great responsibility to ensure that subjects of a nation or kingdom operated within the laws of God and of the land.

How would you keep the law unless you have the understanding or knowledge of good and evil or wrong? Good administrators, judges, leaders, kings, prophets and priests are those who have good understanding of the law. Using the example of the 10 commandments (Exo.20:3-17), it is interesting that most of them were stated in the negative, "Thou shall not…". It was instructive of what we are not to do as with most laws. It is therefore given to one who is presumed to know the evil or wrong act.

1. Thou shall have no other gods before me
2. Thou shall not make any graven image. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them …
3. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord the in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy
5. Honor thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shall not kill
7. Thou shall not commit adultery
8. Thou shall not steal
9. Thou shall not bear false witness
10. Thou shall not covet

Out of the ten commandments (Torah), eight (8) directly command the children of God not to commit a certain sin - "Thou shall not …". The other two (2) about keeping the Sabbath and honoring parents refer to sin indirectly; but still infers the knowledge of sin. The reason for the explicit reference to sin results from the persons addressed being law breakers.

Lawlessness and sin was imputed in man and the entire human race when Adam first disobeyed the one and only commandment, "thou shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil". Disobedience to any commandment of God attracted a penalty – the penalty being very harsh. The penalty for sin is simply death – for the wages of sin is death. Sin in the singular was sufficient to have one condemned to death. Since men were condemned from Adam's fall, all men are already counted as dead. The spiritual death was simply excommunication from God's presence. The relationship of spiritual life in a special communion with God was severed by sin.

God temporarily restored the relationship through accepting the life of sacred animals that He ordained on behalf of man subject to them fulfilling specific instructions. The sacrifices to be offered for sin and the procedures to be followed in offering them were explicitly given by God. Disobedience to the Torah (10 commandments) was therefore not just penalized by spiritual death but also physical casting away from the

society or through physical death penalty to avoid defiling the community of God's children.

The law was therefore given to help temporarily alleviate the consequences of losing communion with God. The blood of animals offered to reconcile man to God could not wipe away sin but only covered sin. Man was still a sinner in nature, and hence a "sinner saved by grace" as the salvation was imputed through the blood of animals by God. This means that grace and faith worked out the salvation of man in the Old Testament just as in the New Covenant. Except that in the OT the blood (of animals) offered by priests only covered sin while in the New Covenant the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses and wipes away sin.

With the knowledge of sin in the law comes an internalization of sin in the mind and the heart – the heart of man is desperately wicked. The wickedness of the heart of man is stirred by the law through the knowledge of sin. Whenever we interrogate ourselves (soul searching) if we have sinned through use of the law we expose ourselves to sin – sin is subtle and creeps in through speech and thoughts. The knowledge of the law therefore strengthens sin and therefore death. This means that as we get engrossed in being experts of the law we give more room for sin to enter our minds and hearts and finally usher in death. That is what exactly happened in Adam.

A testimony is given by one pastor who visited some pastoral community some decades ago who was embarrassed to be among some members of that community while drawing water for the animals in a communal well. The men had to help the women in the activity since the flock of livestock was large. The pastor was astonished and asked one of the elder how they could work in such mix where some were hardly wearing sufficient clothing. The reply he got was equally surprising and astounding. He was told to the face that the embarrassment he had was only in his mind but not in the mind of the community as the dressing was common among the poor folks. The pastor had so much knowledge of sin that he may have been the only one who saw impurity around him. Tit.1:15 put it well, "Unto the pure all things are pure but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled". There are numerous environments where such incidences exist. Another example is what we have in our institutions of higher learning. I have been working among the youth in Universities for over 40 years as a preacher and lecturer and one issue that one has to contend with are contentious problems of clothing and mannerism that would disturb conservative people especially the older generation.

Knowledge of Good and Evil Matures Servants

To excel in the knowledge of law and thus administrate justice and truth on earth we have little choice but to partake of the knowledge of good and evil. Lawyers or judges or advocates are people with expertise of the law and must avail themselves to go through the pain and at times horror of hearing and understanding the nature of offenses that victims and offenders have to narrate in the process of administering justice. Just as some counselors and psychologists fall victim of the counseling process, so do lawyers. In the process of gaining great understanding of the law they also acquire skill and knowledge in covering offenders and denying the victims justice. What is justice? What is truth? Am sure there are multitudes of authors with expertise in the law that have discussed this extensively. It suffices here to only say that servants in God's Kingdom (a Kingdom that includes all that we see and do not see) are effective in administrating the law through the knowledge of good and evil.

The law is therefore necessary to ensure order and deal with the lawbreakers for the general good of the society. Effective operation of law enforcers is achieved through good understanding of the law and hence knowledge of good and evil. Good officers in the legal system are sharpened in the law. Servants in state institutions must therefore be more familiar to the laws to be effective. That is why we are commanded to pray for those in authority who serve in public or government institutions.

In the process of being better equipped to serve the community they get exposed to the knowledge of good and evil and hence risk of being manipulators of truth and justice. A lot of injustice is often perpetrated by law enforcers and legal officers who use their positions to achieve selfish interest especially if the system has less independent oversight body.

This is also true in the religious societies. Servants of God are prone to sin while in the process of administering God's law because of exposure to the knowledge of good and evil. According to 1Tim.1:9-10 "the law is made for the lawless and not for the righteous man but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy an profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine". The law is made for those who are sharpened in evil and not for those whose hearts seek righteousness.

The law therefore sharpens the servants on how to administer justice but may not change the nature of servants who are but mortal. The law therefore in itself cannot transform the natural man to live righteous because of sin that is inherent in man. As a matter of fact, the law often stirs the dormant sin within and makes it active. There is need for researchers (who would find it within their domain) to find out if there is a correlation

between laws and offenses (sin); could there be a positive relationship between number of offenses and number of laws and regulations in a community or nation? I am aware of schools that had very few rules ending with very few offences and more disciplined students/pupils compared to schools that had more rules. This could be something worth discussing in other forums.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained for life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" – Rom.7:7-11

The law is spiritual, holy, just and good but the knowledge of evil that accompanies the understanding of the law stirs up the sinful nature already in the carnal man causes man to sin. Sin therefore gets strength in the law as rightly said by Paul;

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" 1Co.15:56

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is essential to mature servants. Much as the knowledge of good and evil

equips or aids servants to administrate the law, the law actually enhances sin in man. Whenever we make effort to run away from sin through use of the law, we find ourselves more captive to sin. Eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil therefore led to captivity of man into sin and death; hence a choice to be a servant. The lineage of man as sons of God ceased when Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The choice not to eat of the tree could be interpreted as a choice to be children and sons of God.

Are we therefore not guilty of the same sin that Adam committed? You may now agree that we are too engaged to see the futility of the religious solutions we so much trust to restore and sustain our relationship with God. Engagement in matters of the law often therefore can defile our mind and conscience such that what could be pure can easily be condemned as impure. We are warned not to judge others, yet to understand the law including the 10 commandments we have to interrogate illegal or sinful action. So what solution is given to avoid thinking or meditating sin in our mind and heart? The solution is given as the tree of life as we shall consider herein.

The Tree of Life is Essential to Mature the Sons

Why would the Creator have both trees (tree of life and tree of the knowledge of good and evil) in the middle of the garden? We have no explanation given. The garden belonged to God and not to Adam and therefore He had good reason. I believe however that the Lord God may

have ultimately wanted Adam to partake of the tree of life sometime in the future. This is informed by the fact that according to Gen.3:22, if man had the opportunity to partake of the tree of life he would live forever. We may also wrongly conclude that this has not yet happened. It has actually happened. Men have been given an opportunity to partake of the tree of life in Jesus Christ according to Rev.2:7; 22:14.

Adam however, did not partake of the tree of life and that is why the Creator took the next step of banishing Adam and Eve from the garden. They were chased out of the garden to ensure they don't get any chance of eating from the tree of life lest they live forever like the Creator (Gen.3:22-24). The scriptures actually spoke in this manner. Literally, this implied that if Adam and Eve were to eat of the tree of life they would live forever but in a state of disobedience. This may lead to eternal conflict with God with untold consequences. God banished man from eating of the tree of life for the good of mankind so that they may get some chance to be reconciled back to God. God placed cherubims and "flaming sword which turned every way, to keep them way of the tree of life" (Gen.3:24). The Word of God that is sharper than any two-edged sword has the ability of keeping man away from "the way of the tree of life". For this reason, unless we are led by the Lord through his revelation we will never comprehend the way of the tree of life.

Why would God's ultimate plan in the salvation of man be in the partaking of the tree of life? Eternal life in the salvation plan was embodied in the tree of life. The gift of eternal life was granted in the tree of life. Jesus spoke of the tree in the parable of the true vine in Joh.15:1-11. Jesus refers to himself as the true vine and the Father as the husbandman or gardener. This implies that he is the tree that is in the Father's garden with God Himself as the gardener. The role that would have been played by Adam is now taken over by God Himself. The main tree in the Father's garden is Jesus Christ. Where are we? We who believe in Jesus are the branches. We are at the center of the Father's garden and precisely branches of the tree in the middle of the garden. What greater privilege can we ever have in the entire God's Kingdom than this? If this cannot loudly pronounce our identity in God, I do not know what else we seek? If this cannot wake us up then nothing else can.

We who have believed in Jesus Christ are already partakers of the tree of life. We are already overcomers as declared in Rom.8:37 – "in all these things we are more than conquerors through (in) him that loved us". The Word speaks and only those whose inner ears can hear and believe. Servants are looking forward to partake of the tree of life while sons are already partaking of the tree of life. The sweetness of the tree of life cannot be compared to that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One is as sweet as honey while the other is as bitter as the waters of Marah (Exo.15:23). The bitter water

prophetically is akin to a curse administered by a priest (Num.5:18). Knowledge of good and evil is equivalent to a mix of good and evil that definitely cannot be sweet but bitter or sour; for out of the same fountain you cannot have both sweet and bitter water (Jas.3:11). As God gave Moses a tree to cast into the waters of Marah so as to make them sweet, so must we accept to partake of the tree of life to have the joy of eternal live (Exo.15:25).

Servants therefore believe in salvation and eternal life to come in the future while sons' salvation and eternal life has already begun. The great "I AM" is also Emmanuel – God with us and in us.

The Tree of Life in Heaven

The other scripture that speaks of the tree of life is in Pro.3:18; 11:30 and Rev.2:7; 22:2,14. In Rev.22:1,2 the pure river of water of life flow out of the throne of God and the Lamb in Heaven with the Tree of Life on both sides of the river. The tree of life yields 12 kinds of fruit every month. The leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations. So the same tree of life that is at Genesis (the beginning of the creation of man) that is also the 1st book of the Bible is at the end of the last book (Revelation). It is at the beginning of the creation and fall of Adam, and; at the end that culminates the salvation of man. The tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev.2:7).

Interestingly, the promise to those who will be obedient to God's Word and shall overcome is the opportunity to

partake/eat of the tree of life (Rev.2:7;22:14). This means that the same opportunity that Adam was denied is now granted to those who will believe and obey the Lord. It is an opportunity to live forever and hence take up the nature of God that is eternal life.

Wisdom, understanding, the fruit of righteousness and a wholesome tongue is a tree of life (Pro.3:8; 11:30; 15:4)

Jesus Christ - The Tree of Life

As one reflects on the scriptures and the word that Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches, we are in essence partaking of Him. We are partakers of eternal life in Him as his branches and will yield His fruit in season and out of season. This gives weight to the scripture that invites all to the great supper of the Lord that must be filled. What greater joy and celebration than partaking of the eternal life of Jesus Christ. As branches of the true vine, we are partakers of this great supper that comes before midnight and the dawn of another day. Only challenge is our believing.

Believing in the calling as sons of God has a great challenge of acceptance because of the prominence of servant ministry in Church history. Many have stumbled on it with many perceiving it to be highly theoretical than practical, yet that is what faith is. Since we demand to see it working before we believe, we end up never bearing witness to the functioning of the new wineskin of sons in the Son. Paul very well spoke of many of us when he wrote prophetically in Rom.9:32 that "*Wherefore?*

Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone". Peter also agreed in 1Pe.2:8 that "..*a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed*".

1Pet.2:7 - *"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner*"

May we not be among those who stumble but believe in the leading of the Lord through revelation of Father in the Son by the Holy Ghost! Shalom!

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Appendix on Abbreviations of Books in the Bible

Gen – Genesis	Mic – Micah	Col – Colossians
Exo – Exodus	Mal – Malachi	1Ti – 1Timothy
Lev – Leviticus	Mat – Matthew	2Ti – 2Timothy
Num – Numbers	Mar – Mark	Tit – Titus
Deu – Deutronomy	Luk – Luke	Phm – Philemon
Jdg – Judges	Joh – John	Heb – Hebrew
2Ch – 2Chronicles	Act – Acts	Jas – James
Psa – Psalm	Rom – Romans	1Pe – 1Peter
Pro – Prov	1Co – 1Corinthians	2Pe – 2Peter
Isa – Isaiah	2Co – 2Corinthians	1Jn – 1John
Dan – Daniel	Gal – Galatians	Rev – Revelation
Hos – Hosea	Eph – Ephesians	