



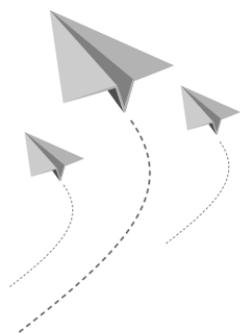
The **3** MUST-DO'S in Life

Manual for Seekers
of the Truth

Funmilola Sonubi

THE 3 MUST-DOS IN LIFE

**A Manual for Seekers
of the Truth**



Funmilola Sonubi

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Unless otherwise specified, all Bible quotations in English are from the King James Version (NKJV 1987).

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ENDORSEMENTS

The 3 Must-Dos in life clearly offers a path of hope, direction, transformation and radical change. Living life with eternity in mind is a worthy mandate. Life is only worth living if it is lived in Christ Who grants us the right mindset, attitude and passion for God, self and others.

Funlola is on a mission to portray the undiluted truth about life. She combines both her experience and expertise to highlight three important relationships that one can easily undermine. Whether you are a believer or a seeker, young in faith or mature in faith, this timely book is for you! It will give you deep insight into living a life of meaning.

Dr Grace Sola-Oludoyi

Wife of the Special Assistant to the General Overseer (SATGO)
RCCG, Europe Mainland Region 3

This important book of The 3 Must-Dos in life can become a pivotal point for your future and your lasting influence.

Funmilola calls our attention to what matters most in life, what we must embrace and properly place our trust in. It's a must-read book for all.

Pastor Fadeke Chinedu

The Secretary to Mummy G.O., Pastor (Mrs) Folu Adeboye,
Wife of the General Overseer of RCCG

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this book to the Triune God and to everyone who has contributed immensely to my life until now, and to everyone who may do so in the years to come.

My prayer is that through this book we will all become much more self-aware of where our trust is placed. May we not just trust in our strength in this journey of life, so that the 3 Must-Dos will be a gracious delight for us and not a daunting task.

The Lord enabled me to put all my favourite Bible verses together in a book to commemorate my 40th birthday. This 50th birthday, I thank You Lord Jesus for helping me to complete this book. I feel fulfilled and full of gratitude! May you be blessed as you read in Jesus name amen.

FOREWORD

‘The 3 Must-Dos in Life’ is a great read that covers the foundational truths of the Christian faith.

It is an invaluable resource, insightful, concise in its delivery and yet brimming with nuggets of wisdom. It offers a compelling exploration of the word – trust; what it means to trust and how we must make the choice to trust. Funlola suggests that we have the power to choose to trust and believe.

I am drawn to meaningful quotes and one of my favourite quotes from the book is: “One of the greatest gifts God gave us is the capacity to trust”. The questions at the end of each chapter help readers consolidate their thoughts and reinforce their understanding.

Funlola merges her scientific knowledge and background, her professional experience as a counsellor, in-depth knowledge of the word of God and her Christian journey. The result is this powerful work for which one reading will not suffice.

I highly recommend ‘The 3 Must-Dos in Life’.

Pastor Sola Irukwu

RCCG Jesus House London

INTRODUCTION

Each of us finds ourselves on this planet by no choice of our own. Like everyone else, we became participants and actors in our world. We manifest ourselves through our behaviours and choices. Each of us reflects and makes decisions based on our chosen principles and values. Some of us protest through the way we live out our life.

It is obvious that nothing happens in isolation. No one can be neutral. We have all been influenced by associations or through relationships. These influences have inevitably left us with controversies in our hearts, but life goes on. Don't you wish we had a small book, an A-Z of clear instructions of the things that we are expected to achieve on Planet Earth, regardless of our circumstances?

The aim of this book is to explore the three most important things we are meant to do in this world and to help anyone like me who is struggling to better understand some important controversial questions about our humanity.

This book starts with the different excuses used that prevent us from achieving our purpose because we fail to pay attention to the 3 Must-Dos in Life. How did we become the way we are? Why do we ignore the fundamental manual of dos and don'ts?

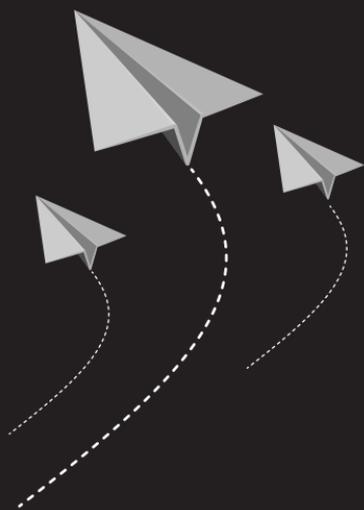
We have explored many ways to convince those who are seeking for the truth: the confused, the discouraged, unbelievers, people without faith, the religious, non-Christians and Christians. We hope that they will be encouraged to choose to do the 3 must-dos.

We seem to have trust issues unless we can see signs, but it is evident that we have been given the freedom and the responsibility to choose. We are created for a purpose and we must do what is needful in order to make meaning of our creation. This book sets out to create awareness about the needful 3 must-dos in life that will inherently make our living a purposeful and fulfilling one.

All of us gradually become more aware of our human struggles in doing the must-dos in life, and our trust issues that play out clearly through our choices. But then, are you ready to be challenged?

Please note that this book may have some spiritual undertones but the opinions, the principles, the challenges and values are intended to enable us to question our perspectives and attitudes towards life's must-dos. If you want to skim read through the book, stick to reading the main texts. But if you are inquisitive and interested in more in-depth insights, then please read the digging deep and the italics alongside.

CHAPTER 1



OUR EXCUSES

A man started to walk on a rope tied between two tall towers. He was slowly walking whilst he tried to balance with his son sitting on his shoulders. Everyone from the ground watched him with bated breath. He finally reached the second tower, and everyone clapped, whistled and cheered. He asked the crowd if they thought that he could walk back on the same rope to the other tower and they shouted in one voice, 'Yes, you can!' 'Are you sure you trust me?' he asked. 'Yes, we can even take a bet!' 'Ok, is anyone of you prepared to sit on my shoulder and I will take him or her to the other side?' No one volunteered to sit on his shoulder.

What do you think is their excuse? ***It looks like Belief is one thing, Trust is another!***

The Starting Point

Let us consider the above story and look at some barriers that prevent us from believing and trusting when we need to make choices. These must be established before observing the must-dos. Knowledge and understanding are the power behind our actions and decisions, which thereby clarify where our faith lies.

Every perspective is a choice, not the truth. The truth is sometimes bitter, especially biblical truths (the commandments of God), which can be rejected from many angles; but that does not change them from being the absolute truth as originally intended.

This book is not the first book that will illustrate the must-dos in life, but we find excuses to wriggle our way out, like the crowd in the story above. But why?

Excuse 1:1 I do not trust anyone or anything

When it comes to trust, there is a need for total surrender, as we notice from the above analogy. Is this where our real issue is as human beings? We struggle to surrender our control because our natural responses from our nervous system have a primary goal - to optimise our survival actions and defence.

This optimal behaviour started as a spermatozoon. The probability of you being born was extremely low, in fact it was a miracle, considering the billions of spermatozoa that you had to out-swim. Your neurobiological system has since then been endowed with a powerful set of intelligent survival mechanisms. Could this be the reason why the first man, Adam, did not trust God enough, despite God visiting and relating with him in the cool of the day, every day? Not to trust is a human protection reflexive adaptation, because our hard-wired system is built to react to every threat response.

Excuse 1:2 That is the way I am

There are biological evidences which show that I am created the way I am because I inherited my genes from my parents. Many have argued that we are predetermined (God's plan) from above, which means that we are not in

control, so we cannot help the situations of our state of being; we inherited it from Adam: “That is how I’m made. It is not my fault!” Yes, but not entirely, because there is also the understanding that we are predetermined (as a result of sin and its consequences) from below, because we are created from the soil. Could this be the reason why we struggle as created beings?

The very best gift we have received is the power to make choices

As earthly creatures, we manifest through some decisions that rest with us and only us. We have an enormous amount of control. It’s not all dependent on God or on nature. The very best gift we have received is the power to make choices. Which means that you cannot blame God at any time or blame anyone or anything else for your outcomes.

Excuse 1:3 I am only human, so why bother!

It is dignifying to believe the biblical report that we received the breath of God and became a living soul as a human being, and as a result, we share some characteristics with God. Unlike other creatures, we have the spiritual capacity to connect and relate with God, like Adam did.

The breath and the spirit of God in every one of us gives us the capacity to seek God (there is no excuse). But our Adamic nature makes a lot of us choose wrongly. Adam

chose to believe Satan, which damaged his relationship with God because of his disobedience, and as a result sin entered our world.

The spirit of God in us is awakened by Jesus when we accept Him, and His Holy Spirit comes to reside in us and gives us the connectivity, so we are not just human but we become ‘born again’, adopted children of God. But when we have our needs met, we tend to become attached to life. We are never in touch with the need for God. That is dangerous.

If you have refused to activate your spiritual capacity, you have simply relegated yourself to the level of ‘non-human living things’ that only possess a body and a soul. Let Jesus awaken your spirit today, tomorrow may be late! [see the prayer of salvation at the end of this book, please.]

Excuse 1:4 I am not a believer, I do not have any faith

We are all believers in one thing or the other. Even atheists believe, as they believe that there is no God; they believe that there is not enough evidence to prove that God exists. It is still a belief. The Bible opens with “In the beginning, God...” This tells me that we are not meant to investigate His existence, we are simply to choose to accept Him and then we will experience Him. There is suppression of evidences about God and wrestling going on in our mind that we are not conscious of.

The human side of us makes us vulnerable to faults, weaknesses, sins, leading us to wrongly believe and thereby creating trust issues. With the very same heart that you don't believe, you can choose today what to believe. It is *your* decision; *you* are the one in control.

You know what you believe in and what you stand for because your faith is reflected through your actions. Yes, knowingly or unknowingly. Why not relieve yourself of this struggle and surrender this power control to your Author and Master? If you choose to give the control to Jesus, He will relieve you of your natural tendencies and through His Holy Spirit you will be empowered to live a divinely assisted life, to your own amazement.

Excuse 1:5 But I am not a Christian!

It is okay. You are you and God loves you regardless. Let us explore God's love letter to us and the reasons for choosing this Christian holy book as a main reference instead of any other.

Why Choose to Believe in The Bible:

- The Bible tells us real stories about the Creator and His creation.
- We read about how the Creator cares for His creation and what He has done to rescue it.
- It is the only book that has revealed how the Creator caused us to become.

- These are sacred texts telling us how we got here and where we are going.
- The Bible is God's letter and instructions for living, even though it is relegated in some people's eyes and therefore many 'run to and fro, because worldly knowledge has increased' (Daniel 12:4).
- Whether we believe in this Holy Word or not, it stands very relevant to us in many aspects of living a fulfilling life through its inherent divine wisdom, evidenced by basic governmental laws being based on it.
- The Bible gives us guidance on how to live our lives in a pleasing way, as our Creator intended.
- Much more, the Bible is a record of the relationship between God and humans.
- The Scriptures are intended to be our model and standard.
- The Bible tells us the story of past heroes, who fought battles and triumphed in adversity.
- The Bible enlightens us on how to be saved. Be wise, be not blinded by the devil and unseen forces; instead, read and trust in this sacred word of God.
- The Bible tells us that the 'god of this world (i.e., the devil) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). Ah!
- The words in the Bible are divinely inspired, supervised and authored.

- The Bible has done more to shape and influence our world history in unparalleled ways than any other book, and remains the best-selling book of all time.

Growing up from a different religious background, I found these reasons compelling enough to show interest in reading the Bible. We seem to struggle to trust what is divinely laid down, we would rather look for earthly and visible alternatives.

I came out of my excuses and began to search for how to by-pass this human survival thinking system. I became interested in biblical content and I searched for ways that enable me to interact and relate well with myself and with others, and furthermore I discovered methods to build trust in God and His words in the Bible.

Let us go to Chapter 2 to unfold some major limitations that hinder many of us who are struggling or seeking for the truth.

Adam decided to disobey God's instruction and he fell short of His perfect plan

***Digging Deep:** The first man, Adam, was given must-dos. God said, enjoy everything but do not touch this one fruit.*

We know the story of how Adam failed to believe and trust God. He decided to disobey God's instructions and he fell short of the predetermined (God's perfect plan) from above, but the predetermined (the consequences of sin)

from below made him blame God. The deadness to God did not stop Adam from making excuses to God; he said, 'it is the woman you gave me.'

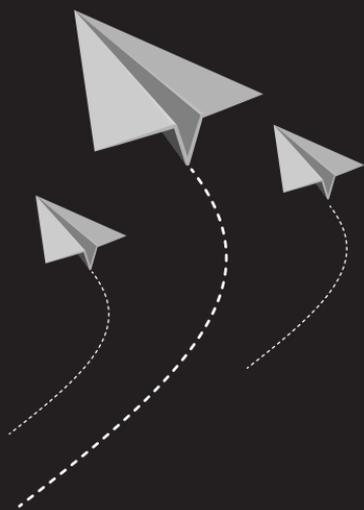
Biblical Truth: *There is no amount of goodness that can make us good enough to approach or relate with a Holy and Righteous God (Jeremiah 2:22, Isaiah 64:6). No amount of prayers or charity deeds can make us gain His approval. Because of our very make-up, we are prone to making excuses. God knows this human side of us will always fall short; that is why, before we sinned, He made a Way (Romans 5:8). That is, The Good News.*

We have a choice to trust and to follow the Way, the Truth and the Life. Or, you can devise your own way, like many people/prophets have done. They are pointing to alternative ways other than Christ, the Son of God. Today, we hear of many religious proposals, and unfortunately, people are making free-will choices to follow different ways. The Bible warns us about this as signs of the end time. When we follow Jesus, God sees us as believers in Christ; He sees the cross and we receive mercy and grace to approach and relate with Him.

The Good News

God knows that our human nature predisposes us to fall into sin, which is why He sent a Redeemer, who had no sin, to take the punishments due to us, as sinners, and to die a sinner's death so that the price was fully paid for our sins.

CHAPTER 2



NOT YET CONVINCED?

We human beings are natural doubters or excuse makers. It is important to establish and clarify any wrestling that may be going on in our minds now, before we embark on these must-dos.

2:1 Ego and Trust Issues:

Many of us struggle with what to believe or what not to believe, which casts doubts in our dealings and in the way we trust. Trust issues are there, knowingly or unknowingly, and there are factors that make us susceptible to this struggle.

Ego is a common factor that affects us in the misplacement of our trust. Ego is closely associated with pride. Pride is certainly a manifestation of ego. Trust issues are usually a residue of being controlled by ego. It takes a positive balanced view of our ego to choose humility instead of pride.

Ego is the self-identity we have constructed while developing through life. Ego was created through self-defence, in our thoughts and reactions to circumstances. It is self-created as the result of events that happened to us whilst growing up. We gave an unconscious response and meaning to those events through our interpretation and our brain stored this information. These attachments are part of us, they are our individual identity, our story, our ego.

Are you aware of your ego?

Do you understand how your ego works for you: positively or against you? It takes ego (the knowledge of self) as a behavioural trait for someone who has been run down by others, in order to shake off those negative thoughts and refocus. Have you mastered your self-awareness to the level that your ego no longer controls you by the standard of this world?

Our ego also uses beliefs to strengthen its identity. People become so attached to their beliefs that they are ready to die for them. To believe is to accept and trust that something or someone is true. Our feelings or beliefs are often stimulated by thoughts, and those can often be unconscious thoughts. Do you know that EGO can be 'Edging God Out'?

Unless we surrender our ego to God by trusting Him, then ego will continue to roll out unconsciously and be the giant that shapes and controls our reality and the interpretations of our present-day life events.

This clearly manifests in our beliefs, behaviours and choices, and ultimately determines where our trust lies. We blame God that He created us to be helpless. Are you really helpless when trying to understand your ego?

Dear reader, you can simplify your path and surrender your ego to Jesus, Who is able to build you above and beyond the level of your ego's negative impacts.



What are you thinking right now? Write your thoughts here.

2:2 Why Should I Trust God?

- God is not a man that He should lie.
- God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- God never fails; whatever He has said, He will bring it to pass.
- God is ever faithful, ever sure.
- God is sovereign, unlimited, and almighty.
- God is infinitely good.
- God is all-powerful, all-capable, all-reliable.
- God is all-wise, all-knowledgeable, all-sufficient.
- God is love, merciful and gracious.
- God is perfect and upright in all ways.

Does all this sound like God can be trusted?

- Trust God because He knows you.
- God is with you,
- God loves you,
- God is fighting for you,
- God is your refuge,
- God is thinking of you,
- God has great plans for you,
- God will provide for you, and
- God will never leave you nor forsake you.

Life's experiences conditions us to live life the way we do, so that we don't trust God or anyone, but we have a role and responsibility to learn to adapt.

Adaptation to use our ego in a positive way can only happen based on our beliefs and faith. God has placed values in everyone, it is now up to

Surely we have been impacted by our environment, but it is much more about what we do about this impact that counts.

us. Yes, we have been impacted by our environment, but it is much more about what we do about this impact. We cannot undermine our developmental introjections and our unequal societal status quo. We also appreciate our struggles, but life is simply about the choices we make. God deserves our trust.

Choose this day whom you will serve. ‘But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord’ (Joshua 24:15). Similarly, Moses set before the Israelites life and death, blessing and cursing (Deuteronomy 30:19). I beseech you to choose life, so that you and your seed [children and descendants] may live.

Trust in the Lord your God; if not, you are your own lord.

2:3 Believe in God?

God does not make us believe. We cannot discover God by our personal efforts. You cannot search for Him through religion. You only discover Him when He reveals Himself to you (Matt 11:27, John 6:44, John 15:16, Proverbs 21:1, Jonah 3:10, 2 Corinthians 7:10).

Belief comes from influences of hearing and seeing and belief turns into faith when we act out what we believe.

God exposes us to ideas, He gives inspiration and gives us opportunities, but the fact remains, that we have to choose what we believe with all of the available resources.

This is because God knows that belief comes from influences of hearing and seeing, which start from the womb, from our environment and from our experiences. Belief turns into faith when we act out what we believe.

Faith is the evidence of obedience shown through our actions (like when Abraham was ready to slaughter his only son Isaac in obedience to God).

Actions will fuel our trust in what we believe. What are you actioning, where is your energy tailored towards? What are you choosing to hear that is dictating your belief and your actions?

Are you sensitive to what God is pushing to your hearing and seeing, and what are you doing with these divine resources? John 8:45 says that we just naturally don't believe the Truth.

We are simply commanded in the Scriptures to believe in God and in His Word.

You are simply to believe in God, and you will be saved. Belief is only shown through a corresponding action. The opening story in Chapter One showed that the crowd believed the man could do the crossing all over again, but they did not evidence their belief by getting on board with him. Many of our problems of trust are simply because we do not believe in God, or if we really do believe, we do not show our belief through our corresponding actions.

Our sins do not define us, we are rather defined by our beliefs and our choices.

2:4 To Believe What Exactly?

We are all a believer in something, right? Our beliefs show in our actions. What are my actions portraying? Are mine angry with God? Do I see Him so far away and hidden that He can't be related with? Or do

- I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
- I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord.
- I believe Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
- I believe Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary.
- I believe sinless Jesus suffered for my sins.
- I believe Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried.
- I believe Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.
- I believe Jesus ascended into heaven and He is seated at the right hand of the Father and
- I believe Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead; and that one day I will see Him in glory.
- I believe in the Holy Spirit,
- I believe in the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.
- I believe God is Spirit. He dwells within us as believers in Christ and He can relate with us on a one-to-one basis.

Do you believe the above Gospel truth? Can you articulate your beliefs about God and write them down if possible? What are the factorial believes that guide your decisions, your principles and your values?

It takes discipline to navigate our ethical life and stay true to our tenets, whether they be religious or philosophical.

This is the reason why we need the Holy Spirit, who is our Helper, Teacher, Reminder, Enabler and our Energising Factor to guide us at all times. ***We are going to be judged for believing, or not believing despite all the resources and opportunities that God gave us.***

2:5 Believe in Which God?

It is important to clarify which God we are referring to:

- The one and only Holy God of the Bible.
- The omnipotent Creator of all and Redeemer of mankind.
- The Lord whose name is Yahweh and Jehovah.
- The Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth and all therein.
- The 'I Am That I am' (Who is, Who was and Who will continue to exist), the eternal God.
- The One true God Who already existed and has made Himself known.
- His self-revelation made us distinguish Him from all false gods.
- The God Who is with us, ever-present, near us and amongst us.
- The Father of Jesus, who taught us also to call God, Father.

- The God that Scriptures taught as One Being in three Persons.
- The God that declared Jesus as His One and only begotten Son.
- The God that relates like Father-Son, as exemplified by Jesus.
- The Triune God that asserted the Lord Jesus' deity.
- The Father God who loves us unconditionally.
- The God who became incarnate as Son, who was willing to die for us so that we may be forgiven.
- The God whose immanent Holy Spirit lives in us.

2:6 Which God Are My Beliefs connected to?

Please note that historic religious commonality does not affirm that God is basically one and the same for all. ***The fundamental beliefs we hold make a crucial difference, and they are the key to answer the question of 'Which God are you relating with?'***

Who is the object of your worship? What is the principle guiding your worship, in spirit and in truth? Worship is a matter of the heart, not external demonstrations.

Acceptable worship can only be directed by the truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, not by any religious ceremony.

The God of Christianity came to seek and to save the world's lost humanity. This loving God took the initiative to lay down His life for all, for the salvation of whosoever would put their trust in Him. He came to our rescue.

Other religious alternatives are dependent on what man can do to find God by their own efforts, rather than trusting in what God has already done.

Accept the finished work of Christ today. The choice is entirely yours!

2:7 Knowing Father God:

- Reminds me that I am a dependent being.
- Reminds me there is Someone bigger and greater than me in charge.
- Gives me meaning and significance on this earth.
- Gives me focus for my worship.
- Shapes my understanding and structures my worldview.
- Gives me hope when I'm down, knowing I can lean on an Almighty God
- Serves as my framework, holding everything together.

2:8 Why Study the Word of God?

- His Word helps us to know and understand Him more (John 5:38-40).

- His Word guides us through life (Psalms 119:105).
- His Word is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- His Word teaches and brings clarity.
- His Word corrects and reproofs us.
- *His Word points to what is true & pure (Proverbs 30:5-6).*
- *His Word is sufficient and complete (Rev 22:18).*
- *His Word is authoritative (Psalms 119:89).*
- *His Word accomplishes His promises (Isaiah 55:11).*
- *His Word transforms us into Christlikeness.*
- *His Word restores and comforts (Psalms 19:7).*
- *His Word gives us wisdom and purpose.*
- *His Word warns us of judgement.*
- *His Word is full His promises and rewards.*
- *His Word is worth more than money and food.*
- *His Word is a discerner of the heart intentions.*
- *His Word helps us to obey Him and disciple others.*
- *His Word endures forever, His word is eternal.*
- *His Word carries power to heal and deliver us.*
- *His Word is the standard outside our own thinking.*
- *His Word is the determining factor in what we believe and teach in the church.*
- *His Word is holy and sacred, Holy Bible.*
- *His Word leads to salvation and eternal hope.*
- *His Word gives us peace (Psalms 119:165, John 14:27).*
- *His Word gives us victory over sin (Psalms 119:9).*

- *His Word helps us to stay Spirit-filled.*
- *His Word increases our faith and maturity.*
- *His Word gives us joy (Jeremiah 15:16).*
- *His Word cleans us and defeats the enemy.*
- *His Word produces fruits in our lives (Psa 1:2-3).*
- *His Word brings hope of meeting Him one day.*
- *His Word tells us about our heavenly home.*

2:9 Why Jesus?

- The birth of Jesus was predicted by the prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before Jesus was born.
- Jesus fulfilled prophecies written before His birth through the Virgin Mary.
- Angel Gabriel announced His name and His purpose was to save people from their sins.
- God the Father declared ‘this is my One and only Begotten Son’.
- Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
- Jesus overcame temptations, living a sinless, blameless and perfect life.
- Jesus led a life of complete obedience to God, regardless of the excruciating pain and public shame.
- Jesus performed many recorded supernatural miracles over nature, over death and over the power of sickness.
- Jesus had powers that only God could possess.

- Jesus had the ability to predict the future, accurately, called prophecy.
- ***Jesus did what the breath of God in man couldn't do. The law written on tablets didn't do it, the prophets' warnings didn't do it, our moral attributes didn't do it. God had to come in flesh, in the form of a man, and now grace-divine enables us to be righteous as God intended. Thank You Jesus! (Act7:51-53)***
- Jesus provides eternal hope through God's grace, for everyone who believes that He is Lord.
- Jesus provides the bridge for us to receive God's offer of forgiveness for our sins and fulfil the hope of eternal life. This is the purpose, and the reason why Jesus is Lord.
- Jesus came to the world over 2000 years ago to set the example of how God desires everyone to live whilst on earth and to show us how to relate with God through prayer.
- Jesus honoured God throughout every event in His life.
- Jesus was humble and gentle, mirroring God's Spirit.
- Jesus completed His purpose by offering Himself to be crucified, so that God could be glorified through His resurrection.
- Jesus loves us and laid down His life for us, His friends.
- Jesus forever lives at the right hand of God, praying for us.
- Jesus promised to secure a place in Heaven for each of us if we place our faith in Him and trust God.

2:10 Is Jesus Truly Your Lord?

‘Why call me “Lord, Lord” and do not follow my commandments?’ (Luke 6:46). This is the same question that Jesus is asking us today. Lordship is obedience. *Obedience to biblical instructions is what makes us qualify to call Him Lord.*

Following Jesus is not a passive ritual. It does not happen by accident. It involves active intentions, not some religious trials. It is a lifestyle of a personal daily walk that becomes an everyday relationship.

A Christian means a follower of Christ. How much do we follow Him closely, to the extent that when people encounter us, they are convinced of His lordship in our life? The only way to experience freedom from sin is when the Son lives in you through His Holy Spirit.

Are you following Jesus daily, that it has become an everyday relationship with Him? Then you are truly a Christian.

Digging Deep:

Is God your Lord? Many believe there is a God, they respect the Deity and have regard for the divine. However, they believe that He is too high up there, too holy, too righteous, too powerful and majestic to relate with Him, and that we

are mere mortals. So, they worship and relate with Him from afar or not at all, which is understandable. But to break this barrier, God sent a Mediator, a Breach Builder, a Redeemer, a Reconciler, an Advocate who is in touch with every way we feel. The Messiah Jesus is God With Us (Emmanuel). When we accept this biblical truth and we have faith in what this Jesus did, then Jesus becomes the Lord of our heart. We invite and say, 'Lord I need You'. As the Lord, we surrender unto Him to come into our being and transform us. We become a co-heir with Jesus and adopted into God's family. Now, we can approach and relate with God and we can call Him our Father, who art in heaven.

Let us suspend all the excuses, refuse to play the blame games, stop the doubting; let us choose to ignore the religious deceptions and the false prophets. Simply turn to the Way, the Truth and the Life, the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart, please open the door to Him today. And He will take His abode with you to make the must-do-in-life an easy and possible task for you, because His grace is sufficient for you. You will be able to ride on, even in the face of difficulties, fears and obstacles, because trust dictates that you surrender your control to Him.

2:11 Is the Devil A Necessary Enemy?

Satan and his demons' opposite nature may conversely help us to reject evil and to seek goodness, and thus to trust in God. Is God allowing evil or the many religions manipulations to keep us lazy Christians on our guard, to keep us trusting in the True Lord?

The greatest gift God gave us is the capacity to trust. Are you prepared to use that capacity to trust God? Or are you waiting for situations that will compel you to turn to Him? Surrender your trust today, tomorrow might be too late.

Did God allow Adam to be tested by the devil so that God could see where Adam's belief lay? Adam believed the devil and ate the forbidden fruit. The sin of Adam was unbelief, leading to disobedience.

Where is your own belief? Is it based on man-made, earthly treasures, or on eternal glory?

We may be spiritually dead to God because of our sins, but we are alive to sin. As spirit-beings, we are never morally dead to respond to God because we are created in His image and likeness, so we share His moral attributes.

Today, you can choose to be alive unto God and dead to sin; yes, it is possible, and it is in your control to choose what to believe.

2:12 Notice That!

Now that we have established the framework on which the 3 must-dos in life can rest upon, we can now proceed. Are you convinced yet?

It will be difficult to do the 3 must-dos in life unless you have Jesus living in your heart. The Holy Spirit is the Enabler of the must-dos in life. Otherwise, if you try to do it outside of Jesus, the Giver of the Holy Spirit, you will only be doing religious self-righteousness in your own natural strength, as your own lord.

There are many hard truths discussed above that I have struggled to grapple with. I wrestled and battled with them until I finally surrendered my ego; then I accepted, believed and abode by the Truth, and I found inner peace. It is still a daily walk with the Lord.

There are many lies that I have believed, so that even when light came, I failed to embrace it because of my natural survival mechanisms. I decided to not continue to accept lies and I intentionally pursued Truth, with the aim to glorify God and to be a sincere imitator of this Jesus Who I am following. Then the wrestling gradually subsided, the invisible heavy weight I was unconsciously carrying was lifted off. I enjoy daily fellowship and commune with God as a friend. What a privilege we have in Jesus!

Please don't hate me if you disagree with me. I had my natural resistance just like you, initially. But please do your own research and then be honest with yourself to do away with egotistical pride and embrace what you now know is the most reliable Truth you have been refusing to accept. This is your own test; I pray that you will pass it like Jesus did. I am waiting to rejoice with you and share your discoveries and your testimonies.

God is relying on your stewardship of your freedom and your control of power of choice, and I pray you won't fail Him. Whatever you do, make sure you seek Him and put your trust in the Lord, your God.

Before we examine the must-dos, what is your own excuse, or what are the hindrances? Maybe you do not know the must-dos; okay, have you never come across a must-do list? This will not be the case anymore, after reading the next chapter.

It is obvious that whichever way we look at beliefs, trust and decisions, we have a responsibility placed on us to choose. These choices form our personality. Like Adam, you can choose to blame God or blame everything else.

2:13 Scriptural support to trust God:

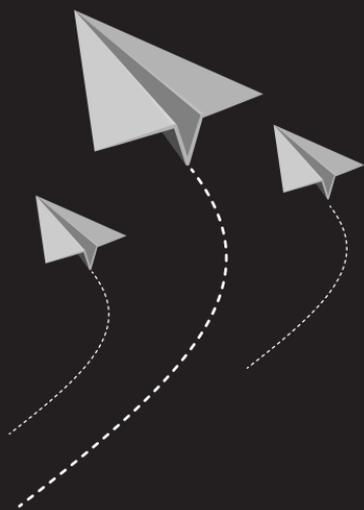
- 'Trust the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your path' (Proverbs 3:5-6).

- ‘Trust in God at all times, oh people; pour out your heart before Him, God is a refuge for us’ (Psalms 62:8).
- ‘Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God’ (Psalms 20:7).
- ‘Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock’ (Isaiah 26:4).
- ‘When I am afraid, I put my trust in you’ (Psalms 56:3).
- ‘It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in man’ (Psalms 118:8).
- ‘The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe’ (Proverbs 29:25).
- ‘Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the Lord’ (Psalms 32:10).
- ‘Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act’ (Psalms 37:5).
- ‘Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord’ (Jeremiah 17:7).
- ‘Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion’ (Micah 7:5).
- ‘In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’ (Psalms 56:11)



This space is for your reflections.

CHAPTER 3



WHAT MUST I DO?

Most of us have issues with control. Letting go is one of our biggest struggles, and we have spent some time exploring these in chapters 1 and 2.

If you ask the question ‘what must I do?’, it connotes someone who wants to be led, someone who has relinquished their control, someone who is ready to submit.

If you really want to feel free, you need to get into the habit of asking God this co-dependent question. God is not religious; God is a relational Father whose main interest is for Him to have a place in our hearts. We are created for relationship, first starting vertically with God, and then horizontally with others.

I therefore submit that our first and most important must-do in life is to relate with our Maker.

Imagine your car is a Mercedes. You will have to relate with an authorised dealer, whether you like it or not. If not, you will be relying on second-hand parts or agents whenever the car needs repair. So God is also our Designer; any avoidance or inappropriate relating is to our own detriment. His arms are always open to embrace us. We only need to be willing and obedient.

When Saul encountered Jesus (Acts 9:6) on the Damascus road, the question he asked was, ‘**Lord, what do you want me to do?**’

3:1 The Number 1 Must-Do in Life is to Relate Well With God.

Why should I relate with a God I do not see? But He sees you, He created you and He is inviting you to be a co-creator with Him, like Adam.

God said, let us create man in our own image. This statement is indicative of relationships in its true sense of a Triune God. This relational God created everything that man would need before man appeared in the garden of Eden. Man was to enjoy all and maintain it.

God visited man in the cool of the day. God speaks to man even today; we are the voice, arms, legs and eyes of God. God clothed naked Adam and Eve after they sinned. 'For God so loved the world that He gave...' (John 3:16). God has made a way of escape even when we have committed sin, and He guides us to manoeuvre ourselves back to Him.

Is it surprising that the 10 commandments are all about relationships? God cherishes relationships, and when we get it right with Him, He will guide us in all our other relationships.

God is love and love is God. Love compels God to forgive us. God is the only perfect Lover. As human beings, we are only capable of partial and conditional love.

God loves us perfectly and unconditionally, because the Bible says while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The Living God has always been part of our lives and He has impacted us in every way. He wants us to be reconciled, even in this world of confusion. How can we ignore Him and expect a balance?

God wants to reconcile and relate with us, even in this world of confusion. How can we ignore Him and expect a balance in life.

We struggle with the enemy, the devil (aka Lucifer), who has been constantly trying to blind us to the Truth and the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). In all our struggles, we must keep our primary focus and our eyes on the Gospel - that

God loves us regardless and He has already made a Way. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Keep on gazing on the Lord Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of your faith.

3:1:1 **How to Relate with God?**

To relate with God is to love God. We express love in different ways, either through affirmation, acts of service, giving of gifts or quality time, or by just reaching out to a person. If we want to have a relationship with somebody, we will use everything and anything to reach out.

- To love God is to take time to know Him.
- To love God is to study about Him.
- To love God is to take interest in Him.
- To love God is to know what He said.
- To love God is to observe and do what He said.
- To love God is to reverentially fear Him.
- To love God is to obey Him.
- To love God is to prioritise Him.
- To love God is to love what God loves.
- To love God is to hate what God hates.
- To love God is to serve God.

Moses told Pharaoh: ‘God said, let my people go so they can serve me’. We are saved to serve our Maker. Or are we self-sufficient and serving selves?

I struggled for many years to submit and accept the sovereignty of God over my heart (that He created). Yes, God created every heart and no matter what we do, whatever happens to us, there is a longing for the Creator of our hearts. **The Creator intentionally put the longing there but our upbringing, nurturing, development and exposures makes us wrestle, and we learn to trust or not to trust Him.**

Once we do not prioritise and appropriate the trust in the Maker of the heart, then the heart automatically keeps on longing, but unfortunately the longing gets displaced in sub-standard, inferior, superficial makers. These other ‘makers’ are visible, but they are not the real maker. They may help but they do not erase our longing for the real Maker.

We feel God is distant because there is a disconnection (since we are born in sin). We feel more connected with the things we see and touch, and that is another reason why we don’t trust God.

3:1:2 It Is A Commandment to Love God

- ‘You shall love the Lord God with all your heart... (Deuteronomy 6:5).
- ‘What doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear Him, walk in all His ways and to love and to serve Him’ (Deuteronomy 10:12).
- ‘And the blessings if you obey the commandments to love God, which the Lord commands you’ (Deuteronomy 11:26).
- ‘No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon’ (Matthew 6:24).
- For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments (1 John 5:3). See also Mark 12:30, Hebrews 6:10, 1 John 4:16, 1 John 2:5, 1 Corinthians 8:3.

3:1:3 Our Humanity

Some things are attributed to the flesh. No matter how much we wrestle with it, it is flesh, it is mortal and that is who we are. It's not our fault that we are feeble, weak, frail, fail, faint-hearted and disappoint God. That's why He made a Way for us, so that we can be forgiven.

God gave us the choice, but we failed Him. However, our failings are already catered for; Jesus died for those failings so that regardless, we are accepted by God, even in our failings. The decision rests with us to accept Him. If we now choose to accept that longing to connect with the Maker, we ought to cling to Him and accept His knocking and calling.

What makes us refuse, refute, rebel, and reject Him? What's in man that puts Him in this opposition with his Maker? So tragic! Could it be that we have found alternatives, an alibi, a way to make others more capable, so God is not in the equation?

In my view, this is because the soil part of us as humans makes us naturally rebellious and disobedient in nature. **But it is God Who breaks and cuts across this human nature and penetrates the heart that He created, so that the rock-hard heart can be broken to perceive and receive into the underlying starved heart, so that at last love can penetrate, light can come in and trust begins. Now he/she will turn to God.**

Christians have been given the job of preparing hearts in readiness through our prayers, preaching, loving and relating, in order to accelerate His Kingdom to come into these hearts.

3:1:4 When You Trust God!

- You will not worry.
- You will not stress to fix the impossible.
- You will not hurry ahead and you will wait for the Lord to move and make the change.
- You will not be awakened at night, tossing and turning.
- You will not doubt Biblical principles and promises that are in the Book that you cherish.
- You will not turn to others first for help and you will not give a higher priority to human counsel instead of God's principles.
- You will not manipulate and manoeuvre situations.
- You will not step in and take charge without praying and being led by the Spirit of God.
- You will not cling to others to feel loved, needed and secured.
- You will reduce worrying and instead trust in God.
- You will trust God that you can make it.
- You will trust God that things will get better.
- You will trust God that He will surely see you through it all.

3:1:5 The Moment you Trust the Lord Jesus!

You will need to put worry aside and deliberately say, ‘Lord I rest in You, in You alone I put my trust. Lord, help me to lean on You, wait on You, listen to You and endure the test with You on my side.’ **It is easier to live in the flesh and to disobey and not trust in the Lord, therefore make it a project to learn ways in which to begin to trust God consciously.**

What are the things that prevent us from trusting God? Let’s go back and read chapters 1 and 2 again. How can we break down bad habits, break away from our limitations and watch God break through in ways we have never expected? This can only happen when we decide to surrender our control and partner with the Lord Jesus. We can choose to trust Him with intentionality and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can relate well with God.

3:1:6 But I Struggle with Worry!

We have cultivated the bad habit of worry unless we can see or touch some sort of evidence. Really, we have got better at worrying than trust. We refuse to acknowledge God’s providence, but we go about our own way to get answers for our own mess. Instead of permitting God to teach us about our problems, we are too quick and busy calling others, because they are visible. Worry is not believing that God will get it right. **Joy comes from what you know and believe.**

We have seen these others we know as capable friends, as we have connected before, plus they have types of connections, so we believe they can get us through. This is only because we feel very distant from God. But worry never ends. We will never have enough money or resources because ‘more is never enough’.

If we think we are going to outgrow worry, the problem is, we never do; we just learn to live with it, manoeuvre round it or fake it. We can never conquer worry by ourselves, it is part of our humanity, unless we surrender this natural tendency to God.

3:1:7 **Frightening Thoughts**

Imagine I lose everything through fire, accident, disaster, sickness, tragedy, a pandemic and its consequences.

Will I see that the adversity may be happening to either inspect me, correct me, direct me, protect me or perfect me?

And I have to start all over again! At that moment, like Job, will I choose not to curse God for my predicaments? Will I choose God? Will my faith kick into action? Will I move far away from the Lord I have loved and served?

Will I trust God to win this battle? Will I sink into despair and depression? In that very low state, it will take a close relationship with Him to make me say, ‘yet I will trust Him, and I will rest upon His promises’ and I will listen to hear Him say to me, ‘trust Me!’

3:1:8 Prayer Is the Key

Part of relating well with God is taking everything to Him in prayer, so you are not carrying all your challenges on your shoulders.

- Prayer is a way of opening our heart to God in conversation, and it is done by those who believe in Him.
- The root of prayer is relationship and involving Him in all our affairs.
- Prayer draws the heart away from one's own dependence to a position of leaning on the Almighty God.
- Prayer is devotion, reverence, appreciation and thankfulness to God.
- Prayer is giving attention to God.
- Jesus started with prayers. He prayed constantly, He taught us to pray, He ended with prayer and right now He is seated at God's right hand, praying.
- God uses our prayers as a means with which to accomplish His will.
- Prayer deepens our faith and makes our heart ready to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Prayer makes us enter into God's presence and it allows the Holy Spirit to pray through us.
- Prayer opens us more deeply to the transforming grace and power of God.
- Prayer changes things, including our hearts.

3:1:8:1 Pray, How?

- Pray believing God listens and hears.
- Pray consistently.
- Pray according to His will
- Live according to His Word.
- The real basis of prayer should be love for God, not religious duty; without love, prayer is a heartless endeavour.
- The Lord's Prayer is a model for prayers of adoration, confession, petitions and thanksgiving.
- Prayer can be silent, spoken out, put into a song; prayer can be in the Heavenly language or it can be any act of worship that glorifies God.

3:1:8:2 Pray for What?

- We pray for many things, but ultimately, we should pray for His will to be done.
- We pray to seek His wisdom and guidance.
- We pray for healing and well-being, protection, forgiveness of sins. God's desire is for us to pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- Prayer is the most powerful weapon God has given us.

3:1:8:3 Why Should I Pray?

- Prayer helps us to establish a relationship with God and to maintain that relationship with Him.

- Prayer helps us to achieve fellowship with God.
- Jesus is our prime example of why we should pray.
- Prayer helps us to resist temptations.
- The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and brings wonderful results (James 5:16).
- Prayer is spiritual warfare against our enemy Satan. John Wesley said, 'God will do nothing on earth except in answer to believing prayer.' So, we must pray.

3:1:8:4 When should I Pray?

- Pray at all times.
- Pray in every situation with the right attitude of the soul.
- Pray when you don't know what to pray, asking the Holy Spirit to help you pray correctly.
- Any reverent posture is good, such as on your knees early in the morning.
- Prioritise God by giving Him your best one hour daily, as often as possible.
- Ask God to help you keep your daily appointment with Him.

3:1:8:5 Where Should I Pray?

- Pray in your closet [a secret place], and privately.
- You can pray everywhere and anywhere.
- Pray right where you are! It is between you and God, as long as you are not intruding or disturbing anybody.

3:2 The Number 2 Must-Do is to Relate Well with Myself.

Our day-to-day tasks are many, and we always seem to have more added to our plates as the weeks roll by. With these demands and responsibilities, it can be easy to push aside or put up with unpleasant symptoms, because we are simply too exhausted to deal with them. We turn to TV and social media, and cater for other people's needs; we work as much as possible and do anything that helps us to suppress those feelings which we don't want to face.

This attitude does not make the symptoms go away, it does not lead to wellness and it only allows those symptoms to take a greater hold on our lives.

We know that quality relationships keep us happier and healthier. Good relationships protect our bodies and especially our brains. This, therefore, places the responsibility on me to 'look after me and my relationships'.

Control over my life is something desirable, but in a world where there is so much pressure to perform, everything is mutually interdependent.

How can I have absolute control of anything? Therefore, we need the One Who has the absolute control, so that as we relate with Him, He will teach us the best way to relate with ourselves and with others.

3:2:1 My Invisible Intruders!

Sometimes, our own insecurities can wreak havoc on our relationships with our partners, family, neighbours, friends, colleagues and more. Fear of change, self-esteem, attachment patterns, and much other baggage that life may throw at us, predisposes us and contributes to our level of coping.

A strong sense of self, yes and abundant self-love, is crucial. It is hard to give ourselves fully to others without a strong sense of self-care.

At the age of 13, when problems began for me, I assumed responsibility for the whole family and took care of their needs and put them before my own. It became difficult for me, even as an adult, to say no without feeling guilty about it. Even when I developed a sense of my own needs, I was unable to articulate them. I found that I can tolerate high levels of impingement on myself before I can voice out that something is unacceptable. Christ guided me to study counselling in 2007, so I could become aware of the destructive pathway I was on.

The light was switched on; my eyes became opened to my vulnerabilities. I began to make decisions which put me in safety and at peace, and I tried to apply boundaries, even though it was tough. It is still an area of continuous development.

I may have started out naïve, wrong and disadvantaged, but now I have no regrets, as I can never stop giving, therefore God Himself has monitored my path, because givers never lack! These experiences propelled me to my passion and contributed to my focus on my therapeutic practice.

3:2:2 **What About You?**

You will need to listen to your daily internal dialogue and get a feel for what kind of relationship you have with your body, mind and spirit. Ask yourself the following questions: Why are you cast down, oh my soul? How much negative self-talk do I entertain? If a friend is sharing her negative feelings with me, what will be my response? Will I most likely be compassionate and nurturing?

Do I treat myself the same way I treat others? Or do I ignore some triggers and keep on pressing because I'm meant to be strong? Do I tell myself: 'I cannot

How much do you know yourself and how much of this knowledge of self do you apply in making daily beneficial decisions for yourself?

afford to slow down!', 'I will be fine, everything will soon be alright!', 'There is no one to help me, I must keep on, I'm a survivor!' Really? **The way you treat your body reflects on the level of love you show yourself. Do you truly love yourself?**

3:2:3 Self-Love Versus Selfishness!

Turning in to examine myself is the first step towards strengthening all the other relationships in my life. Making healthy dietary and lifestyle choices encourages positive, internal relationships.

Selfishness is when we are insensitive to others and make choices that hurt others in the name of self-pleasure. Selfishness is when we pay too much attention to ourselves and don't care enough for others.

Selfishness is immoral. We are supposed to think of others and be our 'brother's keeper'. Acts 20:35 says 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' JF Kennedy, in his inaugural address in 1961, said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country". There is a Chinese proverb that ends with: 'if you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else'. We should therefore know, for a fact, that it is more of a blessing to give than to receive. However, we must not forget self in the effort to be selfless.

I had not learnt to put myself first early enough. 'Loving self' was not in my vocabulary; it sounded like idolatry to love myself! And I understood that it is Christ-like to love others, but I forgot '*as myself*'. Me and only myself has the responsibility of self-care. Self-love is prioritising my own physical health and psychological well-being. **Unless I take care of myself first, I will likely not be well enough to help and take care of others.**

Jesus said, ‘First take out the log in your own eyes so you can see clearly to take the speck in your brother’s eye’ (Matthew 7:3-5). On an air flight you are meant to secure your own seat belt or mask first before you assist another person.

Whenever you put yourself first and you are in doubt, ask yourself this simple question, ‘Is this selfish behaviour at the expense of others?’

Neutral selfishness is when you look after your own well-being in ways that do not directly or substantially involve other people. Yes, this might mean that time is taken away from directly helping others.

Taking care of myself puts me in a better condition to do things that benefit others.

3:2:4 **Healthy Me!**

When you take care of yourself first, you show up as a healthy, grounded person in life.

It is in our nature to take care of our own needs first, but it has become a source of negative emotions like fear and guilt. People may connote it as unkind and inconsiderate of others, but if you can’t take care of yourself, you may find that gradually you cannot care for others. **Living longer won’t make you happy but making yourself healthy and happy can cause you to live long.**

How can we live longer as our happiest and healthiest selves? Is it about carving out time to take care of self in order to sustain our purpose and destiny?

Taking care of self is about setting boundaries so that you are not easily manipulated or easily taken advantage of. **If you are looking for someone, especially a partner, to fill your emotional needs, then your relationships are vulnerable.**

3:2:5 **Who Are Mine?**

Our body is the temple of God, i.e., where God resides. Therefore, we need to take care of His temple.

What do I enjoy? How much time do I spend doing the things I like and enjoy? Or am I still waiting for the right moment before I can start this gratification form of self-care? Do I understand myself, my triggers, my weaknesses and my strengths? How do I communicate my understanding of myself to myself and to others?

The many aspects of health that keep us at our best and brightest are just not often incorporated into everyday modern life. **How much effort do I put into maintaining a balance of my healthy and wisest options to ensure that I do not get to the end of the road with some disease that will force me to change, rather than installing prevention in the first place.**

When I am asked to explain my life so far, what will I say? ***Will I give Reasons or Results?*** Matthew 25:14-30 is about Jesus' parable of the talents. Revelation 3:1-2 says that we shall all give account.

In this modern, busy world, of work, family, church, business, etc., it is easy to become overwhelmed. How do I keep myself grounded and maintain joy? Do I purposely make time for the daily activities that make me feel good?

3:2:6 My Mindset

Mindset is a collection of attitudes, and attitude is our established approach to life. How can I assess my attitude and gain understanding of my mindset? It is shown through the way I respond to challenges, for instance: how I express gratitude, how I manage, how I take care of myself on a daily basis, my physical, mental and spiritual health.

Our mindset and daily practices are some of the strongest guiding forces that drive us to better health. ***The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.*** That is my role as a counsellor, to facilitate and create awareness of what the client is choosing to think and act on.

We cannot change our past, nor can we change how people will act in a certain way. **The only thing we can**

do is to decide our own attitude. I have decided to cut down on sugar, I eat a whole-food diet, I exercise once a week at least, I try to connect with people if I can. I relax at night before bedtime. I try to sleep well. I watch how I treat people.

Much more, I try to practice what I preach. I must be a doer of the Word of God and walk the talk too, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

If you can't control what you think, you will not be able to control what you do (Proverbs 4:23). Also, as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7).

3:2:7 **My Attitude**

Many of us have a survival story made strong through adversity. My attitude is: Lord what's the lesson you are trying to teach me here? I make space to pause and reflect on what I am doing. My instinct is that with God, I can thrive if I have stayed in His will.

Attitude is altitude because if your heart can conceive it, then you are likely going to achieve it with God on your side.

I try to ask myself: 'Why do I think I cannot achieve this goal?', then I think of reasons why I can. I think on scriptures that affirm that nothing shall be impossible with God. Nothing is too difficult for Him.

Yes, that goal may be uncomfortable occasionally, but I ask you to give it your best shot. It is better to try and fail than never to try at all. There may be plenty of obstacles, struggles and difficulties, but these are all small signs of miracles in process. God never fails, keep on trusting Him. He makes all things beautiful in His time: 'Be still and know that I am God'. Whenever I have faced really difficult situations that brought me to tears, I have tried never to say, 'God, why me?'; rather I say, with God on my side, 'try me'. I am more than a conqueror. What about you?

3:2:8 Believe in Myself

Successful people have the ability to dust themselves off and carry on. You need to have the confidence to believe in your God-given abilities. If you can learn to be resilient, you will be a stronger person in that area. It is good to take risks, because life is a risk, but be careful to take calculated risks.

If you want to take the plunge, research what it is you want to do. Get proper training. Having plenty of knowledge will always empower you. Find like-minded people and networks by going to events and meetings. Let God guide your steps through continuous prayers.

3:2:9 I Struggle with Loneliness

We will never stop wanting more. There always seems to be one more thing we need before we believe we can feel happy. Get understanding of who you are in Christ

(your identity). Understand why you are created (your purpose) and the understanding of whose you are will give you security.

Start to see yourself as 'enough'. I believe that with God on my side, **I am enough!** To be alone gives you the chance to lean into yourself and understand yourself. Do not waste the lonely times in your life.

When we are around other people, we may find we are being a 'performer version' of ourselves that others bring out. We fit into expected moulds. This is not always bad! But it just grants you less time to observe yourself in your entirety.

It may feel scary to be alone. Maybe you are used to being around other people's company. Get used to enjoying your own company, for you are sufficient.

Some things in life do not go to plan, but we have to move forward and stay positive that God will show up. Nothing (with or without a companion) is perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect life, therefore be kind to yourself. Do something for yourself that will enhance your life.

If you fall, standing up and coming back may not be easy. In fact, it is the hardest thing to do, because you have to really believe in yourself. Have a recovery plan for your being able to stand up again. Believe that God is faithful.

3:2:10 **Meaning of Life**

This could mean being happy with what you do. Enjoying the moment! For some, it is trying to improve yourself, or learning about yourself. For others, it is realising that you have this one life and you have to do your best with it. Life could mean sharing your life with others, or finding purpose and then fulfilling that purpose.

The meaning of life for me is discovering that God lives in me: the realisation that God is all loving and willing to direct my path moment by moment (when I let Him), so that I am not aimless, confused and hopeless. ***I know Whose I am!***

In my search for knowledge, I discovered that for a holy God to come to this level of relationship with me, someone paid the price for my access and paved the way for me. That Someone is Christ, and therefore my identity is in the One Who bought me with the costliest price that sets me free for life. My identity is not in my job nor in my relationships but it is in the truth that I am loved by Christ unconditionally.

Jesus Christ shed His blood on my behalf. As long as I believe what Christ did and I believe His claims, and I make up my mind to follow in His footsteps in relating with God, the Father, then I am accepted into God's family. I am born again. Jesus comes to live in my heart in the form of the Holy Spirit.

I am a carrier God. God resides in me. I carry Power. I carry Fire. I am light and salt. These are the conscious thoughts which dictate my life and my actions. I am an adopted child of God. And I can approach God freely in prayer. Wow! This is Good News!

My purpose is to use these divine resources to influence others until they become influencers too. Because God exists and He is all-capable, then one should expect to find those of us who love Him in every field of human endeavour to be impacting our world. Unfortunately, *we seldom forget the rich storehouses of faith that gave our lives meaning and purpose in the first place.*

The living God has been and will continue to be part of our lives, and He progressively impacts us to change the world for the better.

3:2:11 **My Hardest Lesson**

As I relate closely with myself, I became scared, afraid and annoyed to discover that I am actually the one in control of my boundaries, my disciplines, my punctuality and my better time management. I am in charge of reducing stress levels, budgeting and sticking to my budgeted time, money, prayer and Word study. I honestly cannot trust myself to do them. I am confronted with my ugly weaknesses. I am disappointed at my poor efforts. I am

angry with myself that it is simply irresponsible of me to continue in this manner and, worse of all, the onus is on me and there is really no excuse.

For someone to say to me, 'I trust you', is a big challenge for me to rise up to. Imagine God now inviting us to trust Him? I find it comforting to know that I have Him backing me up, regardless of my weaknesses.

The God consciousness is a matter of self awareness. You can just ask God to come right now into your heart and honestly He will, if you genuinely mean it.

Some believe that God exists, but they think our human awareness is not intelligent enough to understand who God is. You can simply ask God to come down to your level of understanding right now and, honestly, you will become aware of Him. God wants to shine His light through us and He wants our light to shine before others, that the world will see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew. 5:16).

But unless we have self-discipline and have dedicated ourselves to prayers and the study of the Scriptures, we will find it difficult to see the light or to get up when we are down. It will be difficult to hear Him say to you, 'Get up, you blessed one'!

3:2:12 This Bad Devil

The devil is a fallen angel formerly known as Lucifer, and his main job is to recruit as many as possible into his cohort. He is a great enemy, homeless, restless, going around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

The devil fights and keeps fighting with the human race, to distract us from relating with ourselves and from cultivating godly habits. Unfortunately, many fall for the devil's tricks, wiles and gimmicks to the extent of losing their salvation. But God is faithful; what the devil intends for evil, God uses it for good (Genesis 50:20 & Romans 8:28). The Holy Spirit is actively at work, bringing us to repentance, and when we repent, the blood of Jesus graciously erases the marks of sin (1 Peter 1:2).

The devil's scheme is to keep us focused on our pain; he is out to destroy the root of our hope, faith and love for God. The devil is constantly and actively at work, trying to blind us or making us too busy to relate with ourselves and to have self-reflections.

That is why Jesus warned us to watch and pray. Don't just think and talk about your temptations. Don't be too busy blaming the devil. Make your prayers positive; say 'Lord, increase my faith'. Looking unto Jesus and saying, 'Lord, give me new hope, renew my hope'. God knows how to deliver us from temptations. God is faithful, and He makes you stand.

The strategies that Satan is using can be overturned and used by God to make things work for your good and to strengthen you.

I don't believe demons are hiding behind every corner, but the Bible teaches that there are forces of wickedness and powers that rule over the darkness in our cities. These are strongholds, and this is why believers have the duty to wrestle in employing a powerful tool such as study of the Word of God and praying according to the Scriptures.

Christ became like us so that He may be tempted. We are tempted so that we might become like Christ. God uses our trials to prove our love to Him. The time of our temptations can prove to be our finest defining hour. Jesus told Peter: 'I have prayed for you'. We have a Saviour who is praying for us continually. Shame the devil by getting up! Jump out of the pull of self-pity. You are more than a conqueror!

3:2:13 Paradigm Shift

A paradigm shift is a conceptual grid or a realisation of a perception that brings about change. A paradigm shift represents a transition in thinking that is irreversible. Your life is not defined by your circumstances, nor by what happened, nor by what does not happen to you.

Your life is defined by how you choose to react to what has happened to you.

We may not necessarily know or understand the challenges we have faced, but we are changed, nevertheless. It is through our challenges that our character shines through right after the storm. Dear winner, get up and claim your prize!

Who do you become after life's challenges? The focus should be on making sure 'I am better than my previous self'. You are never too old to change, rather you are ripe. Yes, ripe for impact, influence, success, etc.

All that I have seen God do so far, teaches me to trust Him for all that I have not seen.

Some of God's greatest blessings are those in the form of unanswered prayers, because He knows all and He knows best, and He is preparing you to handle what He is bringing. In your time of waiting, do prophetic actions.

Do you know what you want? Declare what you desire to happen. Speak out loud in faith. Keep asking until your joy is full. As long as you continue to do His will, God's perfection is imminent.

3:2:14 My Passion

My passion includes being truthful to myself, acquiring knowledge (because knowledge gives power to self) and using the privilege to empower others. I am a life-long learner.

Coincidentally, I have four degrees and I'm still researching which PhD to settle on, and I'm letting God lead me.

My purpose is facilitating learning and helping others by creating awareness through counselling. My motivation is taking action, those simple small steps.

I am a reader, I'm passionate about equipping myself to be confident to make godly choices. I like learning new things and being adventurous. I am a health and wellness enthusiast, passionate about natural alternatives; I fan healthy relationships, simplifying life, personal growth, and yes, evangelism. Do you know your own passion? It's good if there is something you can do to transform your life, so find your passion and do it, or possibly even do it for a living.

Doing anything other than our passion is like falling short of our full potential in life.

Do you have something you love doing? Have you discovered it, is it possible to turn this passion into a profession? Sit with God until He gives you a revelation.

Our passion gives us reasons to be happy, satisfied, with a feeling of contentment that life is how it should be. Find a 'passion quote'; mine is, "if it's got to be, it's up to me" by Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo.

Sometimes we don't have to look far, the passion is already there. My real passion chose me; people have approached me and just opened up with their issues. I am humbled by the trust that my clients have placed in me.

I feel privileged to have the skills to be able to work at quite deep levels. I love the collaborative nature of the work and empowering another to flourish, instead of my previous job of analysing abnormal cells under a microscope.

I noticed my natural empathic tendencies, so I had to get myself trained up properly, so that I do not end up hurting people and hurting myself inadvertently. I became creative in increasing my clients' awareness and facilitating their autonomous empowered choices about their desired change. They are enabled to grow and find a new sense of direction, whilst I am also growing and developing as a vessel through whom the grace and love of God can flow to these persons.

Please go to God about your passion and let Him illuminate your path and open your spiritual eyes of understanding. God longs to see us accomplish our purpose and realise our full potential.

How you hear will determine how you live. The words begin to shape our world without us knowing. Let Jesus into your heart today and hearken with intentionality.

3:2:15 My Money

Is it your money, is it not God that gave you the talent, health and strength to make money? Now that you are the custodian of that money, God is looking for sound stewardship.

Whenever we touch what is holy to God (tithe), like the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, we end up toiling and getting little yield. We don't have to agree with the rules, our own duty is to obey. Then we reap the reward of putting God first.

It is very easy to justify certain behaviour when it comes to our sacrificial giving to God. This is because money is power, influence, speed, comfort, and when money speaks, truth is often silent. When we are not obedient stewards, money is likely to become our master. Let Jesus be my Master and Lord of all, including my bank accounts.

... 'If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?' (Luke 16:11).
... 'Any of you who does not give up everything cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:33).

Don't allow money to become your master out of desperation, let God be the Master by faithfully honouring Him first in your givings.

Apostle Paul instructed us concerning money collection in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

- **Our giving is a personal responsibility.**
- **Each one of us, with no exception.**
- **Our giving is an intricate part of our devotion.**
- **It is meant to be given regularly**
- **on the first day of the week (Sundays)**
- **and in proportionality.**

Every giving is a sacrifice to God and it should always be done out of love for God, not out of compulsion.

Jesus appeared to His disciples on a Sunday, as a celebration of resurrection and the giving of their collections. It is a sacred thing of the Lord; if you are faithful with £1, you will be faithful with £1 million.

Don't discourage anyone from giving, because you will deprive them of the possibility of God's enormous blessing. Jesus did not discourage that certain poor widow (Luke 21:1-4) from putting in her all in the offering basket, rather He commended her action. The only time God has asked us to test Him is in the area of giving, and He has promised to open the windows of heaven and pour out immeasurable blessings.

Our giving should not be out of guilt or sentiments or an emotional response. Biblical giving is not based on impulse, but it is a kingdom principle. It is a holy habit to develop.

Money is not evil, and we don't give money because we must, or to get more in return (even though God is not a debtor, He rewards us in several ways). We give because we simply love God and we want to see His kingdom come and His will be done. When we claim to love someone, we voluntarily give.

We give because we have earned, so you take out of God's provision. As God prospered you, return a portion. The burden is placed on God to keep providing for you. I think it is a fair and proportionate giving principle.

God is looking for clean financial pipes to channel His blessings. Is your pipe rusty or blocked? God will not bless chaos, please come and set aside your excuses, clean your pipe with responsibility, stewardship, orderliness and obedience.

Although our credit file is about creditors looking at our credit records to see if we can be trusted with money before they can lend it to us, God looks at hearts, to see if they're ready to be trusted. Trust God by obeying and abiding by His principles, and watch Him bestow many blessings upon you, so that you will become a blessing to many.

3:3 The Number 3 Must-Do is to Relate Well with others.

God said, it is not good for man to be alone. Our connections to others are integral in how we are able to manage life and find a feeling of belonging. God said two are better than one because they have a better reward for their labour. We are dependent beings. We did not just appear like Adam. And even Adam was lonely until God made a companion for him, Eve.

Acknowledging our own state of being is very important in supporting our whole wellness, and this is what chapters 1 and 2 dealt with. I recommend going back to read it again when you have time.

The way we interact with others is a deep reflection of our beliefs. The way we interact with our spouse, children, parents, siblings, co-workers and friends is a deep reflection of our inner well-being, and vice versa.

3:3:1 Our Social Connections

Our social connections influence our actions. We all have influence in abundance. The power of influence seems to function linearly in that, so the closer we are personally and physically to others, the greater our influence over them, and vice versa.

We are always exerting influence (whether good or bad), simply by being who we are, saying what we say and by just doing what we do.

Hanging out with someone who eats really well can inspire you to do the same, while hanging out with someone who always complains and is generally unhappy may rub off on you as well.

Our social ties can impact our health. How can we best support our relationships and subsequently boost our health in the process? Emotions and inner states are transmitted like viruses via our words and actions, even from the quietest and smallest. Ask yourself, ‘am I a good influence?’

Can I become the example that I myself want to see? Or how can I foster relationships with the kind of people I would like to have in my life? How can I surround myself with a support system of people who will really be there for me and give honest and intuitive advice? No man is an island.

3:3:2 Our Biological Connections

Let’s look at our body’s different system working as a whole, not as divided pieces. The connections are powerful. The greater grasp of this systemic working understanding is linked to increased happiness, satisfaction and maintenance of wellness. A lack of biological balance is linked to poorer outcomes. In the same manner, our connections to others are integral in how we are able to manage life and find feelings of belonging. We can grow by learning to connect in a

graceful way, by finding new relationships to enhance our physical, mental and spiritual health.

Happy relationships benefit us in many ways. However, troubled relationships create stress and anxiety, which can manifest medically in a variety of negatively connected ways, such as headaches, sleep issues, upset digestion and others. Many cancer cases are caused by our poor lifestyle choices, such as diet, movement, sleeping, and relationships.

3:3:3 Getting the Balance

What are we supposed to do in life in order to achieve a balance that will make us a better friend, partner, family member or co-worker? How can I deepen my ability to understand myself and others? How can I guarantee I won't fail, since there is no perfect relationship anyway?

Perfection is always a growth process, not a stagnant state. Is there a simple recipe to guarantee a pleasant relationship outcome? What must I do on my part? I am interested

in knowing, because the quality of our relationships influences every aspect of our health. Stronger relationships mean a stronger you. The effects of our

Our primary aim of relating with others should come from a heart that cares and reaching out to be a channel through which the love of God can flow for His glory.

relationships, even from childhood, emerge and cascade throughout life to foster cumulative advantages and disadvantages for us.

Once we acknowledge the importance of relationships in our lives and make a commitment to focus our positive energy on them, there are lots of ways to tune in to the people in our life and increase the quality of our connections.

We need to explore our own feelings first. Why do my feelings always appear to react around certain persons in a particular manner? We need to identify positive and negative relationships. We need to realise that we humans have an innate desire to relate. How can we nurture our significant relationships? Friend power is more impactful than willpower. Fostering friendships and having a supportive community provides numerous health benefits. We are wired to want connections as relational beings.

3:3:4 **On Parenting**

When we show our children that healthy relationships start at home, we set them up for healthy relationships throughout life. The precious parent-child relationship often lacks focus, due to demands on family life and the many pressing obligations. But we can consciously help our children to overcome hard times and model a greater sense of connection and harmony within the home. It is

not always easy, depending on what was modelled by our own parents, but with intentionality it is possible.

Sometimes, I see my weaknesses in my children and I feel like a hypocrite when I put pressure on them to not cultivate such habits, but it goes to show that these children are products of both our genes and much more what they see us doing, nature and nurture. I work hard on myself to remain their friend. I try my best to negotiate my way and stay involved in whatever they are doing.

I have noticed that my children have grown so quickly and become independent, and I find myself having to compete for their attention in order to stay connected.

I am challenged daily to be like Jesus, who began to do and to then teach, not vice versa (Acts 1:1). These children are seriously looking at us, as our choices and decisions matter greatly. The reason God chose Abraham was because He knew Abraham would direct his children and his families to keep the way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19). I pray we will not fail God in being the godly example that our children can emulate.

3:3:5 On Marriage

Marriage is when a relationship leads two people, a man and a woman, to make vows to one another in front of witnesses. They make a life-long commitment to be together in union as husband and wife. God performed

the first marriage in Eden, and He is ever-present, listening to the vows, especially the marriage that is based on the Bible.

Marriage also gives legitimacy to sexual relations between the couple. It is not just physical union; it is also spiritual and emotional union, which mirrors the relationship between God and His church. Marriage between a man and a woman supplies the best setting for God's plan to thrive. It is the best setting for the birth of children and the best environment for the learning and preparation they will need for a successful upbringing.

It can be very rewarding to have a spouse in life to share experiences with, to spend time with, to depend on in both the good and not so good times in life. I am blessed to have a husband that allows me to be free to be me.

Cohabiting is a couple living together and having a sexual relationship without being married.

Marriage is commitment, cohabiting is convenience!

These relationships can often lose the initial attraction and the attachment (glue).

3:3:5:1 The Untrue Glues for Marriage

- Sex alone does not hold a marriage together.
- Your body, beauty and looks do not hold a marriage.

- Your food and delicious dishes help (for a while) but not entirely.
- Taking good care of the home is crucial but is still not enough.
- Your money or generosity does the trick to some extent but not totally.
- Your marriage certificate is not enough.
- Having children or not having children is not everything.

3:3:5:2 **The True Glues for Marriage**

- Fear of God
- Loving and keeping on loving
- Humility and prayer
- Spending quality time together
- Trust and communication
- Respect and relating with knowledge
- Commitment to your vows
- Humour and good companionship
- Working on yourself
- Appreciating and validating each other
- Being a helpmate and sharing tasks
- God's orderliness
- Patience and submitting one to another
- Not magnifying nakedness and mistakes
- Forgiveness and tolerance
- Picking your battles

- Choosing not to fight back, but to let go and let God.

3:3:5:3 The Bitter Truth

- Your spouse is not going to complete you.
- Your expectations might not be met.
- You may not always feel ‘in love’ or experience ‘happy ever after’.
- Your partner’s family are key relationships.
- Your partner’s finances may be disappointing.
- Conflict is inevitable, prepare to settle it.
- It may get tough but that is not a reason to quit.
- Disappointment hurts, but there is always hope for change.
- Sexual love may fail to express deeper love.
- Movies and social media give skewed perception of the ideal marriage.
- You may become the major or only earner.

3:3:6 Considering Divorce

Sometimes, our relationships disintegrate with everyone going in their separate ways. Statistically, nearly half of all marriages end in divorce.

Divorce happens most times apparently because one party has hardened his/her heart (Matthew 19:8, Mark 10:5). Even with strong and compelling reasons, no divorce is pleasant.

Ask yourself first: am I the one who has hardened my heart? Then consider the following: But I made vows before God to stay in the marriage till death do us part. Am I really going to now go back to God and renounce my vows? What would Jesus have me do? Then tell God: 'I'm staying in this marriage because I want to honour You and I trust You to heal my heart and heal this marriage! I want to be a godly role model for my children. I don't want to leave an evil inheritance or join the divorce statistics or stay in a status quo. What God has joined together, let no one put asunder.'

Has he/she been abusing me and rejected me, is their behaviour life-threatening? Can we first try separation and counselling? Am I being selfish here because these children will suffer the consequences in not striking a healthy balance in life? I will need to double my efforts to do the job of two parents.

Women are far more financially independent these days, and they are okay just being by themselves, so maybe I will be ok, you could think. But how long will I last before I will feel overwhelmed? Can I promise myself I will not start to change my style of dress so I can soon be 'back in the market looking for a companion'?

Maybe this spouse that I know is better than the new person whose agenda I don't know. Maybe time will heal if I exercise more patience. Biblically speaking, a

Christian divorcee should never remarry, according to 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Matthew 5:23, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11-12. At my age, I know I can, and I will remain married to Jesus instead? So, for my sanity I must divorce, even though 'God hates divorce' (Malachi 2:16). Will I listen out and obey His voice, gently telling me what to do for peace sake?

3:3:7 I am Divorced

I hope you know that you are not condemned; neither should you ever condemn yourself. God is a God of second and many chances. Even though the Bible clearly states, as discussed above, that as a Christian, you are not meant to remarry, this is a tough one for many. But you know yourself best, so please settle it with God if you know you cannot stay single for the rest of your life.

Make sure you hear Him clearly. The fact remains that you are a child of God and nothing can change that. Jesus loves you with perfect love, regardless. Any man or woman is only capable of conditional love anyway, it's part of our fallen nature. So, don't be too hard on yourself! God uses situations to change us.

Will I be able to stay single and be happy forever? Will I want to try again with another spouse? Will it work this second time? Is there true love anywhere? What lessons have I learnt?

There is no husband and wife in heaven (Matthew 22:28-30, Mark 12:23).

Romans 14:12 says each of us will give an account of him/herself. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says that each of us will appear before the judgement seat of Christ so that each one may be repaid for...Revelation 2:23 says the One Who searches the minds and hearts will give to each of you according to your deeds.

Be encouraged in the Lord. You deserve to be happy. Get your relationship with God right so He can navigate you through this new life that you have always wished for. Remember you will not be judged by what happened to you but by what you did with what happened.

The utmost goal should be to resemble Christ, and this can only happen if we spend time with Him every day, studying the Bible and praying.

3:3:8 **Struggling with Sins**

You are precious to God and He loves you regardless of the state of your being. We all have a fallen nature, but the impacts of this fallen nature are at different levels.

I do not know what phase in your struggles you are in right now. Are you struggling with entanglement, breaking from your past, or are you searching for a new meaning?

Can I assume that I am addressing a Christian that continues to fall into sexual sin or immoral act? Are you still in church or have you resorted to a personal relationship

with God without the church's mediation or have you rejected your faith?

We know that the church believes that a sexual relationship is only ideal in heterosexual marriage. Remarriage after divorce, abortion, having sex outside of marriage, same-sex genital acts, and many real or virtual sinful acts are all incompatible with Christian faith. Unfortunately, we are all guilty. Sin is sin! Jesus said repent and sin no more!

Do you believe in all or some of the values your present Church seeks to transmit, and if not, will you prayerfully find another? It may be troublesome, but you should embark on the journey to find God's love. He is closer than you think. Participating as a volunteer church worker will strengthen your faith and you will become comfortable if you find a mature minister that you can confide in to support you in your godly decisions.

Hiding from church is a recipe to compartmentalise your choices and it is an easy strategy to compromise your faith in Jesus. Please hear me well, God is relying on you, like Adam, to make your choice to love Him and obey His word. Don't fall into sin and blame God. The thoughts and the feelings that make us do things contrary to the word of God are all irrational inducements from our fallen nature.

As discussed already, we are slaves to our neurological tendencies. They will always show up, **but it is what**

you do with the thoughts and the feelings that will determine your standing with God afterwards. I pray you will not fall into that sin. If you do, please don't remain in that downwards spiral. God has not left His Fatherly position; you can just reach out to Him. Like all of us, you only need to keep on working on your boundaries, discipline and consistency.

Our personal goal should always be to please God in every endeavour and to gravitate towards a closer relationship with Him daily. When we genuinely do this, God is a Rewarder; He lightens our load and lessens our struggles while we become more and more like Jesus. **If the fear of God and respect for Him dictates the outcome of your every struggle, you will eventually glorify God in your success story** and with the Holy Spirit in you, your Helper, you will behold God's glory for evermore, amen!

3:3:9 I am a Christian

Finally let us talk to ourselves. This book has taken nearly five years to put together, and as I was writing the conclusion, behold the coronavirus pandemic started to unfold. This got me thinking seriously about our generation and how we have 'played God'.

Political leaders in many countries have passed many controversial laws that undermine the core values of Christianity - encouraging abortion, banning prayers in

schools and taking the Bibles from public places, etc. We have been playing God.

Many pastors, churches and fellow Christians too have disappointed (you and) God by not living up to the desired expectations and standing as prophetic voices to the nations. However, we suddenly found ourselves being confined to our various homes. Be honest, what were you busy with when the Government issued the guidelines to stay at home? What was mainly on your mind during the lockdown? Whatever was occupying your mind was your god.

When you had the time during the lockdown, what was the pressing priority that was very present for you? That would be your idol. Was it the news, the social media, your phone, infection worries? Clearly, Jesus is not the centre of your life, or is He? How can He be? Can you possibly convince yourself about the role of Jesus during that global crisis? Leave out all the excuses! Is Jesus truly the Lord of your life?

You will know if He is Lord if you were still following Jesus during the lockdown and you were not busy following Facebook, WhatsApp, the news, anything and everything except your main focus, which should be studying your Bible and sitting at the Master's feet to receive divine revelation about the now. Clearly it shows where your heart is!

How much we follow Jesus will show through how much time and focus we give Him out of our 24 hours.

Most of us are following media, money, man's influence, prestige, power, wealth, and it's all about control, instead of hearing God calling us His own people to humble ourselves, pray, seek Him and turn away from our wrong ways so that He can forgive and heal our world (2 Chronicles 7:13-17).

What conversation are you having with your Saviour? Can you hear Him giving you instructions and how much do you follow His leadings?

If Jesus should come today, will you recognise Him from your regular relational level with Him? You might say, 'Yes Jesus, we relate for about 15 minutes every morning when I pray'. And Jesus will say, I was looking for the kind of attention you give your phone, tablet, screen, TV, your body/face. But I never really got your full heart-to-heart focus, despite all the opportunities and resources I made available to help draw your attention. Do not let Him say 'Get away from Me, I never knew you'.

3:3:10 **Struggling with Unforgiveness**

People hurt us, betray us, break our trust or cause us intense emotional pain. It is so easy to be unwilling or unable to forgive. But you will harm yourself more if you continue in anger and wish for revenge. Forgiveness is

to relinquish our entitlement to fight back and release ourselves to enjoy the victory in God.

Forgiveness reflects on loving myself enough to move forward. Unforgiveness is believing I am right when God says I am wrong. Bitterness is believing God got it wrong. Unforgiveness is choosing to stay trapped in anger and stuck in the past, not moving forward or choosing to stay trapped in a jail cell of bitterness, serving time for someone else's crime.

Unforgiveness is hatred and grudges, which are heavy things to carry. When you hold a grudge, it increases your risk of depression, lack of sleep, blood pressure, anxiety and more. Joyce Meyer said we are never justified in harbouring unforgiveness towards anyone. To be a Christian is to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in us.

The Lord's prayer says, 'And forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us'. If we forgive others, our heavenly Father will forgive us also. But if we do not forgive others their sins, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses (Matthew 6:14-15). Forgiveness is a two-way street with God.

If you still find it difficult, speak your desires to forgive to God. Everything happens for a reason, so ask God to help you turn it around for your good. A problem-free

life never makes a strong person. Please forgive yourself, and whatever it is, forgive others (Matthew 18:22). Let the Lord give you the joy of His coming.

We are all bad judges, possibly because we are incapable of seeing all the circumstances surrounding a situation. God is the all-knowing Right Judge of all. God's judgment on your behalf is the sweetest revenge when you hand it over to Him.

To forget and not hold resentment is what I found difficult, but I noticed that when I forgive, God has a way of bringing seasons that make me remember the painful experiences no more. Dear reader, let the Lord take care of the future you are afraid of, trust Him. That challenge has an expiry date, but our hope of reigning with Christ must not expire.

God is moved by our love for Him, worship of Him, giving to Him, our faith, our service, our prayers and our forgiveness of others. So, go ahead, package that forgiveness and give it as a gift of love. It will free you and the Lord will honour your obedience. Storms come to everyone for a reason but only those who hear and practice the word remain standing. Thank God for you are still standing. You can choose to come out stronger with God on your side. Frank Sinatra said the best revenge is massive success.

3:3:11 The Wake-up Call

It is time to stop all the excuses under the sun. You are either following Jesus or you are not. Jesus is saying, 'if you are My follower, then you will get to know Me'. Our challenges are opportunities that God gives us Christians to get our attention, so that through our testimonies a lot of people will be saved. Challenging times are times to get to know Jesus better. God wants our attention, so please do not miss the opportunity.

Are you truly a Christ follower? If yes, how much information do you have about Christ? What are His principles, teachings and promises? If you have to defend your faith, to what extent can you mirror this Jesus Whom you have been following since you became born again, so that when people experience you, they can conclude from that encounter that you are indeed a Christian.

If Christ is fully formed in us, praying will no longer be a challenge. Prayer will move from being a desire to a delight. But it takes spiritual discipline to focus and be consistently seeking Him, so that we are not only relying on what our pastor/prophet said every time.

Plan to pray. Set your alarm, wake up, keep your appointment with God. Practice only makes perfect, when you keep the focus, the consistency and the discipline. God is moved by our commitment to Him.

3:3:12 All Change Please

Our world has changed since the Covid-19 pandemic. The preparation for the end-times has started. Are you ready? If you are not a student of the Word of God, please become one now, because there must be a separation and a distinction.

Plan your day with God in mind every day. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, hear Him moment by moment. Let your spiritual antenna be up and at the alert setting.

Don't busy yourself with what others are saying. Hear first-hand from God. Surround yourself with godly resources to build your most holy faith. We don't have any more time to waste. You are either following closely or you have lost the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is not just about lip service or keeping up appearances. Relate with your Saviour to the extent that you are convinced that you know Him.

Prove to yourself without any shadow of doubt that if Jesus comes while you are still living on this earth, you will recognise Him and participate in the rapture with Him.

3:3:13 I Am a Mature Christian

Now, it gets deep. This level is not just about relating with God. It is about being intimate with Him. God is a caring God, but also a God of principles. There is a reason and a purpose for every season in life.

God is depending on the responsibilities of mature Christians with deeper understanding and revelation to influence their world. God is looking for our unshakable trust in Him when we are faced with problems. **We are going to be defined by our response to the Word of God during any crisis.** We must become fearless and acquaint ourselves with God (Job 22:21-30).

‘The just shall live by faith’ (Habakkuk2:4). We are expected to make use of all the resources that God has given us to convince many prodigal sons and daughters to return home.

Enlist yourself in end-time evangelism as we engage ourselves in prayers, asking God to strategically place us to populate His Kingdom and cause His will to be done.

The church will never be destroyed, the church always survives every attack. God said, ‘I will build my church’. Ask God, ‘What is my strategic role in Your end-time agenda? I must not miss Your divine placement by getting distracted by any crisis. No, this season, I must be an active influencer of Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done, O Lord!’

Sometimes, we are being straightened and strengthened by crisis. Our prayers make power available for the will of God to be done, and they scatter harmful gatherings and disrupt them from performing their evil enterprises. For God has not given us a spirit

of fear, we will never relent from gathering and praying by all means always. **We have experienced a continuum of powerful prayers. We pray constantly to ensure our protection and much more, to change the spiritual climate of our nation and our new normal in a post COVID-19 world.** We know that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God, to create the movement of God in our land. May the Lord help us not to fail Him during any crisis in Jesus' name, Amen!

The Golden Rule is that we are commanded by God to love one another. If everything is based on love, if our choices are made out of love for God and for others, if we are motivated by love, the world would look different.

Remember that life is never without a need, or a problem or a hurtful moment, but **we have a faithful loving Father God Who is always wanting us to inform Him, involve Him and invite Him!**

3:3:14 **Scriptures on Love for Others**

- 'Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law' (Romans 13:8).
- 'If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he that love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen' (1 John 4:20).
- 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God' (1 John 4:7).

- ‘Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart’ (Galatians 6:9).
- ‘A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother’ (Proverbs. 18:24).

Digging Deep:

Consider how God invited Adam as co-creator with Him in naming all the animals. God out of love reached out to us as human beings through the prophets (Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha and others) until He came down in human form, just to reconcile us to Himself.

Jesus’ main role was to save us, to show us He is the Way to the Father, and when we follow the Way, He teaches us how to love and relate with the Father. Please accept His invitation so He can teach you How to co-create our world with Him. He also gave us the Bible to instruct us (1 John 2:1-2). How sad that many of us have refused the Book and the Author.

Make up your mind today, tell God what you want to co-create with Him. Hear from Him as to what He wants you to create for Him. Decide to love Him and partner with Him and nurture this new relationship with Him. Make Jesus the Lord of your heart. Let Him navigate you through life and heaven is assured for you eternally.

3:3:15 **About Heaven**

All religion appears to have a common goal of going to their place of relief, which is a realm of comfort, an escape from the troubles of this life.

There are different concepts and doctrines of heaven. When I close my eyes in death, which concept and doctrine am I going to cross over with? When my spirit leaves my body, will my spirit be left to travel and wonder and continue after life? The grave is the seal of everything. Some believe it is our children that makes us eternal or maybe heaven is actually here, or that heaven is the sky, or it is a celestial glory.

Christians believe Heaven is from the revelation through our Holy Book, the Bible, so it's unique and it shows us the Way. We cannot even know Heaven unless Jesus shows us. Nobody can get to Heaven without Christ (John 14:6). So, there is Heaven and there is a way to get there. Speculation has not given us the answer, it has come only by revelation through the Word of God.

We must never give up on our hope of reigning with Christ in Heaven. Heaven is our eternal home. We are sojourners on earth Jesus is the One coming to take us there.

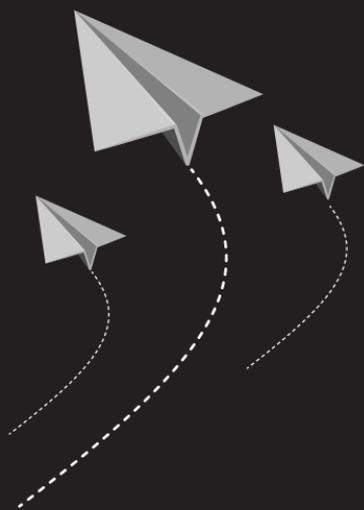
Men were going to build a tower in search for God in Genesis 11, so they thought they would be able to see God and reason with Him. God showed them that 'you

cannot figure Me out with your little dust mind'. God confused their language, and that is how they became scattered throughout the earth. God said, 'I will give you the Book which will help you learn about Me and relate with Me.' God came in person and grew up to tell us about Heaven. People have a choice if they want to get there: the Bible tells us about Heaven and shows us the Key to get there. We must look forward to living eternally in heaven never in hell.

Heaven is a concealment, according to 1 Corinthians 2: 9-10: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. Jesus said, 'I go to prepare a place for you in my Father's house, there are many mansions; I will come again and receive you to Myself' (John 14:1-4). This heavenly inheritance that we look forward to as believers in Christ is comforting.

Christ died to make Heaven possible and He lives to make Heaven real. Heaven is where God lives and abides. The dead in Christ will rise first and we that are alive, in a twinkling of an eye will be transformed (raptured) and link up to meet Him in the air and be received into heavenly immortality with the eternal God. This is the Good News.

CHAPTER 4



THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

We have found that our survival mechanism creates trust issues for us because our brain is designed for survival. It started originally as a spermatozoon that fought billions of other spermatozoa. This survival mechanism has not changed yet. Our brain still scans the environment, looking for potential threats and whether to trust or not. The resulting consequences and limitations are our excuses and unbelief.

Our brain has more neurological tendencies to discern negative events than positive events. We are naturally wired to look for negative signs such as fear, fright, flight, rejection. But the good news is that we can choose our thoughts. Yes, this is given by God. **We are not robots. God gave us the freedom to use our thoughts to shape our reality and interpret events in a more empowering way.** Since it is God-given, should we not therefore involve Him in our thinking? Should we not share this control of shaping our reality and interpretation of life events with the Author of all things? Consider if this is where our issue lies.

We tend to think we have all the control to do and undo everything. Our brain works to ensure our survival and the perpetual natural state is to fear (always be on guard), but we need to recognise this weakness and totally surrender our fears to God so He can control and order our natural state.

This is what trust in Him is all about. We can say that it is easy to hold onto fear because that's how I am wired anyway. We can say that it takes trust to surrender my control of my natural tendencies to the God that I don't see or believe in. Every day, many of us feel as if we don't have control over our lives and our reactions. You genetically inherited the defence condition you are in right now, which you cannot control.

You also know how your survival mechanism impacts negatively on you because of misappropriation of your trust. But we can choose how we react and how we show up in life. We can show up from the natural state of fear and panic that will be evident during any crisis. Who did you run to? Or you can show up from a state of peace, regardless of the chaos and suffering, knowing that God is in control.

The 3 must-dos in life are, firstly, the greatest commandment - to love the Lord your God; secondly, to love yourself; and thirdly to love your neighbours as yourself. When this order of God is carefully observed, we can take on any hurdle that comes our way, knowing that it's a win-win situation.

Jesus called us His friends. Jesus said, 'Let not your heart be troubled, just believe in God and believe also in me.' Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in His Father's (God's) house. Thomas asked, 'How can we get

to this place?’ Jesus said, ‘I am the Way the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me’ (John 14:1-6).

Finally, brethren, unless our trust is put in the right place, we will revert to our predetermined survival level of fear and distrust.

Does this mean I will never find fulfilment unless I place my trust in God? No! There is a permissive will, allowed by God, which may not necessarily be beneficial. It means you decide the factors that are impacting and shaping the reality of your fulfilment in life. And, yes! there is also the perfect will of God when we trust Him. God does not choose for us if we don’t invite Him. This means that we have to reap the consequences of our choices eventually.

Unfortunately, certain religious manipulations have poisoned the very breath of God in some of us, to the extent that we do not trust the Author of life and the path He sets for us to return to Him eternally. However, the choice still rests with you.

The bottom line is that where you put your trust influences your outcome and fulfilment in life.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says “let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and obey His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring

The Finishing Point

Life is full of choices. Life is also full of compromises. We are all free to the point of choice. Success is series of making positive choices in life. Successful people do make mistakes but they learn new things each time. Repeating the same mistake is what leads to failure. Making positive choices repeatedly is possible when we truthfully submit our heart to the best Lover of our soul, Jesus Christ.

I made my choice by giving my heart to Jesus, I strongly recommend that you too should give your heart to Him today. I promise you will never regret and you will find doing the 3 must-dos in life will become delightful experiences.

Prayer

Today Lord Jesus, I dedicate my heart to you. I see my wrongs and I repent from all my sins. Please forgive me and wash me in your precious blood. Holy Spirit, I welcome You to occupy Your rightful place in my heart.

As you trust God and walk with Him through the grace of our Lord Jesus, may He bless you with what you pray for and reward your must-do works according to His will.
AMEN!!!.

End Notes

The Holy Bible NKJV, the NLT and Amplified version.

This book is a result of daily listening to Premier Christian Radio and various biblical teachings for many years.

The personal journal I kept for years contained so many reflections which I desired to put together and make available to help anyone who is wrestling with similar struggles.

The theological perspectives that took me so long to reach are the result of a serious journey I went on, including Bible college, to study theology to unravel and unpack the Bible, so that the understanding brought simplicity and empowered my faith.

The Google word search and online dictionary helped with making meaning and facilitating literal understanding.

The bulk of these materials are inspirations from the Holy Spirit and God specifically supervising the writings, so much so that even myself I am flabbergasted to see the resulting product.

Reading the Open Heaven Daily Devotional book by Pastor E.A. Adeboye from 2000-2020.

Many years of attending weekly Bible studies at church, Sunday service and many conferences.

It will be good to hear from you, the readers, especially if you want to help us put this book in the hands of many people. Please contact on funlolasonubi@me.com or text +447956 030808.

This book can be made available free of charge if it is for the primary purpose of being an evangelistic tool. But if you are led to donate it will be appreciated.



Are you eager to find the Truth?

The 3 Must-Dos in Life is the manual for everyone who is seeking the truth about where their trust really lies, where they have actually placed it. Sadly, there is no concise instruction manual to teach us how to appropriate our trust and how to use this trust in managing life's challenges. Where we place our trust can make our lives miserable or truly fulfilling. When our trust is placed well, it colours our experiences and navigates our thinking, emotions, reactions and energy. This book of exploration will help us to trace ourselves back to how we came to be. What happened to you and I in becoming us? When did it happen? Do you know your core values and principles? The insights in this book will help you finely tease out what you believe when it comes to making decisions. It will also help you realise what guide your choices. You will discover where your loyalty is and what keeps you keeping on. Get ready to move to the next level of your journey in life and take others with you!

“ The 3 Must-Dos in life will help you on a journey to personal discovery. It offers practical counselling and godly suggestions on how to grow in your relationships. I recommend it with great enthusiasm. ”

Rev Dr G.O. Bakare (UK)

Funmilola Sonubi (FIBMS, HCPC, CPCAB, BA(Hons), MACC, MBACP, MARCP) is a biomedical scientist who has changed career and become a counsellor. She specialises in facilitating a deeper understanding of how her clients' connectedness influences their overall wellbeing. At her private practice (www.helparisethcounselingservice.com), she helps her clients to explore the root cause of emotional struggles and creates awareness so that clients can gain insightful meanings of their challenges in beneficial and empowering ways. Many of the thoughts and beliefs that Lola has acquired on her personal and professional journeys, which she utilises to help her clients in achieving their desired goals, are expressed in this book.



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