

C THE LABOURER'S TERMS OF COVENANT

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MATURITY: THE MEANS AND MEASURE

By Joseph Enyima

Religion and tradition are some of the most dangerous enemies to the Word of God in our lives. Religion and tradition are to the Word of God what weeds are to a crop. If left unattended to, religion and tradition will overtake the Word of God in a believer's life. They will take the place of the Word in your life and before you know it; your life will be short of power and victory.

Jesus addressed the danger of religion and tradition in His day. He was confronted by the religious people of His day – the Scribes and Pharisees – demanding to know why His disciples were transgressing the tradition of the elders. In answer to them, Jesus said **“Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition...you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.”** (Matthew 15:3-6, NKJV). Notice what He said tradition does to the Word of God. It makes the Word of God non effective in a person's life. In other words, it renders you powerless and helpless.

What does that mean for us? We have to be sure that the Word of God is the only rule of conduct and belief in our lives; and the most sure way to do so is by knowing that God is love. Religion and tradition have no room in a life of love. All you have to do to know whether or not you are in obedience to the Word of God is ask yourself, “Is it of love?” “Am I thinking, saying or doing this out of love?” That will quickly settle all uncertainty.

That brings us to the need to understand the connection between the love of God and our maturity as believers. How would you define a mature believer? The measures of maturity commonly used by believers include things like the length of time a person has spent in the faith, the amount of scriptures a person has memorized, the record of a person's faith accomplishments, and the working of the gifts of the Spirit in a person's life. No doubt, these things have a connection with a believer's level of maturity. But according to the Bible, they are in

no way a measure of maturity. All you have to do to know that is to read 1 Corinthians 13: 1-3.

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

What then is the measure of a believer's maturity? The answer lies in what the Bible teaches us in 1 Corinthians 8:1-2: **“Now about food offered to idols: of course we know that all of us possess knowledge [concerning these matters. Yet mere] knowledge causes people to be puffed up (to bear themselves loftily and be proud), but love (affection and goodwill and benevolence) edifies and builds up and encourages one to grow [to his full stature]. If anyone imagines that he has come to know and understand much [of divine things, without love], he does not yet perceive and recognize and understand as strongly and clearly, nor has he become as intimately acquainted with anything as he ought or as is necessary.”**(The Amplified Bible)

The Christians in the church at Corinth were just like many of us. They were so preoccupied with proving themselves to be knowledgeable about the things of God. What they did not realize, as many of us too don't realize, is that God does not intend for us to know the Scriptures as an end in itself. His intention is for us to know the Scriptures as a means to a higher end – love. Love does in us something that knowledge cannot do. It edifies us. According to Webster dictionary (1913), to edify means, in part, **“to build; to construct”**. And that is

exactly what the love of God does to our spirit man. It is something that knowledge in the mind cannot do.

The effect of edification is greater than that of being knowledgeable. Edification has to do with the release of the human spirit. Love edifies because it flushes out fear and the torment that comes with it from our lives. Fear paralyzes the human spirit. It cripples a person's spirit; and Satan uses it to oppress people (Isaiah 54:14, Acts 10:38). Many people move around haunted by different kinds of fears. Some of these fears are easy to detect. Others are more subtle. They are deep inside the sub conscience of their victims. Information alone is not enough to root this fear out.

It takes the assurance that love brings to free a person from fear. In other words, it takes God to free a person from fear because God is love. When God gets involved in your life, fear has to leave because, **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment..."** (1 John 4:18). When a believer knows deep down in his spirit that God loves him, he becomes liberated. He develops confidence in life because he acquires a sense of identity, belonging and significance that nothing else in this world order can offer. He becomes bold in his approach to God, in his dealings with men, and in his exercise of authority over the devil and the power of darkness.

We can therefore comfortably say that a believer's maturity is a function of the revelation of the love of God in his life. A believer's spirit man is built up only to the degree of the revelation knowledge of the love of God that he has or is walking in. That is why the apostle Paul, in praying by the Spirit of God, asked God to **"...grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man..., that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."** (Ephesians 3:16-19). Notice that it is in the inner man where we need to be strengthened with might; and not just in the mind. And the might by which we are strengthened in the inner man comes through our comprehensions of the love of God – love that surpasses head knowledge.

Intimacy with God – seeking revelation knowledge of His love, meditating on His love for you, and practicing His love in you and on others – is the key to your maturity in Christ. | **CWM**

Where Do You Stand with God?

If you have never accepted Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord, the bad news is that you are separated from God and are walking "...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:3). The good news however, is that you don't have to continue that way. You can be reconciled with God and born into His family by simply praying the following prayer:

Salvation Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). I am calling on You. I pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and be Lord over my life according to Romans 10:9-10. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I do that now. I confess that Jesus is Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead.

Additional Resources:

If you've prayed the above prayer, write the CWM Mission Team and request a free copy of our Reception Package – a set of resources assembled to give you a right start on your journey to victorious living.

Blessed to be a Blessing

Did you know you can subscribe for the printed version of the Labourer's Terms of Covenant (LTOC) monthly study issue under one or more of the following subscription options?

- a) If personal study of the printed LTOC is what you are looking for, then the applicable subscription option for you is the **Personal Subscription** option;
- b) If you simply want to bless a loved one or a friend by having us mail them the printed LTOC, we have a subscription solution for you in the form of the **Gift Subscription** option;
- c) And for believers who enroll for our Associate Ministry Programme, your Mission Cluster members get to receive their printed copies of the LTOC under the **MAF Subscription** option.



MISSION CLUSTERS' FORUM



Vision Caster

Imparting the Art and Heart for Multiplying Kingdom Labourers

Announcing the CWM Scholarship Fund

In addition to reaching hundreds of believers in prison with faith-building teachings, CWM is now actively involved in supporting ex-prisoners to productively reintegrate into society.

Through its Scholarship Fund, CWM provides ex-prisoners who have a proven track record of active participation in its Prison Ministry Programme the opportunity to acquire a vocational education that can help them become gainfully employed. Scholarship offers are currently limited to one beneficiary per year and cover the cost of tuition, uniforms, books and selected tools.

We invite applications from ex-prisoners from any of the participating prisons under CWM's Prison Ministry Programme ('Psalms 68:11 Corps'). Applicants must demonstrate the following:

- a) Active participation in CWM's outreaches to believers in prison
- b) Active membership in a Mission Cluster
- c) Outstanding biblical lifestyle
- d) Admission to a recognized vocational institution

For further information on the CWM Scholarship Fund, please contact us at the address below.

For correspondence, please write to:
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E-mail: missionteam@cwm.or.ug | Website: <http://www.cwm.or.ug>

For subscription payments or donations, make a direct deposit to our bank account:
Account Name: Covenant Word Ministries | Account No.: 0140002100701
Bank: Stanbic Bank | Branch: IPS | Swift Code: SBICUGKX



Covenant Word Ministries, Inc

Covenant Word Ministries (CWM) is a para-church organization dedicated to helping people connect with God, His Word and His Vision for their lives through nurturing faith and casting vision.

Our vision is “a global community of Kingdom co-labourers victoriously leading lives by the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus”. And our mission is “to reach and train believers to apply their lives to the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus and to multiplying Kingdom labourers”.

CWM executes its mission through three ministry programmes using five ministry outreaches: i) A monthly study issue – The Labourer’s Terms of Covenant; ii) Mission Campaigns; iii) Annual Associates and Alumni Mission Seminars; iv) Life Application Product Offers; and v) a Ministry Website.

Our ministry programmes include:

1. The **Associate Ministry Programme (AMP)**: A Mission Apprenticeship Fellowship (MAF) through which CWM initiates believers into a lifestyle of building and multiplying strong lifelong discipleship relationships within the context of a ministry framework and curriculum.
2. The **MAF Alumni Ministry Programme**: A liaison ministry through which the CWM Mission Team interacts with MAF Alumni members for purposes of fellowship, prayer and joint ministry to their lifelong Christian friends as God leads. The MAF Alumni is an alliance of accredited Mission Partners that have completed the CWM’s Associate Ministry Programme.
3. The **‘Psalm 68:11 Corps’ Ministry Programme**: A correspondence ministry that involves extending the reach of our monthly study issue - The Labourer’s Terms of Covenant – to believers in 50 prison facilities in Uganda. CWM is currently reaching believers in 21 of these prisons across 12 districts: Kampala (4), Wakiso (3), Jinja (3), Mukono (1), Kayunga (1), Masaka (1), Mbarara (3), Ibanda (1), Nakasongola (1), Kumi (1), Soroti (1) and Abim (1).

For further information about CWM and its operations, please visit us online at www.cwm.or.ug



The **MAF Alumni** is an alliance of believers (Accredited Mission Partners) who have completed the CWM Associate Ministry Programme – a Mission Apprenticeship Fellowship (MAF) through which believers are initiated into a lifestyle of building strong lifelong discipleship relationships within the context of a ministry framework and curriculum.

As a member of the MAF Alumni, you become a lifetime partaker of the MAF Alumni Ministry Programme whose objective is to encourage believers in their lifelong discipleship relationships after their three-year apprenticeship fellowship with CWM as Associates.

Under this programme, the CWM Mission Team liaises with accredited Mission Partners for purposes of fellowship, prayer and joint ministry to their lifelong Christian friends. For more information about the CWM Associate Ministry and how to enroll, write or visit us online.

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