

C THE LABOURER'S TERMS OF COVENANT

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BEYOND KNOWLEDGE AND CHARACTER

By Joseph Enyima

It is often said that it takes growth to mature. The path to maturity however takes more than growth. It also requires development. People often confuse these two processes by using one to refer to the other. Drawing a distinction between the two processes is however very important as far as our maturity as believers is concerned.

Put simply, growth is about quantitative increase while development is about capability progression. Take a new born baby for example. We establish the growth of the baby by monitoring increase in his or her size and weight. However, when it comes to the development of the baby, we monitor changes in features other than size and weight. We consider things like the baby's ability to sit, to crawl and to eat solid foods. We expect the baby to demonstrate visual and audio recognition after some time. No matter how well a baby may be progressing in weight and size, if these development signs are missing over time the parents and people around the baby will begin to get concerned and to seek answers.

That demonstrates to us that there is more to maturity than growth. Growth must necessarily be accompanied by development for maturity to be whole and complete. What does this mean for the believer? The answer lies in these words in 1 Corinthians 4:15: **"...though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers"**. Paul is here setting a distinction between an instructor and a father. Understanding the distinction that he makes is vital not only to knowing why growth and development need to go together but also why we must be committed to the relationships within which growth and development occur.

When we talk about training up a child in accordance with Proverbs 22:6 we need to know this: whereas an instructor's primary responsibility is to impart knowledge, a father's responsibility goes much further. Beyond imparting knowledge a father is responsible for

imparting character and spirit (or attitude). Whereas a person can grow in knowledge and develop in character, he has to catch a spirit. Some things are taught others are caught. I believe this is what Jesus was talking about when he said, **"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher"** (Luke 6:40). In other words, a disciple is not ready to graduate until he has captured the spirit of his teacher.

For many of the outstanding characters in the Bible, we notice that their excellence is strongly tied with the prevailing spirit in their lives. Take the case of Caleb and Joshua. Many of us know these men for the outstanding courage and faith that they exhibited in their conquest of the land of Canaan. You see their courage clearly expressed in the attitude with which they approached their challenges. Take for example these words of Caleb at the age of 85 years:

"I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I

shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said." And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel." (Joshua 14: 7-14).

How come Caleb was able to stand steadfast in his faith with such determination and valour for forty five years? What was it about him and Joshua that made them not to lose hold of God's promise for such a long time? According to the Bible, it all had to do with the prevailing spirit in their lives. In contrasting Caleb to the men and women of his generation, the Bible records these words from God about him: **"...My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it."** (Numbers 14:24) Caleb clearly captured more than just knowledge of the Word of God from his senior (or father) in the faith. His father in the faith also imparted to him the character and spirit that made him stand out from the rest in his generation before God. Because of the corporate nature of worship that the Israelites practiced, many in Caleb's generation must have had the same knowledge of God that Caleb had. The difference however was in the people Caleb associated with and what he picked up from them. He picked up their character and spirit; and that is what he in turn became known for. He who walks with wise men shall be wise! (Proverbs 13:20). Caleb must have been a diligent student and committed follower of his father in the faith.

Another example of this principle is that of Elijah and Elisha. As you may know, Elisha was Elijah's aide. Elisha must have heard about Elijah way before he met him. Elisha undoubtedly got word (if not sight) of the mighty miracles, signs and wonders that were happening through the life and ministry of Elijah as a prophet in the land. And judging by his response to Elijah's offer for him to work as his aide, it's apparent that Elisha had a strong admiration of Elijah: **"So [Elijah] departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant."** (1 Kings 19: 19-21).

Elisha's service as an aide to Elijah gave him a great opportunity to observe and absorb many things from the

life of Elijah. His knowledge of God must have certainly increased during this period and his character too must have developed for him to have been able to stay loyal and faithful to Elijah throughout their stay. Elisha could not, however, settle for increase in knowledge and development in character alone. He yearned for something greater – he had his sights set on the spirit that was upon Elijah. And when he got the opportunity to ask for what he had always yearned for, he did not waste time in seizing it. He laid out his request in no uncertain terms:

"And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." (2 Kings 2:1-10).

Isn't it interesting and instructive to note that at the moment of their departure, Elijah referred to Elisha not as a 'master' but as a 'father' (2 Kings 2: 12). That says a lot about the kind of relationship it takes to impart a spirit. This account too shows us that excellence in life and ministry requires more than knowledge and character. There has to be a certain spirit about our lives for us to stand out in God. When you read about the life of Daniel, he too had the same testimony about his life: **"...Daniel was preferred above the presidents and**

princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.” (Daniel 6:3-4)

So what exactly is this spirit that was responsible for the excellence we see in the lives of Caleb, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel and many other similar characters? The Bible calls it the spirit of faith: “...since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak”” (2 Corinthians 4:13). The accounts in Scripture we

have examined confirm to us that effective discipleship goes beyond the impartation of knowledge and the development of character. It also calls for the impartation of the right attitude – the spirit of faith. In discipleship, we are called to be fathers and not just instructors. An effective father does not only teach his children. He also passes on to them his attitude (his spirit). He works on developing a bond in his relationship with his children through a combination of encouragement, comfort and instruction (1 Thessalonians 2: 8,11). What is the prevailing attitude (or spirit) in your life? Be sure it is the spirit of faith and be a good father by imparting it to your children in the faith. The spirit of faith has a victorious outlook of life because it sees life through the eyes of the Word of God. | CWM

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The first stage of our journey towards relocating to our home grounds was believing God for an ideal site on which to establish the Covenant Mission Complex. Thanks be to God Who always causes us to triumph! We have victoriously ended that stage of our journey through a miraculous move of God.

The goal for the next phase of our journey is completion of design works for the Mission Complex and acquisition of all necessary permits required for the commencement of civil works. Be a part of this amazing work of God by joining us in faith and financially for a fully finished, furnished and free facility from the Lord of the Harvest for the Harvest of the Lord.

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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).

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